

the components of all the factions and all the dynamics that are going on in Iraq. Just think about our troops sitting in the middle of that and doing everything they are asked to do. We know from the report that Representative SHEA-PORTER referenced, and we know from the GAO reports. They confirm that our strategy is not working and that this conflict begs for a political solution, not a military one; though the United States can play a constructive role, and we will, and we have done so by providing, through high cost and blood and money, an opportunity to embrace a different way to the Iraqi people. We also know the toll that that country has, along the way, encountered.

Seventy-eight percent of Americans say they believe that the U.S. should withdraw some or all troops from Iraq. Sixty percent of Americans say the U.S. should set a timetable to withdraw our forces from Iraq and should "stick to that timetable regardless of what is going on in Iraq." That is not because we don't care. That is because we are looking at the evidence, and we are trying to make the responsible decision for our troops, for the safety of this country and for domestic policy.

At this point, I would like to turn it over to Representative SHEA-PORTER, and we will be wrapping up here in a few moments.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I would also like to point out that this really is a national security issue for the United States of America. General Peter Pace was asked if he was comfortable with the ability of our Nation to respond to an emerging world threat. He paused and he said, "No, I am not comfortable."

We have our troops bogged down in Iraq. We do have enemies around the world, no question about it, but our military is strained. We know that the troops could not stay at this pace past March anyway, so it is natural that the President would call to bring back some of the troops in March. It is not really progress. It is just acknowledging that we have to have them back. But here is the issue: If you know there is a burglar in your neighborhood, the first thing you do is you lock your own door. We didn't do that. We went to Iraq instead of locking our own door. We didn't even pass the 9/11 recommendations. The 110th Congress had to take care of that business. So, finally, we are going to be inspecting cargo from airplanes, and we are going to be inspecting cargo that comes from overseas, and we are going to inspect 100 percent of it after a period of time. That should have been done immediately. We should have beefed up homeland security, locked our doors, so to speak, and then worked with other nations to catch terrorists. They were ready.

On 9/12/01, we had the world's sympathy and empathy. They were ready to work with us to catch these horrible terrorists. Instead, we went to Iraq,

and now our brave troops are bogged down there. The Iraqis have suffered enough. It is time to bring them home responsibly and to start looking at building up our troop strength again so that we can respond to anyplace around the world that we might need to be.

Ms. SUTTON. Well said, Representative SHEA-PORTER.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to close and yield back the balance of our time.

REPUBLICAN FRESHMEN THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE 110TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, tonight we are having our third quarterly report to the 110th Congress. This is a quarterly report for the newly elected republican freshmen. We came here to solve problems. We came here to find partnerships. We came here to really, what we listened about during the campaign, to make America better. Tonight, I have a few freshmen joining with me.

The idea tonight is about accountability. What has gone on here in Congress? I think every time we do this quarterly report, I go and I check the Web sites. Again, today is a new record. Congress has the lowest approval rating, at 11 percent, that it has in the history of its taking a poll; lower than in the years of Watergate, lower than during the years when we were rationing and being held hostage in Iran, lower than the time of 1994 when the last time the parties switched powers here. Tonight is the night we talk about what has gone on, the accountability of what has happened here, and what has taken place.

To start us out tonight is a congresswoman from Minnesota, from St. Cloud, MICHELE BACHMANN. I yield to Mrs. BACHMANN.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from the great State of California, Congressman MCCARTHY. What a wonderful leadership role he is playing with our freshmen class.

It is true, Mr. Speaker, we are so grateful, as freshmen Members, to be here with new ideas and a new perspective. Part of that perspective is a positive outlook on life and a positive outlook on our country. One thing about Americans, Mr. Speaker, is we tend to be happy people, go-getter people, people that have ideas, innovation. We are entrepreneurs. We always look over the next hill. We always look for the next goal. We are forward-looking people.

One thing that I have been a little dismayed about in my time here in the Congress is I have heard so much negativity on the floor. As a matter of fact, in the previous Special Order, I was

amazed at the level of negativity that I heard. That is not representative of the American people. It certainly is not representative of the people of the Sixth District of the State of Minnesota. They are positive people that are looking, as we Republican freshmen are looking, at new ideas, at fresh perspectives.

I was so intrigued this weekend when I was home in my district, I had the chance to read the Sunday paper. I found an article in that paper that talked about the incredible progress we have made in recent years. So much of that has to do, Mr. Speaker, with a lot of the very good decisions that were made in the previous Congresses, particularly, Mr. Speaker, the tax cuts that were passed in 2001, 2003. I say that because I am a Federal tax litigation attorney. I hate high taxation. If you speak with most Americans, they also detest high levels of taxation. One thing that the Congress did so well was to reduce that level in 2001 and in 2003. The one thing we don't want to see happen is to have the country take a dramatic turn now under the Democrat controlled House of Representatives and embrace tax increases. This really concerns us because what we have seen so far is the Democrats are now embracing what, you know, the argument is, will it be the largest or the second largest tax increase in American history? Whatever, it is a very large tax increase. But what the other formula for success has brought about, Mr. Speaker, is prosperity.

□ 1730

Prosperity not just for those who are the high income earners, not even just the middle income earners. We have seen tremendous levels of prosperity, even for those who we would consider the poor among us, who government considers the poor among us, and if there is anyone who deserves help up, a hand up, it is the poorest among us.

In this article I read this weekend, it is really a scorecard of sorts on the Republicans and the great tax cuts that they put through this Congress, and it is very good news.

If you dig into the numbers, as this author writes, his name is Jason Lewis, he is a writer from the Twin Cities, and I want to quote from this article, he writes, "We now have a record number of Americans with health insurance."

I will tell you what. You would never know that, listening to people speak on the floor of this House. You would think everyone is destitute and no one has health insurance. We are at an all-time high in this country with the number of people that have health insurance.

The doom-and-gloom focus says that most of those people who do not have health insurance currently live in households with incomes that are in excess of \$50,000 a year. So even the people who don't have health insurance in the United States are making over \$50,000 a year. In fact, many of them

today are eligible for government healthcare programs. They have just simply decided or elected not to enroll in those programs.

