

was a very difficult situation to face. It's just as difficult a situation for me when I respect the Members of this House to raise these issues, but I've spent all of my adult life in the business of trying to just bring fairness and truth to the forefront in whatever I've done, both as a judge and now as a Congressman.

I am no saint. Anybody who thinks I'm standing up here saying I've not made mistakes in my life doesn't know me or doesn't know Texas or doesn't know the life we live. We've all made mistakes in our lives, and mistakes can be honest mistakes, but this is an institution.

It pains me to think that little boys and little girls who might be in elementary school are hearing on television and at their breakfast tables comments from their parents: "Everybody in Washington is a crook. Everybody in Washington is lazy and gets special treatment. They're all a bunch of 'no goods.' We ought to throw every one of them out." They hear those things about Members of Congress, and maybe it applies to some, but it doesn't apply to the vast majority on both sides of the aisle. I can say that. So we're being painted with a brush, and that brush is full of paint because the media continually keeps it full of paint, and it's out there, painting us, until we're the black-hearted people of this world.

Yet, when I was a little boy many, many, many years ago, you know, we revered Members of Congress. When I went to school, all I heard was what a wonderful, great, democratic institution it was, the most revered institution on Earth—the United States Congress—and what wonderful, great men and women served. Do you know what? They were the same kind of men and women who serve today. They weren't any different. They weren't any more dedicated than the people who serve here today. They were the same kind of people.

I, that little boy in the first grade, was hearing Congress discussed at my mama and daddy's breakfast table. Even when my mother and father disagreed with something that Congress was doing, they still acknowledged them as special people—giving to the democracy that we hold dear, giving of their time and their talent and, quite frankly, giving of their lives, some of them, their very lives.

I know that, today, we celebrated 50 years of Chairman DINGELL's service to this House—the longest serving Member in the history of the Congress. So you can clearly say that JOHN DINGELL gave his entire adult life to this institution. That should be revered in the eyes of everybody, and that should not be tainted with somebody's saying, "dirty deeds are done by every Member of Congress; they're all evil and no good," because my colleagues and friends everywhere, that is not true, and that is why we have to raise issues on ourselves.

We are a body that has chosen as part of its governing unit a committee whose sole purpose is to judge ourselves. There are other institutions that do this. The bar associations in most cities of most States have bar committees that judge members of the bar, who are the lawyers. I may be mistaken, but I believe that the medical community judges itself and raises ethical issues on the medical community. I believe, in the accounting community, the accountants judge the ethics of the accounting community. So we're not unusual by setting up a group of our Members to judge our Members, but we have more of a standard to live with than that.

Our standard should be that we judge ourselves, that we try not to even appear to have committed some kind of impropriety. Avoid the appearance of impropriety. That is where we need to go. That is where we need to be. When things arise, we need to raise these issues, and we need to talk about them and talk about them not out of hate or out of politics. We need to talk about them out of love for the institution and say to ourselves, "What is my part of this, and what should I do?"

When I wrote the letter to Chairman RANGEL, I think that's kind of what I was saying. Mr. Chairman, this is the way ordinary folks get treated. You're not getting treated that way. Why don't you ask them to treat you that way? That's all I asked. I didn't say, "Resign." I didn't say, "Support the Rangel Rule." I said that. Then I said, "If you can't, then will you support my Rangel Rule?" That was the purpose. That was to remind him that we have an issue here, an issue of unfairness.

I think I'm going to be willing to give back some time tonight because I don't want to go off on another position that we can't complete, but we'll be back, and we'll be talking some more about ethics.

I would remind this body as a group that we all have a duty and a responsibility to try to live up to the standards that have been pronounced by the Speaker and now by the President of the United States that we be the most open, honest and ethical Congress in history and that we not have one standard for the powerful and another standard for the ordinary folks. Those are good goals to accomplish. I am going to step forward during this period of time in my life and try to get this body to accomplish those goals. If I can do that, I will go home and smile to my folks back home and say, "I did the best I could."

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, my name is KEITH ELLISON, and I am here once again to help represent the progressive message of the Progressive Caucus.

