

after a China visit later this month, is prepared to put the full force of American attention into this area. It is important that we be thoughtful in terms of our economic assistance so the world environment does not suffer as a result of this economic collapse.

We need to press for as much support, monitoring, and observation as possible for these critical elections taking place in June spread across over 100,000 polling places in a country that has no election infrastructure.

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It may be a little effort, a little time, it may be a little trouble for the United States to be involved in Indonesia during these troubled times, but I can think of no place in the world where our investment would have more impact on the global economy and on the lives of ordinary men and women.

TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak briefly this afternoon, in this raspy, cold-driven voice, about the need for tax reform in America today.

I would like to begin my remarks by reading part of a letter from one of my constituents, Mr. Gerald Racine, of Green Bay, Wisconsin. This letter is one that I believe speaks for a majority of people in northeastern Wisconsin and I trust and hope for a majority of Americans. He writes:

Representative Green: We just finished doing our 1998 Federal income tax returns and we agree with you that it must be simplified. Doing those calculations seems impossible and when we get done, we don't know if it makes sense. We just keep our fingers crossed that we did it right. Being a retired banker and accountant, we don't feel that we should have to go to a tax expert to file what should be a simple income tax return.

Mr. Racine, I agree. We have a frightful tax problem in America today, Mr. Speaker. Not only do our families pay nearly 40 percent, almost half, of their income in taxes, they are also forced to endure a difficult, frustrating and confusing maze of paperwork and bureaucracy that can challenge even a retired financial expert like Gerald Racine.

According to the IRS's own numbers, it will take an American who has a few investments and itemizes his deductions some 22 hours to file his Federal income taxes this year. That is more than a half a week of work, and it is 3 hours longer than it took just last year.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we get this session under way in earnest, let us remember that while tax relief is a key priority for us in Congress, tax reform is also an issue that must be addressed.

I am proud to be a supporter of the Date Certain Tax Code Replacement

Act. This bill would scrap the current Tax Code and enable us to replace it with a simpler, more reasonable tax system. It would ensure that we have a serious debate in this Nation, a long-overdue debate, about what our Tax Code should look like. I believe that new Tax Code will be simpler, more fair and less burdensome.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this proposal and in a larger effort to reduce and reform taxes for our working families.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his excellent statement and remind him that last year the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) and I toured this country and debated in 30 of our great cities in America the issue of replacing the current Income Tax Code with a simple, fair code, either a flat income tax or no income tax and a national sales tax which is a plan that I have espoused. The crowds were enormous. Americans are ready for this Congress to act.

I just had a great conversation with the chairman of our Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), who is also a strong supporter of repealing the IRS and the Income Tax Code and replacing it with a consumption tax like a sales tax. He has assured me that before he leaves Congress this session he intends to give us a chance to not only debate this issue but perhaps even resolve it.

I want to congratulate the gentleman for being a soldier in this quest and wish him the best of luck because not only the people of Green Bay but the people of America are depending on us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DECENNIAL CENSUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Census Bureau announced a new plan to conduct the decennial census in the year 2000. It was disappointing. The Census Bureau has flip-flopped and now wants to have a two-number census.

What they want is that, after the Supreme Court ruled last month that you have to do a full enumeration as the Constitution clearly states, a full enumeration will be conducted and that is the good thing, they announced yesterday that they will go out and make every effort they can to count everybody in this country on April 1, 2000.

But what they want to do is, once they get that number and so we will have a Supreme Court-accepted number that every city, county, census tract, census block in the country will have, they then want to do a manipulation of that number. They want to take that actual count and manipulate it and get a second number. That second number they want to say, that is going to be the official number. It kind of baffles my mind.

I thought when the Supreme Court ruled, I thought when six Federal judges last year ruled that sampling was illegal that we would just move on and get the job done. But, no, this administration is playing politics with the census, and it is very clear now that they have flip-flopped to go to a second number. Because for the past 7 years they have been focused on one number and have said, "We can't do two numbers. We can't do two numbers." Now, yesterday, they say, "Oh, yeah, we want to do two numbers."

They argued against two numbers, because it will not be trusted by the American people, it will add tremendous confusion and it is the lawyers' dream. When every city, county and each census tract in this country sees two numbers, they are going to want the number that is best for them. If they do not get the best number, they are going to file suit. This is going to be tied up in the courts for years to come.

Every State's efforts to do redistricting, and this involves whether it is a city council, a county commission, a State legislature or the House of Representatives, if they use these manipulated numbers, that second census set of numbers, it is going to be thrown out, I feel quite confidently, by the court, but it is going to be tied up in the courts.

Why in the world are we wasting the time, the money and the effort to do that? Unless we really like to support trial lawyers to give them this area. In fact, at the Supreme Court hearing last November, Justice Scalia even raised the question, "Are we going to be creating a whole new area of law called census law?" I guarantee you we called we go with the two-number census.

What they are going to do is take that original set of numbers, the real count, and then they are going to take another sample, a sample of 300,000. This was attempted in 1990. It failed in 1990. Now, they want to take the failure of 1990 and say we are going to do that in the year 2000.

In 1990, when they tried to do it, what they did is did regions of the country. That is what they are proposing now again. Instead of using 750,000, where they are going to have a sample in each State as originally conceived, now they are going to have to group States together. So my home State of Florida, it is very likely, and we do not know yet, lumped in with Georgia, Mississippi Alabama and South Carolina.

They will get all these States together, and then they will use that