The median household income, more good news is that adjusted for inflation, the median household income today has risen in 2006 to over \$48,451 nationwide, and in the Twin Cities in Minnesota, median household income today is at a robust \$62,223.

This is great news. We should be talking about this great news. And how did we get to this level of prosperity? It is because of the tax cuts that came in 2001 and 2003, and that great investment is now paying off.

Surprisingly, in August, the figures show the first significant drop in poverty in a decade. This is great news. Shout it from the housetop, which we are. This is the "big House." We are shouting it. The official rate declined from 12.6 percent in 2005 down to 12.3 percent. That is great. We want to reduce the level of poverty in the United States.

The Federal tax cuts of 2003 gave us an economy that added \$1.3 trillion in real output. We have grown more than 3 percent annually, according to Investors Business Daily.

Business spending, way up, adding 8 million new jobs to this economy. Real labor compensation per hour has rebounded, because now wages have advanced 3.9 percent from a year ago.

Those are statistics. But it really means things for American families. As a woman, as a wife, as a mother of five children, we have raised over 23 foster children, I will tell you what: When your wage goes up, that means you can afford to pay the light bill at the end of the month. You can afford to have groceries. You can take your kids and buy them the clothes that they need for school. You can pay for the field trips they have to go on. And you can pay for all the sports activities that they love to do after school.

These are real benefits, when government doesn't have that money, when normal real people have this money. That is what we want, to have all households have that money, and the poorest families are the ones that need to benefit even the most.

Mr. Speaker, even with the slight decline in job creation in August, the Nation's unemployment rate remained in record low territory of 4.6 percent. Great news. Great news for today.

Robert Rector also just came out for the Heritage Foundation, and he told us among the households considered poor in our country, of those households that we call poor, 46 percent of those households in America, almost half actually own their own home. That is something that we don't always understand, that almost half of all poor people in this country own a home. If you own a home, Mr. Speaker, that is your greatest down payment on the next generation and on wealth creation.

Most people that are considered poor by our government own a car. In fact,

of people considered poor, 31 percent of poor households own two or more cars. That is great, and we want to keep prosperity going for the poor.

Seventy-eight percent of those who are considered poor by the government have a DVD player or have a VCR player. In fact, 62 percent have cable or satellite TV. One-third of poor households have both cell phones and land line phones. And a stunning 80 percent have air conditioning. This is really good news, significant, because as recently as 1970, and I remember this, only 36 percent of all American households had air conditioning. My family wasn't one of those. So I am grateful that today 80 percent of the people that even the government considers poor today have air conditioning. This is great news that we have.

In fact, the study said that 89 percent of poor families themselves, and this is very important, say that they have enough food. Boy, if there is any measure of poor, it is, are you hungry? No one wants to see one child, one older person, anyone go hungry in this country. Eight-nine percent of people who themselves are categorized as poor say that that they have enough food. Only 2 percent of that category say that they don't.

That isn't to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are not serious problems for those who live below the poverty line. Trust me. The foster children that we took into our home, they were categorized in this category. There are needs aplenty for those who are below the poverty line. We need to address those needs.

That being said, there is good news out there. Let's celebrate the fact that Census Bureau figures don't even include when they categorize people that are poor the value of non-cash benefits. So if you are poor, the government doesn't even include the fact of the amount of money you receive in food stamps. They don't include the amount you receive in housing subsidies, in Medicaid, or even the Earned Income Tax Credit. That is to say, and this again is good news, that the gap between the poor and average households is even smaller than sometimes what it is stated to be.

That being said, we are now at a juncture, Mr. Speaker, when we are looking at a turn. I know my colleagues that are also going to be speaking in the freshman class are going to be talking about this turn.

I will end on this note, because I gave a lot of great news. The negative news that we are looking at is that so far in this Congress, the Democrat majority in the House has passed their budget, and their budget included, again, the largest, or however you want to parse it, the second largest tax increase in American history. I just want to say that for the people of my district and the people for your district, they will probably have to be paying an additional \$3,000 a year for every average American family, and that will nega-

tively impact the poorest among us the most.

So we have two choices in front of us: Do we want to continue with lower taxes and prosperity, where the poorest among us have seen actually tangible benefits? Or do we want to take the route that the Democrats have proposed, and increase taxes knowingly \$3,000 a year on my family, on your family, on families in our districts? I can't abide by that, especially for the low-income families in my district.

With that, I say let's do what our founders would want us to do, and that is to embrace hope, prosperity, new ideas and a fresh perspective.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back to the kind gentleman from California, Congressman MCCARTHY.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman BACHMANN for her talk. You can see from her enthusiasm, you can see from being a mother of 23 foster children, that she brings hope, not only to America, but to Congress. She brings a problem-solving idea, trying to find some commonsense ways actually to make change here. We are so proud to have you here.

As I said, this is the third quarterly report put on by the freshmen Republicans on accountability of what has gone on here in Congress. We want to bring it back to your house, Mr. Speaker, to let people know what has gone on on this floor.

There is a reason why America has lost faith in their Congress. The approval rating is now at 11 percent, the lowest in the history of any poll on the approval rating of what has gone on in Congress. So tonight we want to talk about what has happened here. But we want to also talk about our future and how we can make things better, how we can find common ground, how we can actually bring hope back to America and have real change.

Tonight I have the honor of introducing one of the superstars in the freshman class. He comes from the Sixth District of Illinois, Congressman PETER ROSKAM from Wheaton, Illinois. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate Congressman MCCARTHY's leadership this afternoon and this evening, this opportunity to have a conversation and really to reflect on what it is that we have been sent here to do. I know that I and my colleagues that join me here on the floor, Mr. Speaker, are people that came here as problem solvers. We didn't come here to fight partisan fights. We didn't come here to have sharp elbows. We didn't come here to call people names. But we came here to try to get something done.

We represent districts that are really commonsense districts, that have a high expectation of this process. I know that all of us who are on the floor today, we don't celebrate in the very low view that the American public has

of the Congress under this current leadership. We don't celebrate in that at all. In fact, we mourn that in many ways, because there has been a real lack of leadership and a lack of an opportunity.