We are really, really pleased to be joined tonight by an absolutely stellar leader in our great country, none other than the chairwoman of the Progressive Caucus, the co-chairperson, LYNN WOOLSEY of California. Let me yield a little bit of time to the honorable chairwoman because, when she is on the floor, representing our great caucus in this great body in this great country, it is always fun to listen to what she shares with us. Actually, she is going to share a little bit about a letter that the Progressive Caucus wrote, among other things. I am just going to yield the floor to Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY for a moment so she can get us started off right.

Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, how are you today?

Ms. WOOLSEY. I'm fine, KEITH. Thank you again for pulling together a Progressive Caucus Special Order and for making it something that we want to come down here and talk from our perspectives about as to what's going on in our Congress and in our country and overall in our world.

Right now, this country of ours, this Congress of ours and certainly every single person I saw in my district—Marin and Sonoma Counties—over the weekend are all talking about one thing, and that is the stimulus package, the recovery package, that we are debating between the House and the Senate. Now, after 1 week and 1 day of electing a new President, the House passed the President's recovery package, and we are proud of it. The Senate has changed it slightly—considerably. Really and truly, 90 percent is overlap in one way or another, but there are some misses that our leadership will have to deal with in conference.

I don't know how many people understand what happens when the House passes a piece of legislation on an issue and then when the Senate passes a different piece of legislation on the same issue. In order to have a law, we have to have conferencing between the House and the Senate. It's bipartisan with Republicans and Democrats. The conferees go into a room, and they start working out the differences. The only thing they talk about is where the two pieces of legislation differ and where they can come together and agree.

So now, what does this have to do with the Progressive Caucus?

□ 2130

Well, your Chairs of the Progressive Caucus, myself and RAÚL GRIJALVA, wrote a letter to the conferees asking for four important issues to be strengthened in conference between the House and the Senate.

And maybe what you would like to do, KEITH—I will talk about the first section and then hand it over to you to comment on, and then we'll go to the

second, and third, and fourth; and then by then, we will be pretty much out of here.

Mr. ELLISON. You bet.

Ms. WOOLSEY. So I'm not going to go through all of the introduction that we said in the letter except we said, "As the co-Chairs of the Progressive Caucus, we write to you today to express our great concern about H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill of 2009. And we would like our leadership in conference to pay attention to four major issues."

The first one, investing in America's future. Our children. And then we went on to say that in the Senate bill, almost half of the funding cuts come from education. We consider this irresponsible, we consider it shortsighted. Eliminating funding for school construction not only hurts our Nation's children, but it also impedes job growth. What perfect growth for jobs is building schools for our kids that they need, and at the same time, providing jobs that pay a liveable wage.

Additionally, the Senate cut funding for Head Start, Head Start and early Head Start, from 2.1 billion to 1.05 billion. And in our letter we said that this chips away at our Nation's future and places an overwhelming burden on families already feeling the strain of a bleak economy and that we requested that our leadership return the funding to the House-passed levels.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, Chairwoman, thank you for yielding back.

I want to say—and just to agree with you—that investing in our young people, young people going to Head Start is one of the very best investments that any society can make. And you can get conservative economists, you can get liberal economists, any kind of economists you want; they can tell you that the biggest bang for the buck is investing in early childhood education, programs like Head Start.

You're right to point out as well, Madam Chair, that we have about 90 percent of the House and Senate bill is overlapping, but there's that 10 percent that we're here to advocate about. And I think it's important that the American people know that the Progressive Caucus is going to be in there fighting for an inclusive version that embraces all Americans.

And I want to thank you and Chairman RAÚL GRIJALVA for writing that letter. That's the kind of leadership that the American people expect from you.

And I just want to also add that education is a critical point. The House bill allocated 2.1 billion for funding for programs to prepare children. And that was cut to about 1 billion in the Senate side.

But let me also talk about higher education.

The House voted to provide about 6 billion for higher education while the Senate compromised, ultimately eliminated 3.5 billion for higher education facility modernization and purchase of instructional equipment.

Right now, as you know, Madam Chair, when a recession like the kind we're in right now, what do people do as they try to figure out what to do as they've been unemployed? They often go to school to try to upgrade their skills. And the opportunity to do this, the investment in that, has been not as fully there as it could be as it is in the House version.

