

and ultimately the support of all the Members of this House and the Senate.

I look forward to the day where we can pass this bill in both Chambers and put it on the President's desk for the President's signature, and again, truly make a difference for the people that we serve. I think it's the right thing to do.

With that, I thank my colleague from Connecticut for his friendship, his valuable input and support on this bipartisan universal health care bill. And I also want to take a minute just to thank the Speaker for giving us time to discuss this very important issue.

Mr. SHAYS. If I could thank the Speaker as well. And thank you again and your staff, and my staff as well. It's a great opportunity to work on this legislation with you. Thank you.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you. I thank my staff as well. It is something that often gets overlooked, and I want to make sure that it's not because your staff and my staff have worked so closely on this, as well as the effort that you and I have put in. A lot of great work has come from this collaborative effort. And I thank you again for your support and your input.

#### TAXPAYER FREEDOM DAY

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity tonight to be on this floor to speak on an issue that is near and dear to a lot of our hearts, and certainly a lot of our constituents' hearts, because tomorrow, April 23, is Taxpayer Freedom Day. It's an opportunity, for the first time this year, for taxpayers to start working for themselves and not simply for their government to pay taxes.

On April 15 we paid our taxes. On April 23, days beyond that, we come to a point where it is no longer an issue of working to pay just the taxes that each taxpayer needs to pay, but now we go on to do for ourselves what we can and should do that would allow us to do things for others that we would like to do as well, to benefit them, to meet needs that cannot simply be met by government, that can be met in special ways by ourselves.

This morning I had the privilege of being at a Big Brothers, Big Sisters breakfast fundraiser and hearing an outstanding speaker who was from business and industry, a leader in her own right with a major corporation in my district, and yet appealing to the fact that in the private sector, in charities and special functions, that there is a place for finding ways to do it better, quicker, faster, more efficiently and cheaper in the process, that there needs to be ways to collaborate in such a way that organizations that sometimes are redundant and overlap come

together, if not to join forces as the same group, but to join forces in providing resources to each other that they don't have to duplicate. I said to the speaker afterwards, you know, that's, indeed, what government ought to be doing as well.

The only way we will do that, though, is by forcing ourselves to do things appropriately to allow the engine of our economy, that being the private sector, individual worker, entrepreneur, risk taker, business person, industry, to do for themselves only what they can do. And to do that, they certainly need to have the resources in place that will enable them to function successfully.

□ 2100

By having to work until April 23 just to pay taxes, that's not the right approach to accomplish that.

I recently was hooked on the HBO mini-series "John Adams," a mini-series on the take-off on the book written by David McCullough, a noted historian on the Framers of our way of life here in the United States, our governmental system, the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and all that makes this country great. And I was again impressed by the character of the Framers of our system of government who saw freedom and liberty as the ultimate priority and saw that freedom and liberty ultimately flowing from individual property rights, individual rights to use resources that they had, and the opportunity ultimately in the Revolution to break away from the King and be able to control more of one's own largesse, limited or great as it might be.

I was impressed by the character of these gentlemen and those behind them, the men and women who supported them. I was impressed with the fact that they believed in people, in individuals, in their ability to make good decisions, their ability to choose well, their ability to spend their resources more wisely, more efficiently, and better, certainly, than a larger body known as the government.

They were also appreciative, Mr. Speaker, of the fact that these individuals, in greatness of their own hearts, could reach out and meet the medical needs, meet the security needs, meet the housing and care needs of individuals, and go beyond just themselves because they had ability to do that, if their government allowed them the liberty and freedom of choice because they had resources to do that as well.

I believe that our Framers never even would have envisioned what we've come to today. They would have never envisioned that we, as individual taxpayers, would work until April 23, after paying taxes on April 15, just to pay the taxes that we paid on April 15. That is what they revolted for, that lack of liberty and choice in using their own resources.

Someone far more significant than I once said, "The ability to tax is the

ability to destroy." I can't talk about other States, and I'm delighted to have another Member with me on the floor tonight to discuss this issue as well, my friend and colleague and the freshman class president, of which I'm part, BILL SALI from Idaho. I can't talk, Congressman, about your State, but I can talk about Michigan, a great State, a great State of natural resources, surrounded on three sides by the Great Lakes if we count our upper peninsula, and I would not forget the Upers, surrounded on three and a half sides by the Great Lakes, with natural resources in the ground, growing on top of the ground, and with natural resources known as human resources that would be second to none. A State that has a history of producing things, of manufacturing, leading in manufacturing, developing the auto industry. The district of which I represent, right in the heart of it was where Henry Ford developed the whole process that has become the assembly line approach to the auto industry.

And yet this great State at this point in time sits at, sadly, the number one worst unemployment rate in the Nation. According to CEO Magazine last week, we rank the 49th worst business climate in the United States. We have people moving out of the State to find jobs. We have our friends in Indiana recruiting jobs from Michigan and doing it far more easily because of what we have done in our State. A State that truly is being destroyed by the ability to tax.

Most recently, the State legislature and our Governor went the wrong direction and frustrated any type of turnaround by increasing income tax, by putting a tax on services for the first time, and then putting a new business tax in place. And then having the cry come up from the taxpayer about the service tax, they rescinded that and put a surcharge on top of the business tax. And then we have the chutzpah in ads and otherwise that say that we are open for business.