I think whenever you have conversations about how you are doing so far, and this is our third quarterly report that the Republican freshmen are participating in, it is always in the context of looking at what the expectations were as the 2006 elections came about. What was it that people said, that the American people trusted in, that the American people believed in, that the American people cast their votes for? What was it, that rhetoric that called people forth?

I think we don't have to go very far to really look at the rhetoric from the 2006 campaign and look at the comparison to the accomplishments in 2007, and you can see why 89 percent of the American public says, "that's not what I voted for." So let's kind of refresh our memories.

First off was that we were going to be a very hard-working Congress. The 109th Congress, we were told, was essentially lazy and wasn't accomplishing anything. That was the characterization of the previous Congress under the previous leadership. In fact, we were told that during the next year, Members of the House will be expected in the Capitol for votes each week by 6:30 p.m., and will finish their business by about 2 p.m. on Fridays, we were told by then Minority Whip HOYER.

Well, as it has come into fruition, here we are, it is 5:40 p.m. in Washington, D.C. There is plenty of time for us to be doing substantive work, amending bills, debating bills, considering things. We could all be in committees. And yet the House is quiet today, and here we have this time to be reflecting on what the performance has been.

I regret that. My sense is that we are here to work, and we are willing to work, and we are anxious to work. Yet the way that the majority has structured the calendar, there is simply too much time. Of the 21 weeks in session, only six have included five full days of work. That is according to the official website of the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Or, we were told that the Members of the House would have at least 24 hours to examine a bill and a conference report text prior to floor consideration. That is what the gentlewoman from California, Ms. PELOSI, said in her publication, "A New Direction For America." She also said, and it was reported in the Washington Post, that she would insist that bills be made available to the public at least 24 hours before they would be voted on by the full House. Yet the reality, Mr. Speaker, is far different than that.

You know, it is one thing to not make a big deal about something in a campaign and then follow through and you keep things the way they are. But

it is an entirely different situation to create this overarching sense of expectation, to create this sort of nirvana invitation, to come to this new 110th Congress where everything is fantastic, and you are just going to love serving here.

Yet the harsh reality is this: The following bills did not enjoy that generous 24 hours notice: The following bills are H.R. 1, the very first bill of this new Congress. H.R. 1 did not enjoy a 24 hour notice period.

Now, let's think about it. Is 24 hour notice the biggest deal in the world? No, frankly, it is not. It is not the biggest deal in the world. There is a little bit of process argument to it and there is a little bit of inside baseball feel to it.

□ 1745

But the point is the current majority leadership created the expectation that 24-hour notice was going to be the standard. So here are just a few things: H.R. 1, H.R. 2, H.R. 3, H.R. 4, all of the first bills, no 24-hour notice. H. Res. 35, the intelligence oversight authority, not the ability to have 24-hour notice. H. Res. 296, H. Con. Res. 63, and on and on and on, no 24-hour notice.

Or we were told by Mrs. PELOSI in the last election cycle, she is quoted as saying, "Rules governing floor debate must be reported before 10 p.m. for a bill to be considered the following day." That sounds great. But the problem, you see, is that the Democrat majority leadership hasn't followed through on that.

According to this report which was put together fairly quickly, nine bills with the twinkling of an eye haven't enjoyed that notice.

As we are moving forward and considering this, my district is sort of interested in the process, Mr. Speaker, but they are really interested in the substance of this Congress. This is a group that is now in the leadership and now in the majority that made very clear promises about what, fiscal discipline and fiscal responsibility. And those are things that deeply resonate in the district I represent.

This is what Mrs. PELOSI said. She said, "Democrats are committed to ending years of irresponsible budget policies that have produced historic benefits."

Additionally, she said, "We will work to lead the House of Representatives with a commitment to integrity, to civility, and to fiscal responsibility." That sounds fantastic.

You go door to door in the Sixth Congressional District in Illinois, you go door to door in Mrs. BACHMANN's district, you go door to door in Mr. MCCARTHY's district in California, and you say I am going to stand for fiscal responsibility, and they say, hip hip hurray, go to Congress. You go do the right thing.

But where the breakdown has happened or the disconnect has happened is when people say, hey, I voted for fis-

cal responsibility. I voted for fiscal discipline. That's how I cast my vote last November. And now they come into the third quarter of this year and all of a sudden they realize that is not happening. That is not even close to happening. Oh, they are spending money like there is no tomorrow. That is how this majority has approached the budget situation.

Do you remember the conversation we had on the earmark process on this House floor, Mr. Speaker? Earmarks are those abilities to sort of put a little Post-it note in an appropriations bill, and the note says this money is going to be spent on this particular program in this particular way.

There are some people who say all earmarks are bad. I don't necessarily think that is true, but I think all earmarks should be transparent. People should have the ability to look at the Federal budget, people should have the ability to look at the appropriations bills and look at the work of Congress and say, who is behind that spending item, what is motivating that person, and where is it going.

Well, what we were told is that these earmarks would be transparent. In fact, we were told throughout the course of the 2006 campaign what the Democratic leadership wanted to do was completely transcend the earmark process and open it up to sunshine and goodness and light. But the reality was much different than that.

The reality was it was the Republican minority in this Chamber that had to fight tooth and nail on this floor to drive the appropriations process open so that earmarks were transparent because the way it was originally set up was that we were told that all we could do was simply write a letter if we had an objection to an earmark to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee. That is simply not good enough.

So as we are reflecting today and looking about at what is it, how is it that an institution that is to be celebrated, an institution that is to be admired, an institution that is to be respected, is now down at an approval rating at an all-time low? I regret that. I am sad about that. I don't celebrate in that.

I think what has happened is the American people have come to the conclusion that the rhetoric of the Democrat majority, the rhetoric of the leadership of the Democratic Party, the rhetoric of the last campaign simply doesn't match with the reality of what they are seeing in Congress. And so the promise to make this the most ethical group in history hasn't come to fruition. The promise to be fiscally disciplined has not come to fruition. The promise to make this process open and accessible to all hasn't come to fruition.