So we want folks to know that they can do something about this. The conferees are confereeing, and, you know, this is something that Americans don't have to sit back. It's not over yet. It's not done yet. This cake is still baking. So it's a time to try to be back involved.

I yield back.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, and now, KEITH, the second issue we addressed is investing in America's States and local communities. Recognizing the squeeze being put on State and local governments, the House, rightfully, set aside assistance—assistance to ease the financial crisis right here at home. That was slashed in the Senate's bill. It was slashed to \$39 billion, which was a \$49 billion reduction. States are seeing crises within education, within health care, job training, welfare programs; and it's really unclear, right now, how many States and localities will be able to function without the above-mentioned funding streams.

And we requested that our conferees returned funding to the House-passed levels.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know, I'm glad you mentioned that because Mark Zandy, who, again, was an adviser to JOHN MCCAIN, a Republican, said that the way to really stimulate the economy is to put it in certain areas and not so much in others.

And if you look on this chart right here, Zandy's Estimates For a Multiplier Effect For Various Policy Proposals, what you find is that spending money for States has a pretty good stimulative effect. Right down here, "revenue transfers to State governments." For every dollar we put into that, that will generate \$1.36. That's an important expenditure right there that we could use to really stimulate the economy.

This will bring back good benefits to the economy. So for the Senate to shortchange us by \$40 billion is a mistake.

Let me also say, too, that these are good jobs, these are—we're talking about cops, fire fighters, we're talking about people who are really out there filling potholes, doing important jobs, making sure that people are getting workforce training and development. These are critical functions.

And you know what? I read, Madam Chair, that if you were to add up all of the State budget deficits that are current right now, it would amount to about \$350 billion. I know my own State of Minnesota has about a \$5 billion deficit. I know California, your State, is in need.

So the thing is that what we're trying to do is make sure that we don't have layoffs at the State, that we don't have service cuts at the State, and that we're continuing to bolster and pump our economy up.

So I'm glad you brought the aid to States out because it's very critical, very important.

And I might add that temporary increase in food stamps has a very stimulative effect. For every \$1, \$1.73 is going to come back; increasing infrastructure, for every \$1, \$1.59 comes back.

Now, I might add, Madam Chair, that certain things do not have a very stimulative effect. Things that don't really do much good in the situation we're in right now would be making income taxes that are expiring in 2010 permanent. That would not help. That has a very minimal stimulative effect. These kinds of things won't help. Making expiring capital gains tax cuts permanent has less—we put \$1 in, we get less than \$1 out. These kinds of things are important to keep in mind as we look at the stimulus proposal.

Thank you. Let me yield back to you.

Ms. WOOLSEY. The other thing we have to remember, Congressman ELLISON, every single economist has told us you have to spend the right amount enough, otherwise it doesn't matter what you spend because it won't do the job.

Mr. ELLISON. That's right.

Ms. WOOLSEY. And we have lobbied for a really bold stimulus package. I personally would have had a package that had the tax cuts on top of the spending, and it probably would have totaled over \$1.2 billion.

Mr. ELLISON. Trillion.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Trillion dollars. Thank you. I still have a hard time saying "trillion" when I'm talking numbers.

And that, I believe, would have been what we needed. Because, you see, we're only going to have one bite at this apple. I don't believe we're going to get a second chance. So I think it should be as bold as it can possibly be.

And the third "ask" in our letter to the conferees was regarding investing in America's future, home ownership. We see this as one of the key elements in the Bush recession, the housing crisis that can be felt from Wall Street to Main Street. And that's why we think that the Senate action was actually wrongheaded.

The Senate bill zeroes out \$2.25 billion in funding for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, which would have provided funds to States and localities to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned and foreclosed homes.

The House allocated \$4.19 billion for that program. We requested that our leadership return the funding to the House-passed levels so that we would then make a statement about how important housing and neighborhoods are and that we shore up the neighborhoods that are suffering the most.

Mr. ELLISON. You know, Madam Chair, no one has to tell you. You've been a parent. You've raised a family. You know how it is.

Ms. WOOLSEY. If you will yield a minute.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, let me yield.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I've been on welfare. I've moved—man, I can really relate to what's happening with people right now.