I love my State. I love the people of my State. And I think we are Wolverines because we're tenacious, as de Tocqueville said. But we are frustrating the engine of the economy by the excessive taxation that we have put on.

I want to talk more about it, but I know Congressman SALI has much to say on this as well because, Congressman, you are known, first and foremost, as a man of principle, but a friend of the taxpayer, a man who came to Congress because of that agenda to provide less frustration and more opportunity for taxpayers. And I know that tomorrow you will rejoice that we have reached Taxpayer Freedom Day. But I know as well, my friend, that you wish it was far sooner than April 23.

I yield to my friend from Idaho.

Mr. SALI. I would like to thank the good gentleman for yielding to share a few thoughts.

Now that the April 15 deadline for filing tax returns has passed, I would actually like to ask everyone to consider a few things.

In 1900 most Americans only had to work until January 22 to fully meet all of their tax obligations to the Federal, State, and local governments. At that time the percentage of a worker's income needed to pay their taxes was just 6 percent. Imagine how much easier life would be today if we were done working for the government by the end of January.

And today, Tax Freedom Day, for most Americans doesn't come until tomorrow, April 23, as my good friend has pointed out. The deadline to fill out your tax forms, it comes and goes, and yet you're still working for the government, not for yourself, not for your business, not for your family. A third of your income goes to pay the taxes that you owe government.

Government has demonstrated an insatiable appetite to grow. In fact, Federal spending has more than tripled since 1965. Almost every week in Congress, we are asked to vote to create new programs and expand existing ones. Unless there is some urgent need, and there usually isn't, I vote "no." Americans just can't afford it anymore. Congress is not being careful enough with our hard-earned tax dollars.

The majority recently passed a budget plan that would raise taxes by \$683 billion in the next 5 years. That's the largest tax increase in American history. It requires higher taxes on married couples and small businesses. Their plan also includes no permanent fix for the alternative minimum tax that threatens unsuspecting middle income Americans to the tune of \$70 billion in new taxes.

And on the horizon are even more tax increases if Congress fails to act. Higher income tax rates and higher capital gains tax rates will hit virtually everyone. Higher dividend taxes will hit every investor. The death tax will be back, as will the marriage tax penalty. The tax credit for every child will be cut in half.

I think Congress needs to recognize that Americans are taxed too much, and that is why I am a proud cosponsor of my friend Congressman WALBERG's Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2007, which would prevent this unprecedented tax increase. Congress must make a priority of finding ways to lower the tax burden on Americans instead of increasing it. If we don't, Tax Freedom Day will soon be delayed until May or June and we will reminisce about the "good old days" when our tax debts were paid in full by April. Well, let's hope and pray that that never happens.

As a kind of a bookend here on your comments earlier about what's happening in your State, I want to let you know, Congressman WALBERG, in the State of Idaho, we're actually going the other way. This year our legisla-

ture cut the tax on personal property for businesses. We had a tax that was imposed upon the personal property that businesses owned, and that's being phased out at least at the bottom, and there will be a floor so that if you have less than \$100,000, I think was the number they settled on, worth of business property, you won't pay any property tax on that. It's not just for business, though. It's for individuals as well. And I will let you know that in Idaho we have been paying tax on the food that we buy, sales tax. This year the legislature passed a plan that would increase the deduction that's allowed against your State taxes. We call it the "Grocery Tax Credit." It will increase that significantly and will reduce the taxes that people pay on food.

This is an important concept because I have kind of a principle that I use as a test here, and it's this: If you had a dollar to put wherever you thought it would do the most good and you could pick your favorite government program or anywhere in the private sector, where do you think it would do the most good? What the legislature in the State of Idaho has said is we think it will do the most good if we leave it in the hands of individuals. It comports with the Founding Fathers, as you were referencing earlier. Unfortunately, I don't understand the thinking of your State legislature where they are going the other direction.

And I guess this represents the battle that exists within this country today. Many people say we live in a divided country. And I think that's true. And it's divided, I think, into two main categories, the first one being those who believe in the vision of the Founding Fathers, that want a government that is there to serve the people, that we will have a government that allows people to have the freedom to determine what's going to happen in their own lives, allows them the freedom to use their personal property, the wealth that they create because of that personal property to do as they see fit.

And that's opposed to the other vision, which is one that says government must do more for people. We hear that phrase on this floor regularly or some iteration of it: Government must do more. That's not what the Founding Fathers thought. This vision that government needs to do more, that somehow if the government takes control of a problem, that it will be solved. How many times have we looked at a program and said why won't this thing work? And the answer, I think, is because generally government doesn't work. That was the whole point that the Founding Fathers brought to light.

And I think there are two places where we can see kind of the underlying principles that get at these two very different visions for our country. The Founding Fathers relied on that vision that was set out in the Declaration of Independence; that when they said these words, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are cre-

ated equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" and then later said "Governments are instituted among men" to protect those rights, that's one vision that says our rights come from God and it's government job to protect and respect those rights.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was, I think, addressing a press club here in Washington, DC, he described it quite differently. He described government as a contract where the people give power to the government and then the government dispenses benefits to the people. We call those things entitlements today. The vision of the Founding Fathers didn't rest at all on entitlements. They rested on rights. That vision that wants to see bigger government, government's securing a solution for every problem—

Mr. WALBERG. Reclaiming my time, if I could just pose a question on that, why would you say that government should not be flexible and mobile enough in order to deal with the changing of times? The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was the envisionment of the Framers of this wonderful country, this wonderful system of government as well. But as time went on and problems developed with a much larger country, what would you answer to the person who says we should be mobile and we should be flexible to meet the needs of people as it develops? I pose that to you knowing, I think, what your answer will be.