I think that, Mr. Speaker, in large part is why we are now at this historic low of 11 percent. I think we can do better. I think there are some of us

who are on the floor this afternoon and evening who want to be problem solvers. There are some of us who want to get things done. There are some of us who understand that living within our means means making fundamental choices and decisions.

We were elected as leaders, and yet sometimes there is a temptation, which I sense on the majority side that they simply want to kick the can down the lane and have another Congress make the tough decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I was sent here to make tough choices and I stand ready with these good colleagues. We are here calling balls and strikes. We don't come in as harsh critics of everything. We are not simply here about donkeys and elephants necessarily, but we are here talking about those things that ought to bring us together as Americans, and that is the ability to work together towards solutions, to make the tough choices now and not defer them to future generations.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman PETER ROSKAM. He makes a good point that you may campaign as a Republican or a Democrat, but when you come here, you should come to the issues as Americans. That is how we come to you tonight, looking for common ground, and the place where we can actually solve problems. That is what we campaigned on and made a promise to do, and that is why we are before you.

Just as when you are back home sitting at your table with your children, and I have mine, Connor, 13, and Megan, 11. I look for their report cards. I look at their grades. Tonight we are going to talk about Congress's grades.

The next speaker we have tonight is an individual from Ohio. He was a State senator, kind of a star there as well as on match, a wrestler, an NCAA champion. And currently, he is serving on Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform, and Small Business. He is also looking out after us when it comes to the budget.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Let me thank the gentleman from California for putting this together. I appreciate the chance to be with you and some of my colleagues from the freshman class.

I particularly want to reference the tone that the gentlewoman from Minnesota brought to the discussion this evening. She talked about the optimistic can-do spirit that has always been a part of this country and that is alive and well today. Frankly, we are going to need that spirit when we confront the challenges that we face.

I call it the David attitude. You may remember the old story from Scripture. When the Israelites were camped against the Philistines, and every day the Philistine giant would walk out and issue the challenge. He would ask: Who will fight Goliath?

The Israelites' response was: He is so big, we can never defeat him. But David's response was: He is so big, I can't miss.

That is the attitude we need to confront the challenges we face. You think about the challenges that America faces today, unprecedented in our Nation's history.

First, we have the terrorist threat as real and serious as it gets. We have this debate in our culture over whose set of values are going to win. There is a core set of principles, a traditional set of American values that made this Nation special. We should not be afraid to defend and protect and promote those principles and values.

But the challenge I want to focus on tonight is fiscal discipline. This is so, so important. Many of us have been back home over the last 6 weeks talking to all kinds of folks across our congressional districts. Many times what I do when I am speaking in front of a group, I say, you all may find this a surprise, but the Federal Government spends a lot of money. Everyone starts to laugh. And I say, they spend a heck of a lot of money.

The Federal Government spends \$23,000 per household per year. We have an \$8 trillion national debt. We have spending that is out of control. If we don't get a handle on that, what we are going to do to future generations is going to be difficult and it is going to make it tough for us as a Nation to continue to be number one economically.

I like to remind folks that the way the world works today, the economic superpower is also the leader in the military area. The economic superpower is the military superpower. Right now that is the United States of America, and I believe the world is safer because of that fact. We want America to lead diplomatically, we want America to lead militarily, and we want America to lead economically. It is important we do that. When America leads, the world is a safer and better place. And we want to make sure that continues.

In order for that to continue, we have to get spending under control. Over the course of the budget process, the budget that the majority party brought forward would in essence raise taxes over the next several years over \$200 billion. When they look at scaling back the good tax cuts that were put in place back in 2001 and 2003, that have helped our economy respond to some of the hardships we faced after the 9/11 attacks and the recession that followed, we need to make sure that we get spending under control.

We always hear about tax-and-spend elected officials, tax-and-spend politicians. In fact, I would argue it is the opposite. It is spend and tax. Spending always drives the equation. We have to get spending under control.

In the appropriations process that we went through this summer, 12 different spending bills that finance the government over the course of the fiscal year, of those 12 bills, nine are nondefense. To those nine bills we offered a series of amendments that would have held

spending at last year's level. It wouldn't have been a cut. It would have simply said to the government, the government that already spends \$23,000 per household, it would have simply said: We want the government to spend what we spent last year. After all, all kinds of families have to do that, and all kinds of taxpayers have to do that, and all kinds of businesses have to do it from time to time. Why can't the Federal Government do the same thing?

Yet we heard from the majority party we can't do that. If we would simply spend what we spent last year, the sky would fall. The world would end. We have to have more of the taxpayers' money. That is the argument we heard. But it was not a cut; it was simply level spending. If we would have been able to do that, we would have saved taxpayers \$20 billion and helped to begin to put us on a path to deal with the financial problems that will come if we continue to deficit spend.

Don't take my word for it. A former governor on the Federal Reserve Board, Dr. Edward Gramlich, said this: "Budget deficits lead to less economic growth and a lower level of economic activity than would otherwise be the case."

Mr. Walker, the comptroller general said, "Today, we are failing in one of our most important stewardship duties: our duty to pass on a country better positioned to deal with the challenges of the future than the one we were given."

One of our fundamental challenges as people elected to public office is to make sure that the next generation has it better than we did. If you think about what has really allowed America to grow and prosper, we are the greatest country in the world for all kinds of reasons and all kinds of policies that we have, but in the end it is that parents have been willing to sacrifice so that their kids can have life a little better than they did. That kind of philosophy should be present in how we run the United States Congress and how we run government and how we spend taxpayer dollars.

Unfortunately, those amendments weren't passed and we were not able to save over \$20 billion to help to begin to put us on a path towards greater fiscal responsibility. It is important that we do that, and it is important that we do it for the future of Americans. But we are going to get there.

The gentlewoman from Minnesota is right; Americans always figure out a way to address the obstacles and hurdles that are in front of us, and we will figure out a way to do this. We just need to keep talking about it and stay diligent. If we do that, we will put our country on the path that it needs to be fiscally so we continue to be that leader economically, militarily and diplomatically.

I appreciate what the gentleman from California is doing in helping to lead our freshman class and thank him for a chance to be a part of this hour this evening.

