

or we can have a great concentration of wealth in a few hands, but we cannot have both.”

Today’s economic policies have shifted this great economy and the benefits of this great country and this economy to the wealthiest 1 percent, as today’s Wall Street Journal notes. When I look at this and think about what has happened to the middle class family, with increasing health care costs, college costs, retirement that is less secure, and jobs that pay less than they did just 3 years ago, I’m reminded, especially as I look at communities across this country, with police officers and police departments and fire departments that are under stress, schools that are closing, teachers that are being laid off, and libraries that are cutting hours, I’m reminded of when George Bush declared in 2000 that he was opposed to nation-building. Who knew it was America he was talking about.

Mr. Speaker, we have to return this economy and this country back to the people who built it and to the families and respect their values. The middle class and their values and their economic interests are under assault. It is time we turned this country around and focused our policies on the middle class and their families.

#### TAX SIMPLIFICATION AND REFORM WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is recognized during morning hour debates.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the rhetoric of class warfare has never worked, and it certainly is not going to work today, particularly when we see opportunities proceeding for Americans all over this country.

So rather than sit back and enjoy the historic success of the 2001 and 2003 tax measures this Republican majority has passed into law, which have accounted for opportunities, certainly for more than 1.3 million new jobs already this year, we have developed legislative proposals to address longstanding impediments to prosperity in this Nation.

Rather than simply looking for new taxes to reduce, we looked around for other friction heaped upon the free market by this government, and we came up with an eight-part strategy to increase the competitiveness of our economy for years to come: The 21st Century Careers Initiative.

We began to look at ways to make the health care system even more flexible and responsive to the needs of American consumers. We began the process of reforming the way that the Federal Government regulates small businesses in this country. We began a rethinking of the role of the government in lifelong learning programs, so that Americans never stop increasing their skills and their earning power. And this week we began what we hope

will be a long debate about the future of taxation in the United States.

While tax relief has been part of the Republican agenda for decades, the time has come for us to not simply lower taxes but to reform the way people are taxed in the first place. And so we come to the Tax Simplification and Reform Week on the House floor.

We will begin with consideration of two bills that begin to fix our Tax Code so that it will make more sense for Americans. One will increase the income limit to qualify for filing the form 1040-EZ income tax return for the first time in more than 20 years. The other will create the first-ever short-form tax return specifically for seniors.

Now, the debate about tax reform and simplification, like the other components of the career initiative, is not designed to score partisan points, but, instead, to move our economy past the artificial shackles of over taxation, over regulation, and over litigation, which keep the American people from enjoying the full benefits of their economic competitiveness.

This week, Mr. Speaker, we will take another step closer to a friction-free environment that our economy demands and our people deserve.

#### LAGGING WAGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, this weekend, we had more proof that middle- and low-income workers are still feeling the economic squeeze when it comes to making ends meet. Last Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that hourly earnings of production workers, non-management workers ranging from nurses and teachers to assembly-line workers, fell 1.1 percent last month. That is the steepest decline since the recession of 1991, and makes up the lowest level of weekly pay since October 2001.

While weekly pay is at its lowest levels in over a decade, middle- and lower-income workers are feeling the squeeze thanks to ever-increasing education, health care, and gas prices that are rising at rates much higher than the stagnant incomes.

Let us consider a middle-class nurse in my State of New Jersey whose income fell 1.1 percent last month. How can this nurse afford the average \$2,700 increase in health care premiums that New Jersey families face this year? How can this nurse and her family afford the \$1,600 increase in college tuition costs? How can this nurse afford the more than \$2,000 increase in child care costs? These increases would be difficult to keep up with if the nurse was actually receiving cost of living raises, however, it is impossible to meet with rising costs when you are actually seeing a cut in pay.

There is no doubt it is becoming more and more difficult for these middle-class families to make ends meet. You would think this disappointing news would concern President Bush. After all, he already has the dubious distinction as the only President since Herbert Hoover to lose jobs on his watch—1.8 million private sector jobs have been lost over the last 3 years thanks to the economic neglect of President Bush and Republicans here in Congress.