I yield to the gentleman.

□ 2115

Mr. SALI. Well, again, I thank the gentleman. It begins with your vision of the principles that underlie your vision for how you want government in this country to exist. If you have a vision that says the principles can change over time, essentially that the truth can be molded over time, that there is not absolute truth, then you don't have to have that vision of the Founding Fathers. Everything can change. Up can be down if you go far enough with that.

The principles over time that change will lead you to a point where you can move from that vision of the Founding Fathers, where they said that freedom is the thing that matters the most, where liberty is the thing that matters the most. That those rights that are given by God, it is the obligation of government, and the reason that government exists is to protect those rights. If you can change those principles, you can end up with a government that will take care of you and do everything for you, and your rights don't matter at that point. It's not the government's job to protect your rights that are God-given, it's government's job to give you those rights. Again, we call those entitlements.

At the end of the day, when I talk to people who live in my State, what they want is they want a future for their kids and their grand kids, where they

will have freedom and security and prosperity. Freedom comes when you make fewer laws. Prosperity comes when you take less money out of my pocket and give it to government, when Tax Freedom Day comes earlier in the year. Security comes when we have things like a strong national defense, when we allow our government to do those things that are needed to protect the security of the people who live here, and of our country itself.

When I talk to Idahoans, that is what they tell me that they want. That can't exist under a government where the people give power to the government, and the government distributes entitlements. Whoever became free living on entitlements? Whoever became prosperous living on entitlements? Who was ever secure living on entitlements that at any moment can be changed by the 535 Members that serve in Congress.

With that, I would yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. WALBERG. I appreciate those thoughts. I think you got to the nub of the question. It's not the fact that we don't want people to have those entitlements, we don't want them to achieve, we don't want them to have the opportunity that is afforded to all of us here in the United States. But it's based upon the fact, first and foremost, that there is liberty for us to choose, there's liberty for us to be responsible, there's liberty for us to fail, even. And that is quite a liberty, when you think about it. But when we succeed, the liberty to keep and benefit from what we have, and in order to not only care for ourselves, but then voluntarily assist others, and what a liberty that is.

It was said of the Athenians, I read one place, that they desired most freedom, security, and prosperity. And in the end, they lost all of them because they weren't willing to keep liberty first and foremost.

So I appreciate your comments tonight on this eve of Taxpayer Freedom Day, where government often times says why celebrate that? It's your duty to pay the taxes, it's your privilege to pay taxes. Well, I do thank God that I have the opportunity to live in America and I have the opportunity to earn and I have the opportunity to pay a certain level of tax to support a certain level of government that is needed. But I am frustrated that we have gone way beyond that and lost liberty in the process.

I'd like to turn over now some time to another good friend and colleague from Tennessee. DAVID DAVIS has been an outspoken friend of the taxpayer, and I think evidenced by his willingness to battle for the taxpayer and to continue to support prosperity that has blessed his State of Tennessee, and continues to, and sadly, has become home to a number of my Michiganders as well, who have gone for places of employment, and have benefited there. Congressman DAVIS, we hope to bring some of those back to Michigan.

In the meantime, I appreciate you taking the opportunity to talk about the issue of taxes, Tax Freedom Day, and your concerns with it.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. WALBERG. Thank you for your friendship, thank you for leadership. You're doing a great job. Thank you for your foresight and understanding that you can't tax and regulate yourself into prosperity. Never could, can't now, and never will. It's that simple.

I do come from the Volunteer State of Tennessee, and thankfully our Tax Freedom Day is not tomorrow. It was actually about 3 weeks ago. The reason it was 3 weeks ago in the Volunteer State is because we keep our taxes low, and people in Tennessee are actually spending their money on their families now and not sending it to the government. I am happy for that. I'd like to see that move even back up in the year a little more.

There are mothers and fathers all across east Tennessee. I have the opportunity to represent the beautiful mountains of northeast Tennessee and there are mothers and fathers sitting back home in east Tennessee and all across America. They sit around their kitchen table and they have to work out a budget. It's that simple.

I can remember my wife and I when we first started our family, having to do that, knowing how much money came in and how much money went out. We had to make some decisions. You can't spend more than you bring in. If you do, you get in a credit crunch. It's amazing that we have a Congress that sometimes don't sit around that kitchen table. That is exactly what we need to be doing.

Those families back in east Tennessee, they are having to choose between buying gasoline, and it costs over \$50 to fill up their pickup truck, and buying their food. They're seeing the price of milk and bread go up. They are having to worry about paying their house payments or making sure they provide health care for their children. Those are the things that moms and dads across America are having to deal with and we have got people right here in Washington that think if we can just tax them a little bit more and spend a little bit more, we can take care of them.

Now where I grew up, I never came to the conclusion if government could just take care of us, things will be okay. Actually, the way we believe back in the mountains in east Tennessee, if government will just get out of our way and keep taxes and regulations low, we have actually been able to take care of ourselves pretty well. We have done it well in America for over 200 years, and why we think we need to change now, I just don't understand it.