□ 1800

I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio because he is right. Many people talk about the tax and spend, but really it is the spending that drives it. Just from last year, with the bills that were passed on this floor with the largest tax increase in American history, they increased spending by 9 percent. A lot of people ask out there: What was the spending on? How did you go about doing it? I think that is what we are going to talk about tonight.

Before I get to our next speaker, I just want to show a couple of little slides here about where we are going. First, you see the promise that was made, that the gentleman from Illinois talked about, what Speaker PELOSI had said: "Democrats are ready to lead, prepared to govern, and determined to make you proud."

Today, we sit at an 11 percent approval rating of this new majority. That is the lowest in the history that they have ever taken the poll. Lower than in the years of Watergate. Lower than when we had to ration gasoline during the years of President Jimmy Carter. Lower than in 1994 when the public decided after 40 years they wanted to change the majority here and put the Republicans in charge. It is now at the lowest level.

Why? And why is that spending taking place? I want to tell you an example, and I actually saw this on the news the other day, and I credit the news, Mr. Speaker, and CBS doing a story on this. What are we spending our money on? You sit around that table and you decide where you put your money away and where you go to save. Let me tell you a little story. It happened right here on this floor.

I was sitting down here and I was watching, and one of those spending bills, the Health and Human Services, there was \$2 million put in. You say was it put in for education? Was it put in to make America greater? It was put in by a Member, Mr. Speaker, to name a library after himself. Two million dollars was spent. What did it say with-in here that it needed to be? You needed \$2 million for the new Rangel Conference Center, a well-furnished office for CHARLES RANGEL and the Charles Rangel Library. In the brochure, when you look at this library for a college that the library is not even there yet, it will say it will be as nice as President Clinton and as nice as President Jimmy Carter. Well, those libraries were funded by private funds. Those people were Presidents.

Now, what do you say? Maybe this is something that every chairman of Ways and Means would do. It just so happens the Member that served and represented Kern County, where I represent, was chairman of Ways and Means just a year ago. What did he do with his papers? He didn't name a library after himself. He took his papers to the junior college, Bakersfield Junior College, and gave them to them, where the kids can go and look and read.

Well, you know what happened? Just like Mr. JORDAN had said, there were many amendments on this floor, many amendments by this freshman Republican class that said we want to get spending under control. There was an amendment by a Congressman from California, JOHN CAMPBELL, Mr. Speaker, that wanted to take that \$2 million out. He thought that wasn't the best way to go about it. Much as the Congressman from Illinois said, earmarks. This is what an earmark is all about.

Well, just behold, the Congressman that had put this in, Mr. Speaker, Mr. RANGEL, came to this floor. He said he was proud of this. One of the Congressmen asked him: "Well, if it's going to name it after yourself, should we name one after ourselves?" He said: "No, they don't deserve it. They haven't been here long enough."

Mr. Speaker, this is the monument to me, but it is the monument to me paid by taxpayers. It is a monument to me, where not even the college asked to name it after him. He asked to name it after himself.

I am proud to tell you that all 13 freshmen Republicans voted for the amendment to strike out this earmark, to stop this type of activity. This is why we ran, this is what we said we would do, and this is not what the Democrats in the majority party said they would do when they were in control.

This is what has got to stop. This is why spending is 9.3 percent higher, and it's paid by taxpayers' money. I don't think the Members across this country wanted this to take place, I don't believe this person was the President of the United States, and I think individuals that are chairmen of Ways and Means ought to look for the path of what Congressman Bill Thomas did when he was chairman of Ways and Means, he gave his papers to a junior college. He didn't put \$2 millions in to have nice furniture and an office and a librarian, to be as nice as the presidential libraries are.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we have some more Members with us tonight. We have an individual from Tennessee, the First District of Tennessee. He served in the legislature back there. You may recognize him. He is on the floor quite often talking about bringing America back, finding solutions here.

I yield to Congressman DAVID DAVIS.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. I thank my friend from California. Thank you for your leadership tonight. Thank you for pointing out some of our spending and taxing waste. I would like to thank my colleagues that have spoken before me tonight.

I have been absolutely pleased with the group of freshmen Republicans that I came in with, a group of men and women that are very honorable, willing to work hard and do the right things. Thank you so much for serving with me in Washington.

I look back at one of my favorite Presidents, a President that was en-

joyed by Republicans, conservative Democrats, independents, and that President was Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan once said, "We don't have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough. We have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much." It goes right back to what we have been saying, spending then taxing.

There are many people sitting around their kitchen tables around America tonight trying to decide just how they are going to put their budget together, how they are going to make their car payment, how they are going to send Junior to school, Sissy to school, how they are going to pay for their health insurance. Those families are having to make hard decisions. The Government, this Congress could learn from those Americans sitting around kitchen tables.

I did come from the mountains of east Tennessee. Those people back in the mountains of east Tennessee have a lot of common sense. They have enough common sense to know that you can't spend more than you take in, and you can't tax people to death and expect success. That is exactly what this Congress is doing.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the President's program of comprehensive tax reforms, President Bush's tax reforms and the congressional Republicans when they were in charge, those tax reliefs were well-timed to respond to a weak economy. My colleagues have spoken about it. We had terrorist attacks. We have had natural disasters.

That tax relief enacted in 2001 granted immediate tax rebates, reduced marginal tax rates, and lowered the marriage tax penalty. It actually allowed Americans to keep more of their money in their pocket so moms and dads can take care of their families.

My wife and I have two children. We fundamentally believe that we can take care of our children better than some bureaucrat in Washington, D.C. I think it's just common sense. I think there are many people across America, it doesn't matter what party you're part of, it doesn't matter if you're Republican, Democrat or independent, I have just got to feel that you believe you can spend your money better than Washington can as well.

Then, to go on, the tax relief of 2003 accelerated the much-anticipated and successful tax cuts of 2001. Those tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 actually strengthened our economy. The Republican tax relief has seen nearly 4 straight years of economic growth, while adding 7.5 million new jobs into our economy. That is the success that MICHELE BACHMANN spoke about.