Instead of showing any concern, the President has said that our economy does not need boom or bust type growth. The President ought to tell that to the millions of families around America that are struggling to make ends meet.

The economic record of President Bush and the Republican House of Representatives has been an utter failure, and the President’s statement that an economic boom is not needed today shows he is clearly out of touch by the economic realities middle-class Americans presently face.

You do not have to take my word for it, Mr. Speaker, two members of the President’s own party have voiced concern about the economy and the President’s inability over the last 3 years to ease the economic concerns of both the unemployed and the middle class. Last week, Senator VOINOVICH from Ohio signaled his frustration with the Bush administration when he stated, and I want you to keep in mind this is a Republican Senator from Ohio I am quoting, “Despite these overwhelming problems facing our Nation’s manufacturers, I must say I have yet to see any significant action on behalf of the Bush administration to respond.”

Now, that is a member of the President’s own party admitting that the administration has not properly responded to the economic hardships many Americans now face. And, last week, another Republican Senator said the President’s economists gave him bad advice on the impact his tax cuts would have on the economy.

I am quoting Charles Grassley, the Republican chairman of the Senate committee that writes all the tax laws. He said, “U.S. President Bush should have been more skeptical about economic predictions regarding jobs created by tax cuts totaling \$1.7 trillion over 10 years.” Grassley continues: “His economists screwed up and Bush was not right in not questioning his economists.”

Now, again, that is a Republican Senator admitting that the tax cuts President Bush and Congressional Republicans have been touting as the answer to our Nation’s economic problems will not actually create jobs or help middle-class families.

It is nice that some within the Republican Party are finally realizing that their tax cuts for the wealthiest have not trickled down to the middle class. Maybe these statements from Republican senators will serve as a

wake-up call not only to President Bush but also to Republican leaders in Congress that our Nation needs a real economic stimulus plan.

You cannot actually fix a problem until you admit a problem. And, unfortunately, President Bush is still in denial that the economy needs fixing.

#### CLINTON NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER UNDER INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, in front of the grand edifice known as our National Archives, where this Nation's records and a good bit of its written history is kept, are these words: "What is past is prologue." And yet today, in the wake of last night's wire service and subsequent press reports, perhaps that should be amended to read, "What is past is purloined" or "What is secret is stolen."

Mr. Speaker, press accounts today indicate that former National Security Adviser Sandy Berger is the focus of a criminal investigation dealing with the theft of classified documents in the care of our National Archives. It seems that former National Security Adviser Berger, at the direction of former President Clinton, was sent to the National Archives to review documents that might be germane to the mission of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission examining the events of 9/11 and the security situation and intelligence situation which our country confronts.

Mr. Speaker, according to press accounts, former National Security Adviser Berger took copies of some documents. By some accounts he stuffed them into his pants, into his pants pockets, and he left the National Archives with secret material.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in a rather pathetic effort at defense, Mr. Berger's attorney said that his client's actions were inadvertent. I thank my colleague from Kansas for handing me the unabridged dictionary of the English language from which I will read today: "Inadvertent: Unintentional, not attentive, heedless of, pertaining to, or characterized by a lack of attention." Inadvertent.

That is curious. The former National Security Adviser inadvertently putting classified documents into his pockets; inadvertently leaving the archives with classified material? Oh yes, his legal counsel went on to say that our former National Security Adviser was sloppy. Sloppy? Inadvertent? No, Mr. Speaker, there was a purpose to what Mr. Berger did. What was Mr. Berger, Mr. Speaker, trying to keep from the American people and from the 9/11 Commission?

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, before any report is released, we should find out exactly what documents were taken and exactly what those docu-

ments indicated. This is not an inadvertent act. This is not an act of sloppiness. It is an act that is criminal, and it carries with it not only consequences for Mr. Berger, I daresay it carries with it, sadly, perhaps even deadly consequences for the United States.