Especially when you look at gas prices. My goodness, we passed an energy bill, so-called energy bill back in December on this House floor. It had

new taxes, new regulations. You know what it didn't have? New energy. Now how you can call a bill an energy bill with no energy, I don't get it. Sometimes we just need some common sense. The American people get it. They understand that common sense.

And then you look at the budget. The two things that are facing Americans today are their family budget, their small business budget, and then that cost of energy. Those are the two things that are on peoples' minds across America. And you look at the Democrats' budget resolution, it fails the test of fiscal responsibility miserably. Instead of exercising fiscal restraint in lowering our taxes, the Democrat budget raises taxes by \$683 billion over the course of the next 5 years. You heard me correctly: \$683 billion.

Now I go home to my district every weekend, talk to a lot of people about a lot of issues, and I can tell you not once do I hear somebody say, If you could just raise the budget by \$683 billion and take a little bit more of my tax dollars, my family is going to be better off. I don't hear, If you can just pass an energy bill with no energy and just put a little more tax on top of the energy and regulate them just a little bit more, then my family is going to be better off. That is not what the American people are looking for.

If you look at \$683 billion, that is the largest tax increase in American history. It blows away the previous largest tax increase in history, which was passed in 1993, and that was over \$443 billion. These are real tax hikes on real people.

Here are some staggering statistics for families living in northeast Tennessee. According to the Heritage Foundation, because of the Democrat budget, the average taxpayer in my district will be forced to pay an increase in \$1,596. This will result in almost 2,000 jobs lost and a loss of \$188 million in the First District's economy.

When I go home every weekend, I don't hear people say, Please raise my taxes so we can lose 2,000 jobs. We are actually seeing jobs move to Tennessee because we keep taxes low and keep regulations low. We are a good work State. We have a good work ethic. We certainly don't need the Federal Government to come in and help us to move us in the wrong direction.

By reimposing the marriage penalty tax, roughly 23 million taxpayers will see their taxes increase by \$466 a year simply because they are married. Now in east Tennessee I don't go home every weekend and hear people say, I want you to raise my taxes just because I did what is biblically correct and I did the right thing.

We have choices. We have choices between a bigger economy or a bigger government. Taxing spending is not the road we need to head down. 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. That is common sense. That is the type of logic I hear when I go home to east Tennessee every weekend.

I think we as Members of Congress need to be more concerned about the budgets of mothers and fathers that they have to put together sitting around kitchen tables every month rather than growing the Federal budget and taking money from those very mothers and fathers that have to sit around the kitchen table every month.

Mr. WALBERG. That is common sense, I would submit to my good friend, isn't it?

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. That is the common sense that the American people are looking for.

Mr. WALBERG. And not status quo government.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. I hear a lot about hope and change. Really, the hope that people are looking for is just the hope that they can fill up their gas tank, the hope they can buy a gallon of milk, the hope they can buy a loaf of bread, the hope they don't have to spend all their money to take care of government, the hope that the government will let them go out and have that life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness that you were talking about earlier with our good friend, Mr. SALI from Idaho. That is the hope that the Americans are looking for, and the change they are looking for is just to get back to some common sense principles that worked over 200 years very well.

The Founding Fathers knew exactly what America needs. I look around this beautiful room and I look behind you and it actually says: In God We Trust. That is the type of change we need in America. We need to get back to some of those bedrock principles where we allow people to go out and pursue happiness.

You know, one of my favorite quotes is from Henry Ford. Henry Ford once said: If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right. The American people think they can. But they think they can't if they see government continue to get bigger and go bigger and bigger. We talk about taxing and spending. The reality is you spend, then you tax. So it should really say spending and taxing.

So we have got to keep the spending low, regulations low, taxes low, and the American people will go out and succeed. There's no better people anywhere in the world than right here in America. We have a great work ethic, we have great values, we have great morals, and we can take care of our families if we will just allow families to take care of families.

I would like to see if you have any comments.

Mr. WALBERG. Well, I have a lot of comments on that, but you said it so well. I appreciate the commonsense approach from a place where Davy Crockett roamed. I know that for a fact.

Again, we are talking about, Congressman DAVIS, we are talking lib-

erty. We are talking about people who say I am not asking for anything except the opportunities. I am willing to be responsible. Generally speaking, I am willing to be held accountable. If I have the resources to use, the resources to spend, if I have the resources to save, to invest, and take the risks as necessary, if I have a job that I can produce those resources and move further, all it says is that I get more liberty and I get full use of it. If I am tied to April 23 as my time when I can say I finished paying taxes for this year to the Federal Government, now I can buy for myself, but I have got to start thinking about paying taxes next year April 15 as well, it ties me back.

None of us here on the floor aren't saying there is some tax base that is necessary. But what we are saying is we have gone way overboard. When you pointed out that if the majority proposal Democrat budget goes through and it's paid for as they intend with a \$683 billion tax increase, which was passed, which does away with all of those tax relief issues that we had in 2001 and 2003, and have benefited this great country since that time, and then it adds other things to it like the marriage penalty back into it, does away with the ending of the AMT, alternative minimum tax, an onerous regressive tax that's strapping down more of our taxpayers than ever were assumed to be in it. If we put all that in place, we see less liberty, less freedom, more opportunity for abuse by government that doesn't know how to say no.