Things are going very well, and I am glad to see that. The Congressional Budget Office confirmed that the tax cuts of 2003 helped boost Federal revenues by 68 percent. Again, it's not partisan. It works every time. When Democrat John F. Kennedy cut taxes, the tax increase into the Federal Government increased. The economy got

stronger. It happened when Reagan did it, and it happened when Bush did it. It is not partisan, it is just fact.

We must make the successful tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 permanent. If they are not made permanent, which I am convinced that this new hold-on-to-your-wallet Congress is not interested in doing, here's what will happen: 84 million women will see their taxes increase by \$1,970. If you're female and you're listening to me, this Congress is going to raise your taxes by \$1,970. Forty-eight million married couples will see their taxes increase by \$2,726. Forty-two million families with children would see their tax bill go up \$2,084. Twenty-six million small business owners would see a devastating \$3,637 tax increase, the very small businesses that are creating the jobs in the economy. Five million low-income individuals and couples will no longer be exempt from individual income taxes.

We must make the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts permanent. Unfortunately, I am convinced that we will not see those tax cuts made permanent under the spending I see going on on the floor of this House. When we see those tax cuts start to be repealed, we are going to start to see the economic growth actually come to an end.

Washington Democrats have passed a fiscal blueprint that raises taxes by almost \$400 billion on millions of Americans in one fell swoop. As part of their ill-gotten budget, taxpayers in Tennessee will not be allowed to deduct their sales tax from their Federal income tax. Taxes on small businesses, as I said earlier, will go up. The child tax credit will decrease from \$1,000 to \$500. The marriage penalty is coming back.

Residents of the First Congressional District in Tennessee's average tax expense is going up over \$2,000. The definition of a small business will decrease from \$400,000 to \$200,000. Dividends will no longer be taxed at the personal gains rate, thereby increasing the double taxation on dividends by as much as 62 percent.

People all across America voted for change, but they are not getting the change that they wanted in the last election. Over the last quarter there were a couple of bills we have talked about and passed on this floor without my vote, and one of them was the energy bill. The energy bill that we passed had plenty of taxes, very little energy.

The Democrat majority in the energy bill actually decided to tax American oil producers at the level of 16 billion extra dollars. American oil producers. If we take the ability for American oil producers to produce oil, it makes us more dependent on foreign oil, on countries that hate us and hate our freedoms. I think that is the wrong direction for America. I don't think that is the change that the American people voted for.

Then we had the SCHIP bill. It sounds good, giving poor children health care. We all certainly want to

do that. I am for continuing the program at its current level. But at the level that passed on this floor, the Heritage Institute said it will take 22 million new smokers to pay for the bill. Now, is there anyone in America that wants to see 22 million new children have to take up the habit of smoking to pay for a health care bill?

In addition to that, they decided that wouldn't be enough to pay for it so they actually added a tax on your health insurance premiums. So if you buy your own health insurance, your taxes will go up.

We have a choice between a bigger economy or bigger government. The majority party has made a choice. They are for bigger government. Congress has an approval rating down now to 11 percent, and I can certainly understand why we have such a low rating. We need to hold the line on spending, reduce earmarks, pass a line-item veto and crack down on worthless pork-barrel projects and be good stewards of the taxpayer.

Remember, Ronald Reagan once said: "We don't have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough. We have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much." I think we need to start running Congress like the American family has to run their household budget.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. I want to thank the Congressman from Tennessee, Congressman DAVID DAVIS. I appreciate your talk directed to the people back home, telling them we should run Congress much like you run your house. It is not being done today.

As we heard earlier from the Congressman from Ohio about the spending, we heard from Congresswoman MICHELE BACHMANN from Minnesota, we have found that we are not talking about hope here, we are talking about the largest tax increase in American history, because that is what has gone on on this floor, and we want to make a real change about it.

I now have another freshman who is joining us. He comes from Colorado, Colorado Springs, the home of the Air Force Academy, Congressman DOUG LAMBORN.

Mr. LAMBORN. I thank the gentleman from California.

It's a pleasure to be here with my fellow Republican colleagues as we talk about fiscal responsibility. I rise today with new poll numbers in hand regarding the performance in Congress under the Democratic majority. According to a Reuter's/Zobgy poll released earlier today, a measly 11 percent of Americans approve of the job Congress is doing. The American public is disappointed with their government, and understandably so.

When the Democrats took charge in January, they promised to usher in an age of fiscal responsibility. Instead, they propose to hit 115 million American families with new tax increases totaling \$392.5 billion. That is almost \$400 billion.

In addition, the Democratic Congress has also fallen short on their promise to enact serious earmark reform. As a result, wasteful earmark spending continues to be a problem. This is evident by Democrat Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL's \$2 million earmark to pay for a building to be named in his honor. You heard some about that earlier. Ninety-seven percent of Democrats, who only a year ago told the American people they would restore responsibility to government, voted in favor of this self-glorifying measure at the taxpayers' expense.

In a time, Mr. Speaker, when the Federal Government faces an \$8.8 trillion national debt, this Congress must demonstrate to the American people that we can be fiscally disciplined and that we can spend their hard-earned tax dollars responsibly.

I am proud to say that Republicans have been leading the fight for this in the 110th Congress. Increasing the size of the budget and allowing earmarks to go unchecked will not reduce the deficit. I look forward to continuing my work on this effort with my Republican colleagues as we attempt to restore sanity upon the out-of-control spending practices of the Democratic majority.

□ 1815

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would yield back to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. I thank the gentleman from Colorado, and I appreciate his opportunity to come down and talk with us.

As I said earlier, as we talked about the accountability of what has gone on on this floor and we said, why has spending increased by 9.3 percent from last year? And we talked about the majority here and how they have had the "Monument to Me," where they put \$2 million in to name a library after themselves.

When you talk about earmarks, when you talk about transparency, this is what we are talking about. We can find ways that we can eliminate waste, fraud and abuse. That is what the American people want to have happen here. I don't believe the taxpayers of America think Members of Congress deserve \$2 million libraries with well-furnished offices and a library for your papers and memorabilia, that taxpayers should be spending their money on that. I think we should be spending their money in the classroom teaching our kids to read and write English. That is what we should be spending our money on.