It is not sloppiness that led to a lack of security. It is not an inadvertent act. There are purposes behind those who would attempt to shield the truth, and those purposes need to be determined and the American people need to be aware of what action was taken or what action was not taken by those who served in positions of trust, by those who purport to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

And, even at this time of year, where inevitably the call from the left will be that this is some effort to politicize what has transpired, Mr. Speaker, this is too important for politics. This is national survival.

No, what is past is prologue. And, Mr. Speaker, I pray it is not prologue to yet another attack.

#### ECONOMIC GOOD NEWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about how bad the economy is, but I want to tell my colleagues that there is a lot of good news out there about the economy. Since last August, we have created 1.5 million jobs. There are more new housing starts than ever before in the history of our Nation. More minorities are owning homes than ever before in the history of our Nation. More people today in America are working than ever before in the history of our Nation. The economy is strong. In fact, wages are at their highest point higher than ever before in the history of our Nation.

We have heard a lot of gloom and doom about how the President is not paying attention to the economy. Well, he has had a lot to overcome. In fact, in 1999, we had the tech bubble burst. The NASDAQ dropped by more than half its value. November 2000 the recession technically started, both before President Bush was sworn into office. Those were tremendous impacts on our economy. We had to overcome that. Then, on September 11, 2001, a fact many Democrats forget, our economy was dealt a severe blow. In fact, we lost hundreds of thousands of jobs across the Nation. In Wichita, Kansas, alone we lost 13,000 aerospace jobs following September 11, 2001.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have passed tax relief and it has strengthened our economy, but we can do much better than that. In fact, when we look at the barriers to bringing jobs into America, we see that it is not about wages, that it is not about overhead, it is not about something that CEOs or employees or

small business owners can control. Most of the barriers to bringing jobs into America were created right here on the floor of the House of Representatives over the last generation.

It started back in the 1960s, when we started piling regulation and more taxes on businesses and individuals. We started burying into the cost of building products regulations, trade policies, taxation, and medical costs. So now we have come up with a plan, the Republicans have come up with a plan to deal with these issues and help change the environment so we can bring jobs into America. In fact, we have been dealing with this for about 7 weeks.

We have broken the barriers into eight categories. Six of these categories we have confronted right here on the floor of the House, and we have passed 25 pieces of legislation. We started out with health care security. We passed legislation to help lower health care costs. Then we moved to bureaucratic red tape termination, and we passed legislation that would help cut the red tape in America and lower the cost of doing business. We then went on to lifelong learning, to prepare the workforce for the jobs we will be bringing back into America.

We then dealt with energy self-sufficiency and security. We should not be paying \$2 a gallon for gasoline when we have billions of barrels of oil on reserve, and when we have a bad economic policy where we cannot build a refinery even if we could get more oil in; or we cannot distribute it properly or bring down the cost of natural gas. So we addressed that bill during the energy self-sufficiency week with the energy bill.

We then moved on to spurring innovation through research and development so that we can continue the innovation that has been the real strength of this country over the years.

And last week we dealt with trade fairness and opportunity. We passed another free trade agreement with Australia. This week we are going to pass one with Morocco. And these are bringing down the barriers that keep us from bringing jobs into America.

So this week we are dealing with tax relief and simplification, a very important issue because our tax system buries cost into our products. U.S. corporate tax rates are the second highest in the industrialized world, after Japan. America's corporate tax rate is higher than even socialist welfare States, like France and Sweden. Our competitors, such as Germany and Russia, see the value in lowering their corporate tax burdens, and that is just what they are doing.

One study estimated that a 40 percent marginal corporate tax rate, including Federal and State taxes, has the effect of raising the cost of U.S. labor by \$1.43 an hour. So our employers are taking on these costs that they have no control over, but Congress does, and it is time we pass legislation