□ 2130

We end up frustrating ourselves again, don't we.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. I wanted to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Tax Increase Prevention Act. That is exactly the type of leadership we need. You are a great leader in your State. You are a great leader here on the floor of Congress and in America. Thank you for the opportunity to be a sponsor of this legislation. Together we will make some changes. God bless you.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank my friend. I only have to think about the fact that to the taxpayer in my State, that if this \$680 billion tax increase goes through to pay for additional spending, deficit spending, in a budget that goes way beyond what is necessary, it means that on top of the burden that my State government has given to the hard-working taxpayers of Michigan, it gives a \$3,000 per taxpayer increase on January 1, 2011, automatically. And, like you, my taxpayers that I meet with each weekend back in the district and in the 140 town hall type meetings I have held since January 4th, they are not saying, Mr. Congressman, please give us more taxes. Please give us more gas tax. Please raise the cost of our fuels. They are not saying that at all. They are saying, give us some freedom. Give us some liberty. Give us some re-

lief. Let us do for ourselves what we can and should do, if we have the resources to do it. So you hit it right on the head.

I am privileged tonight as well to have another good friend and colleague, a member of our freshman class, an outstanding spokesperson for the taxpayer, for all things that people like John Adams and Jefferson and Washington and others spoke for when they framed all that we are pleased with in the United States, the Congresswoman from Minnesota, Michele Bachmann.

I am sure you have significant things to say about this great event we have tomorrow, Tax Freedom Day. But looking on the other side of the picture, why in the world we have to have that type of a day so late in the year?

I yield to the Congresswoman from Minnesota.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Congressman WALBERG, I want to thank you for your leadership during this special hour that we are enjoying this evening, talking to the American people about Tax Freedom Day. For a lot of people, they just can't believe it when they find out what the definition is.

I can't thank you enough for your leadership, not only for this special hour to talk about this very special day that is coming tomorrow with Tax Freedom Day eve, you might say this evening, but also with your leadership on the Tax Increase Prevention Act. I can't thank you enough for the work that you are doing, not just on behalf of the great constituents that you have in Michigan, but on behalf of all Americans, because the last thing Americans need right now is a tax increase. So we all thank you, and I thank you that I have had the opportunity to sign onto your legislation as well.

I couldn't help but think when Congressman SALI, our fellow freshman, was standing here earlier, he is a gentleman who fought for years in his own State assembly in Idaho for tax cuts and for fiscal sanity in Idaho. I think that is why the people in Idaho sent him here, because they knew they could trust BILL SALI. They could trust him to come to the floor and make the case for fiscal sanity in our country.

When we see tax increases around every corner, what was it, maybe 6 weeks ago we saw that the majority passed I believe it was a \$683 billion tax increase for the budget, the largest tax increase in American history. I know I was flabbergasted when I saw that. Could it be possible that the Congress, in a time of a weakened economy, would come here to this Chamber, to this floor, and make a decision like that, that they would heap burden upon burden upon burden upon our constituents? I didn't think it would be possible.

Then when I listened to our fellow colleague, Congressman DAVID DAVIS from the State of Tennessee, who has said so well so many times about the average American family, who sits

around their kitchen table wondering are they going to be able to fill up their gas tank tomorrow morning when they get up and go to work? What about buying that gallon of milk? You go to the grocery store and you see that grocery store prices have gone up 64 percent since the beginning of the year.

Mr. WALBERG. If I could break in, didn't we hear at the beginning of this year, January 4th and prior to that, that if the majority party had control we would see the prices go down on gas and other things? Didn't we hear that? Have we seen that take place?

Mrs. BACHMANN. Well, I think the gentleman already knows the answer before he is asking the question, because it has been now hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of days since the majority said to the American people that they had a commonsense plan, they had a commonsense plan for reducing the price of gasoline. And as of today, the average price of gasoline across America is now a whopping \$3.51.

I went with our family this weekend, we went to visit my father-in-law. It was his 84th birthday on Sunday. So we had my daughter's car, because it had the best gas mileage of any car that we had in our family, so we took her car. On the way back, we were in Baldwin, Wisconsin. We pulled up to a gas station. We put gas in. I could not believe it. It was \$45 that I put in her little gas tank. Just a few years ago, that is what we spent on our big conversion van, our high-top conversion van. We are not alone. We are here as Members of Congress, but we hear this every day from people back home.

Let me give you just one example. You remember Art Linkletter and the show that he had years ago called House Party? He had a little segment called "Kids Say the Darndest Things." I loved that segment.

I thought about that, because just recently I went to speak to Minnesota Pheasants Forever. It is a wonderful outdoor heritage group. I love to do that. That is one marvelous thing about being a Member of Congress, you can go to speak to great groups about things.

So I went to go speak to them. So I laid my notes, Congressman WALBERG, on the island in our kitchen, and it said "Minnesota Pheasants Forever." Our little daughter Caroline came, and she picked up the notes and she said, "Mom, what is Minnesota peasants forever?" And I said, "Well, Caroline, that would be the taxpayers of the State of Minnesota."

The reason I say that is because tomorrow will be Tax Freedom Day, and in Minnesota, we are a little bit worse off. Our Tax Freedom Day won't occur until next Sunday.