But I will tell you, we have another Member, a brand new Member of the freshman class. Unfortunately, there was a death after the election by Congressman Charlie Norwood in Georgia, and that special election has taken place and we have a new Member to join with us tonight. He actually has some late-breaking news that he wants to share with us, so I would like to introduce and yield what time he desires

to Congressman PAUL BROWN, representing Augusta and Athens.

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. I would like to thank Congressman MCCARTHY for yielding me time to speak on the floor this afternoon.

This afternoon, it was reported that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sought permission from the City of New York and the United States Secret Service to visit Ground Zero, the site of the September 11 attacks. This is an outrage, that this person would request to go to the place that he and his terrorist brethren have caused such destruction in this country.

President Ahmadinejad is coming to the United Nations as the representative of a country, Iran, that the State Department has declared the "world's most active state sponsor of terrorism." His presence at Ground Zero would represent a slap in the face not only to those who were lost in the attacks on September 11, 2001, and to their families, but to all Americans.

Make no mistake about it, Iran is a rogue nation that views America and the Americans as their enemy. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker just spent a significant amount of their time recently here on the Hill detailing the Iranian efforts to come against our troops and kill our boys and ladies in Iraq. To allow Ahmadinejad to abuse his status as a diplomat to visit this site would send a signal that we fail to take the threat that he and his country bring to this Nation and to our people in a serious manner.

What kind of man is Ahmadinejad? Please let me read you some of the public policy positions as compiled by the Jerusalem Post.

He denies the Holocaust. "We ask the West to remove what they created 60 years ago; and if they do not listen to our recommendations, then the Palestinian nation and other nations will eventually do this for them."

"The real Holocaust is what is happening in Palestine, where the Zionists avail themselves of the fairy tale of Holocaust as blackmail and justification for killing children and women and making innocent people homeless."

"The West claims that more than 6 million Jews were killed in World War II, and to compensate for that they established and support Israel. If it is true that the Jews were killed in Europe, why should Israel be established in the East, in Palestine?"

"If you have burned the Jews, why don't you give a piece of Europe, the United States, Canada, or Alaska to Israel? My question is, if you have committed this huge crime, why should the innocent nation of Palestine pay for this crime?"

His quotes about threats against Israel: "Anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation's fury."

"Remove Israel before it is too late, and save yourself from the fury of regional nations."

"The skirmishes in the occupied land are part of a war of destiny. The outcome of hundreds of years of war will be defined in Palestinian land. As the Imam said, Israel must be wiped off the map."

"If the West does not support Israel, this regime will be toppled. As it has lost its *raison d'être*, Israel will be annihilated."

"Israel is a tyrannical regime that will one day be destroyed."

"Israel is a rotten, dried tree that will be annihilated in one storm."

Late this afternoon, this very afternoon, the New York Police Department indicated that they would not issue a permit to Ahmadinejad. I hope they stand firm on this decision, and I applaud that decision. However, we should go one step further. This despotic, Holocaust denying madman should not be allowed in this country. I call upon the State Department and the President to do the right thing; refuse Ahmadinejad an entry visa.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. I thank the Congressman from Georgia bringing forward exactly what is going on right now in America.

I would like to, as we have a few moments left, turn back to Congressman PETER ROSKAM from Illinois and yield him the time that he desires.

Mr. ROSKAM. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think one of the things that is upon us is this time, Mr. Speaker, that we are in as a country right now and we are really in, essentially, a time of choosing. And there are great weighty issues that are before us as a Nation. There are great challenges that we face today, and yet this Congress is not taking up those challenges. Let me give you an example.

Today, we have the free market. That is something to be celebrated and something to be heralded and something to be defended, because the free market has brought about more prosperity for this country, for more people than the world has ever known. Yet, in many ways, the free market is under attack. And so this Congress, if it chose to, could stand up and defend the free market and celebrate the free market and say we are going to stand by the free market. But, no, actually there has been an attitude that has crept into this Congress that says, no, no, no, the free market is something that brings people down. The free market is something that is to bring suspicion on people and ought not to be celebrated.

Or, that other thing that we are dealing with, and that is that notion of energy independence. This Congress, if it chose to, could come together in a bipartisan way and create the environment where we strive towards energy independence, where we are not dependent on a complicated and difficult part of the world, Mr. Speaker, and that is the Middle East; where we are not dependent on them for our economic vitality and, ironically, for our

national security; where we are not funding in many ways indirectly the very people that do us harm. This is the time of choosing.

I think that the reason that we are seeing that this leadership is at an 11 percent figure, and that is almost hard to do if you think about it, to have almost 9 out of 10 people disapproving of you, is because they have squandered this opportunity to deal seriously with these issues.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. I thank the Congressman from Illinois, Mr. PETER ROSKAM, and all those who have joined with us tonight.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, before I begin, some of you may have noticed that I have a different haircut. This past August, I kept a promise to my local American Cancer Society chapter that I would shave my head if they met their fundraising goal.

My promise was grounded in an effort to bring greater awareness to the American Cancer Society's work on finding a cure for a disease that some estimates show will claim more than 559,000 lives in 2007.

The statistics on cancer are mind numbing. Cancer strikes one out of two men and one out of three women, killing 1,500 people every day.

Having been at the front lines of cancer research and services for more than half a century, the American Cancer Society remains a pillar of hope for millions of Americans facing this dreadful disease.

I encourage my colleagues to get out there and support the work of organizations like the American Cancer Society. The war against cancer is a war we must, and can win—but only together.

Well, it has been more than 9 months since the 110th Congress convened under the leadership of Democrats who promised the American people many things, but have since failed to deliver on many of their commitments. This is most evident in recent approval ratings of this Democrat-run Congress, which have reached historic lows.

These numbers say everything about the failed promises of this majority. During the 2006 campaign, the Democrats pledged to rein in spending, yet their budget proposal contains more than \$217 billion in tax increases, representing the second largest tax increase in American history, and proposes spending \$23 billion above the amount proposed in the President's budget blueprint.