What that means for people across America that might be listening to our repartee as we go back and forth tonight, Tax Freedom Day is the first day the American people stop working

for Uncle Sam and start working for themselves. When you average all your Federal, State and local taxes together, the American taxpayer spends the first 113 days of the year as a Federal employee. Basically, that is what it comes down to. We are all Federal employees because we are working for the man. We are not working for ourselves.

Mr. WALBERG. And that is not the idea that the framers of our Constitution had in mind.

Mrs. BACHMANN. That is exactly right. You talked about Adams and Jefferson. We have the wonderful privilege, you and I and Congressman DAVIS, we have the wonderful privilege of being a part of that great cloud of witnesses that went before. They laid down the freedom.

Just think, it was a stamp tax that our founders were willing to lay down their lives for, their fortune, their sacred honor. They were willing to give up everything, just to throw off a stamp tax. My goodness, we do that just in the morning before we have even gotten to lunch yet around here. I can't believe the level of tax increases we have seen, can you?

Weren't you floored coming here as a new Member of Congress? I know if there is one thing that I have learned, Congressman WALBERG, in the time I have been in Congress, what has been now maybe 15 or 16 months, it has been how easy it is to spend somebody else's money. How easy it is. I know it isn't for me. It is really hard for me to spend my own money, and it is really hard for me to spend other people's money. I am not there yet. I haven't drank that Kool-Aid. But I am floored when I see how easy it is for Members of this body to spend other people's money. What is your reaction to that?

Mr. WALBERG. Well, it is very similar, if I might add, to see how large expenditures go out with so little oversight, and so much statement that, oh, well, it has to be done. If we don't do it, who will? And there are so many needs.

Well, there are. I mentioned earlier this evening I had the opportunity to attend a breakfast fundraiser for Boys and Girls Clubs in my area. They do a great work, and they are doing it on the basis of individual contributions, corporate entities that give not only financial support, but also human support as well.

The speaker, a president of a major industry in my area, she said it so eloquently, that it has come to a point in time where we have to find ways to reduce the cost by drawing together and not having redundancies that add cost, but become more efficient and more effective doing not only the same work, but more work for less cost as a result of the effort that is shared.

In government we have to get that concept. We have to understand that there is a person called the taxpayer, and a taxpayer that is not of unlimited resources, especially if we want to keep

freedom around so that our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will enjoy the benefits we have. If we are to pass it on to them in such a way that they will have equal or better freedoms than we had, we have to get on the stick.

So, absolutely, I have been floored since coming here that it is so easy to spend money in this Chamber without thought of actually who will generate those resources, and we frustrate the engine of the economy.

Mrs. BACHMANN. If the gentleman will yield further, that has been my impression as well. It strikes me to think that the serfs in the Middle Ages paid over about 25 percent of what they earned in the year to a nobleman. We could only wish, many of us, that 25 percent was our total tax burden. We haven't seen that in this country for many, many years. It is almost unthinkable that the serfs in the Middle Ages would be better off from a tax point of view than the average American taxpayer today. We are far beyond 25 percent of our income.

As a matter of fact, don't you agree, Congressman, that it would be I think very enlightening for most Americans to learn that they spend more on their tax bill, they pay more on their tax bill, than they do for food, clothing and housing combined?

The average American works 108 days to pay for their food, their clothing and their housing. They work on average 113 days to pay their tax bill. Just think of that. Those are necessities that Americans can't do without. You have to have food, you have to have clothing, you have to have housing. But the one thing that will happen is that you will go to jail if you don't pay your tax bill.

I am a former Federal tax litigation attorney. I tried a lot of cases in Federal Tax Court. The reason why people showed up when it was time for their court date was because if they didn't show up, the judgment may be that they go to jail. Because in this country if you don't pay your tax bill, you have the potential of going to jail. So that is the first bill you have to pay, because if you don't pay it, you may end up in a place you don't want to be, so a lot of sacrifices have to be made by a lot of people.

I will tell you one thing, and I think you would agree as well, Congressman. You have probably seen a lot of waste, a lot of fraud and a lot of abuse in legislation that has gone through this body. We will be taking up legislation tomorrow that is trying to squeeze waste, fraud and abuse out of the Medicare system.

Don't you agree, Congressman, that is something that the American people have been looking for for a long time? I know you are a reformer. I know you came here because you did not want to be part of the status quo. You are an outsider, and you came here because you wanted to change the way that Washington does business. I feel the

same way. I know that Congressman SALI shares that opinion and Congressman DAVIS shares that opinion. We are not about continuing the levels of waste, fraud and abuse.

Mr. WALBERG. It can't continue. If it does, we have lost it all. Jefferson said the government that governs best governs least. And it wasn't simply govern least to allow people less opportunity, but it is to give them more freedom; to give them more of their own resources to make better decisions for themselves, making better decisions on basic needs.

That was the genius of what we had here in a capitalistic system, a system that said we will offer freedom and opportunity. You make your choices, you determine your lifestyle. And, in turn, as we also encouraged through supplementing what went on in the home, what went on in the school, what went on in the church and making it a common theme that we are our brother's keeper, but it is with our own resources, with our own choices, the opportunity that we have to expand and meet needs of others.