This is not the kind of reform promised by the new Democrat majority; rather, it is very reminiscent of the old Democrat majority that took more money out of the American taxpayers' wallets, while creating new wasteful spending and sprawling government programs.

Now, if the numbers are too much to bear, perhaps we can look at a particular issue of great concern to my constituents, my fellow Floridians, and residents of disaster-prone regions throughout the United States. That is the outrageous cost of homeowners' insurance.

Our national economy, and the quality of life for many Americans is severely burdened by the fact that disaster-prone areas, like Florida, continue to suffer from an insurance market that has overblown its rates and refused to take the necessary risk to ensure that every homeowner has access to affordable, quality homeowners' insurance.

Earlier this week, my Democrat colleagues took to the House floor to proclaim their outrage over the troubles homeowners are currently facing throughout the United States as a result of the tanking subprime mortgage market.

I want you to know that the concern of this body should focus on these same homeowners, in addition to the millions of homeowners who can pay their mortgage, yet are not adequately insured. This disparity is a tragedy of equal or greater measure.

You see, faced with increasingly expensive and limited insurance options, Florida embodies the kinds of problems plaguing homeowners in high-risk areas across the country.

Owning a home is fundamental to the "American Dream." It should not be an insurmountable burden. Sadly though, such a possibility is slowly eroding under unbelievably high homeowners' insurance.

As we speak this week about improving the opportunities for existing and future homeowners, we must not forget the next catastrophe is just around the corner for millions of American homeowners. This catastrophe is not limited to the prospect of home foreclosures, but also hurricanes, flooding and other disasters both man-made and natural.

If the American homeowner cannot adequately protect themselves from these dangers, then they are just as vulnerable to losing their homes as those who are facing the subprime credit debacle.

I recently introduced legislation that would allow Gulf Coast States to pool their resources and jointly coordinate responses and preparation for major disasters. The Gulf Coast All-Hazard Readiness Act would allow the Gulf Coast States to form an interstate compact to mitigate, respond to and recover from major natural disasters.

Additionally, I have cosigned important legislation that would remedy the skyrocketing cost of homeowners' insurance in disaster-prone regions of the country. These bills, H.R. 91 and H.R. 330, will go a long way to addressing a problem that is only getting worse.

I implore this body to act, and for this Democrat-led majority to make good on their promise to protect American families. They can start by allowing a vote on legislation that will help families adequately protect their homes from future and almost certain disasters.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials therein.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALZ of Minnesota). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2881, FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Ms. SUTTON (during the Special Order of Mr. MCCARTHY of California), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-335) on

the resolution (H. Res. 664) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2881) to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal years 2008 through 2011, to improve aviation safety and capacity, to provide stable funding for the national aviation system, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be recognized to speak here on the floor of the United States Congress and have the opportunity to address you—while I understand that there are—many of our Members overhear this conversation that we are having and so do the American people. That is the important part about this; it is the people's House and the people need to be heard.

And I would take us back to, Mr. Speaker, the people were heard. They were heard on the immigration issue. They were heard on that issue twice in this year, in this legislative year, Mr. Speaker. And that is, even though we had a great number of immigration hearings before the Immigration Subcommittee here in the House of Representatives, and where I am ranking member on the Immigration Subcommittee we listened to dozens and dozens of witnesses that testified across the breadth of this issue of immigration that has been on the front of the minds of the American people. It has been in the front of our minds for the last about 2 years, and it becomes part of debate in every conversation that has to do with American policy.

Certainly, being a Member of Congress from the State of Iowa where we are the first in the Nation caucus, we have a number of presidential candidates, both Democrats and Republicans, that are in that State much of the time. It is a rare night that the shades aren't closed and there isn't at least one presidential candidate that is spending the night in Iowa after having spent the day and will spend the next day there. In fact, just at the Iowa State game last Saturday, I ran into two presidential candidates just random, not planned, just by the fact of the circumstances. They hear about the immigration issue on a daily basis, wherever they might go across the State of Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and beyond. The Presidential candidates are getting an earful from the American people. And the reason is, the American people understand that they are going to have to defend this central pillar of American exceptionalism called the rule of law. They rose up to defend it when, I call it, the comprehensive amnesty bill was brought before the Senate this year.

We didn't bring a large bill before the House. I don't know if we are actually going to bring one. But twice it was brought before the Senate, and each time the American people rose up and they sent e-mails and they sent faxes and they made phone calls and they stopped in and visited their Senators in their district offices back in their States and also came out here to Washington to go into the Senate offices on the other side of the Capitol dome.

The presence of the American people, the intensity of the message that they delivered to our Senators said, we don't want amnesty. And however you define amnesty, the American people know what it is. And so what I have done is, Mr. Speaker, is I have brought the definition of "amnesty" to the floor of the House of Representatives so we can be talking about the same thing, because what I hear from the American people is the same thing that I believe, and I believe this:

The rule of law is sacrosanct and must be protected. We can't suspend the rule of law because it creates an inconvenience for an individual or a family or a class of people.

It is kind of like the Constitution itself in a way. The Constitution defines and protects our rights, and it is a unique document and it is the oldest document of its kind in the world. The oldest continuously functioning, surviving, effective Constitution in the world is ours, ratified in 1789. And that Constitution sets out parameters, guarantees individual rights, establishes the rule of law, determines where those laws are actually passed, here in this Congress or those responsibilities that are left to the States or to the people.

□ 1830

And yet when we disagree with the results of a constitutional decision, if the American people decide that we like our Constitution, we revere our Constitution and the parameters that are established in this Constitution, Mr. Speaker, if we want to change it, there are provisions in this Constitution to amend it.

We respect this Constitution as being sacrosanct; that it means what it says, and it means what the text of the Constitution said as understood at the time of ratification. And when we amend this Constitution, it's a pretty high bar, but the provision is in here because we are going to hold that standard and adhere to the language that's here because we understand that that's what holds this civilization and this society together. And if we want to amend it, then we go through the process of amending, and it has been done a number of times. It's a high bar.

But that standard of respect for that profound rule of the Constitution is the same standard that we need to have with respect for the profound viability of the rule of law. When we ignore laws, they're undermined. If we ignored the Constitution, if we simply decided I