Ultimately in doing that ourselves, we are also blessed. We also felt the warmth of saying I lifted someone up that was falling, and I also know that there are plenty of others who would come to my aid, individuals who are family members, who are community members right from my own area that would reach out, and, at last resort, if necessary, maybe there was something in the government.

But it is reversed now, where the first place we go is the government. Of course, that causes the ramp-up of costs that now results in the largest tax increase in the history of the United States being offered and passed just recently.

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And, if allowed to be completed and my legislation isn't put in place to make permanent those tax relief issues of 2001 and 2003, we will have a \$683 billion tax increase over the next 5 years, and on January 1, 2011, the taxpayers in my State and across the country, generally speaking, will pay upwards of \$3,000 more the day after December 31 than the day before. That is not the way to go. We have to stop it. The taxpayers out there, whether they be in Tennessee, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, or Indiana, are all saying the same thing; they just want us to hear an answer.

Mrs. BACHMANN. That is right. And if the gentleman would yield, I would absolutely agree. And that is why it is important and imperative, I believe, that we shout it from the rooftops. This is not a hypothetical we are talking about, this is reality that we are talking about tonight, the fact that these tax cuts right now are on automatic pilot. They are going away. They are the engines that have propelled the growth in this economy, both with the cuts on capital gains and on dividends,

that has provided the jobs, the growth, the unparalleled level of prosperity that we have enjoyed. It is all going away if we don't stop that.

That is why I thank you again, Congressman WALBERG, for being willing to sponsor this important legislation. It is why I am on it, it is why Congressman DAVIS and so many of our colleagues are on it. As a matter of fact, there is a piece of legislation that I believe you signed on recently as well as I signed on; this is one that our colleague JOHN CAMPBELL came up with, and that is putting a spending ceiling on what Congress can spend. Because I think that Congressman DAVIS said it very well earlier: We have a spending problem. That is what leads to our taxing program. And JOHN CAMPBELL came forward, the Congressman from California, and he said, let's put a ceiling on government spending, and let's make sure it is not more than one-fifth of GDP.

What is GDP? Gross domestic product. Well, what is that? That is basically everything that we produce in this country every year. Just think of that. Government eats up one-fifth, almost one-fifth, 20 percent, of everything that is produced in this country just to run the machine. Sometimes I think that government is just a big money eating machine, and we are all the people that are working to stoke that furnace to keep it going. But this legislation that we signed says that there is a limit. We are going to draw a line in the sand, and no more. And that is what your great legislation does as well, the Tax Increase Prevention Act, it draws a line in the sand and it says we are going to keep this prosperity going, and the way we do it is by cutting those taxes.

Mr. WALBERG. And I appreciate that fact. There are good pieces of legislation, whether it be setting a cap on spending or setting a moratorium on earmarks, and looking at a way to get control of that so we are not wasting dollars. These are common-sense issues that taxpayers generally look at and say, what is the problem? This ought to be just common sense, to have a line item veto, to have a balanced budget amendment. All of the above speaks to the common taxpayer, which I am one and you are one and all of us who have spoken tonight are one. It speaks common sense to the taxpayer saying, this just ought to be the way it is, because we are willing to do for ourselves if you leave us the opportunity.

So I certainly appreciate your passion on this issue and the fact of your awareness of tax issues having been a tax attorney and understanding that, while there are taxes necessary, that we have gone way beyond the limit. We have gone beyond reality.

There is little debate right now on Capitol Hill about whether the American economy is struggling. That is just there. We recognize the fact. And some of us who are in States that are struggling even more so, like my own

wonderful State of Michigan that has all of the resources available, and yet we are frustrated. The real conversation in living rooms across the country is about how to get our economy moving again.

Essentially, this debate boils down to one question, the question that I was asked in conversations in town hall meetings that I have in various ways, and that question is: Should America promote economic growth and job creation, or raise taxes to destroy jobs and economic opportunity?

Right now, Republicans, our colleagues are asking all House Members to decide which side of this debate they are on by forcing votes on a bill that I introduced that we have referred to tonight, that is the Tax Increase Prevention Act, House Resolution 2734. House Members have to choose whether they support Speaker PELOSI's budget proposal that in total is the largest single tax increase ever promoted in the history of the United States, a \$3,000 per taxpayer tax increase overnight.

With so much money already being wasted in Washington, I believe it is wrong for Congress to try and take more money out of the paychecks of hard-working Americans. My bill, to make more point about it, would make permanent the tax relief of 2001 and 2003, and stop tax increases on raising children, earning money, saving and investing, operating a small business, adopting a child, paying off college loans, and even dying.

Consider the implications of the Democrat's proposed \$680 billion tax increase in 2011 alone. Marginal income tax rates will increase by anywhere from 9 percent to 50 percent, with the lowest tax bracket receiving the highest tax rate increase. That is not talking to the rich and wealthy, that is talking again of the lowest tax bracket. Capital gains rates for individuals will increase dramatically, punishing saving and investing. Restoration of the marriage penalty tax, that is a punitive tax that thankfully we got rid of, and now they want to put it back. The child tax credit will be slashed 50 percent, raising taxes by \$500 per child. The death tax will go from 0 percent to 55 percent.

I have always held the conviction that the American citizen should keep as much as their hard-earned money as possible. With Americans facing rising health care costs, high energy prices, and economic instability, the last thing families need is to be hit with a massive job killing tax increase.

Every week in my home State, I meet with Michiganders, as I did this weekend, who are working harder than ever before and at best breaking even. Michigan families and businesses have, unfortunately, felt firsthand the powerful negative impact of tax increases. These working families' wages have been slashed by higher taxes on income and on small businesses. During our Governor Jennifer Granholm's administration, Michigan has experienced job

losses, declining personal incomes, diminishing home values, and the highest unemployment rate in the Nation, sadly. By proposing a massive \$3,000 per taxpayer tax increase, Democrats in this Congress are following the same failed blueprint that has threatened to ditch our economy in Michigan and destroy Michigan jobs.

Instead of working on tax hikes that ultimately make America less competitive, I believe Congress should stop this \$683 billion money grab from taxpayers. Congress could better spend time eliminating ineffective and inefficient government programs, making health care more affordable, and passing any energy legislation to move America toward energy independence and reduce energy prices.

The debate over whether to raise taxes is just the beginning of a long battle over America's economic future. By making tax relief permanent and continuing to grow our economy, Congress can go an awful long way to restore the trust of the American people, build a better and brighter future for our country, and avoid the economic suffering now felt in States like Michigan.

It doesn't have to be that way. And I certainly appreciate the fact that there are those of us who are fighting for taxpayers' interests. I know the 13 of us who came in as freshmen came in for a reason. That is the smallest freshman class in the history of the United States, probably. But we came in resolute that the taxpayer was to be served; that taxpayers were paying too much, not too little; that we were regulating too much, not too little; that we were destroying the incentives of private hard-working citizens, risk takers, entrepreneurs to do the job that they can only do. Government doesn't do that. And that is why 13 of us came while others lost and weren't sent back because of overspending and overtaxing.

And it is sure a privilege to join with the both of you here in the room tonight. I guess I would offer opportunity for any final comments before we are forced to close this interesting conversation this evening, hopefully of benefit to the taxpayers out there on this eve of tax freedom day. Hopefully it has been interesting, but more than that, it has been something that would stir them into action as well to say: Enough is enough, and we stand for freedom.

Mrs. BACHMANN. If the gentleman would yield. I want to thank you for your wonderful words and your eloquent statement and your deep passion that you have stated. And you are again to be commended for the Tax Increase Prevention Act. Thank you for doing that, and for putting this evening together to let the American taxpayer know that tomorrow is a day of freedom, but it is also a day of reality to realize, finally, that we are going to be able to take off our ball and chain and be unshackled and finally

breathe again and be able to work for ourselves.

But when Americans go to the pump tomorrow, I just want to remind them, Congressman WALBERG, when they go to the pump and they put \$1 worth of gasoline in their vehicle, over 60 cents of that dollar will go to taxes in one form or another. Just think about that. We hear a lot about oil companies and about profits, but when you have \$1 of gasoline, over 60 cents of that dollar goes to taxes. That is something we really need to think about here in Congress. We need to consider it. It is just a microcosm, just a picture of the heavy tax burden every day that impacts the average American. I can't thank you enough for putting this together this evening.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank my friend from Minnesota, and appreciate your passion as well in fighting this good fight.

I would yield now to the Congressman from Tennessee, DAVID DAVIS.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. WALBERG. Thank you for your leadership. I would like to thank Mrs. BACHMANN for your interest in this, your hard work here in Congress.

I really appreciate your leadership in this and understanding that you can't tax and spend and regulate yourself into prosperity. The American people understand it. It is a simple principle. We need to start thinking outside the Beltway, not inside the Beltway. And if we do those things with lower taxes, lower spending, we will actually start to produce energy in America again, start to use American oil and American coal, safe nuclear, those things to bring down the energy costs. If we bring those taxes, those regulations down, then the American people will go out there and have those jobs. The best economic stimulus package in America is a good paycheck. And thank you for your leadership.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee. And, again, I trust this has been helpful for taxpayers to hear at least some that will defend. And there are others in this Congress. It has been said that we are red state, blue state, totally divided in this country. When you get to the common-sense issues, the virtues that people see as common sense, we are not divided, we are not red state, blue state. We are a common based unified people that believe in common sense things.

Jonathan Witherspoon, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, said: A Republic once equally poised must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty. Virtue of hard work, the virtue of risk taking and entrepreneurial spirit, the virtue of accountability, of responsibility, of honesty, of integrity, those are virtues. And they go all into what makes our country great and what our taxpayers generally commit themselves to on a common base. And when we break down those virtues and give those away, we de-

stroy ourselves and our liberty in the process.

So let's fight together to stop this \$683 billion tax grab that will frustrate this country and take it back as opposed to pressing it forward. I thank my colleagues for spending this time with me tonight.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ABERCROMBIE (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. CARNEY (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of Pennsylvania primary.

Mr. DOGGETT (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week on account of medical reasons.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. CLYBURN (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for April 23 on account of two funerals in his district.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of attending the funeral of a soldier who died in Operation Enduring Freedom.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. KAPTUR) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SOLIS, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and April 23 and 24.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, for 5 minutes, today and April 23 and 24.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, April 29.

Mrs. BLACKBURN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah, for 5 minutes, April 29.

Mr. ROYCE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, April 29.

Mr. DENT, for 5 minutes, April 23.

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, for 5 minutes, today.