My children, they were one, three, and five years old. Their father was emotionally ill, and he left us; and I went to work, of course. I mean, they were my babies. I wanted to take care of them and did. But I couldn't make ends meet. So I kept my work and kept my job. This was 40 years ago, remember that.

But we had to go on Aid For Dependent Children to round off childcare and health care. And we got so much more in aid and help then, 40 years ago, than poor people do now, poor moms. And I just don't know how they're making ends meet.

We moved from a really nice home. We had two cars. I was 29 years old. We were the ideal family. And it just turned inside out.

And my kids and I moved to a little two-bedroom cottage. I bought a little beat up Volkswagen, drove it to work every day. It had a flower on the side—this was in the 1960s, of course. But it was so hard. And we got so much help, more help than families get today.

And that's why we want families in the stimulus recovery package to recover along with others that are going to get helped.

Mr. ELLISON. You know, Madam Chairwoman, it's so important that you share that personal experience because there might be people watching this broadcast right now thinking, "Man, you know, am I just like a bad luck accident? Am I just like somebody who can't make it? Is it my fault that I am unemployed? Is it my fault that something happened? We had mental illness in the family," through no fault of their own. They're feeling like, "Wow, you know, it's not working for me."

So when you stand up here on this House floor as a Member of Congress saying, "I have been there myself," it gives them great courage, and it makes them feel like there is a tomorrow; and it makes them feel like there are some people in this body who care and who understand what they're going through. Because, you know, I got charts and graphs up here with numbers; and, you know, you're choking on the world "trillion," and of course it's all ridiculous.

But the point is that it is people who we're here fighting for. That's why the Progressive Caucus was formed. That's why we exist. Because the story that you just told, there are, unfortunately, too many stories like that being told. And there has got to be somebody in this body who will stand up for folks who are fighting, who are trying to

make it, who are trying to take care of those three kids.

I am so proud of our Nation that there was, at one time in our history, when we understood that welfare wasn't anything to be ashamed of. It was what we did for our neighbors because we, ourselves, could be in a tough situation. It was saying we're going to step up for our neighbors; we're not going to let them go without because we all know that we're one accident, one medical problem, one job loss away from being in that situation ourselves.

So this is what a caring Nation does. It says that yeah, you may be living that middle class dream, but you don't know what's going to happen to you next year. And we are here for you because we're all Americans and we care about each other. This is the kind of thing the Progressive Caucus stands for, and it's why I'm so proud that you are our chairperson.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, KEITH.

And, you know, I'm going to go into our fourth "ask" of the conferees, but I think it's important to say because this is probably why we're fighting so hard. When I was on welfare, I used to say to my friends—I was on welfare for 3 years, working the whole time. I would say to my friends, "Well, I don't know how other women do this." They think, "Are you crazy? What do you care about other women? You're working. You're going to be off of it pretty soon."

But, you know, I always knew that I was educated. I had college—hadn't graduated but I had several years of college. I had great job skills, I was as healthy as a horse, my kids were really healthy. And, you know, I was assertive so I could make things happen. And I always worried that other women with children didn't have those same privileges that I had, actually, in growing up.

□ 2145

And it's never left me. It has never entered my mind that I made it; so why can't you? I know how important that help was.

Mr. ELLISON. That's right.

Ms. WOOLSEY. The Federal Government was there for me and my family, and you have to believe I've paid back.

Mr. ELLISON. Reclaiming my time, you know, the Federal Government has been there for so many of us, even those of us who are under the mad delusion that we did it all ourselves. You know, you may be a big successful businessperson, but you get out of the bed in the morning knowing that if somehow you had a medical problem, 911, you could call them, and the EMS truck—that's the government—would come take care of you and take you to the hospital.

If you do manage to get all banged up and clean, the water coming out of the shower, somebody's inspected it to make sure that it wasn't going to poison you.

You get in your car and you get out on the road, that's the government,

too, buddy, making sure that you have a decent road to go on.

And then because people aren't driving a gazillion miles an hour driving crazy, there's a cop out there making sure that people obey traffic rules. That's the government as well.

And there is a light that's properly regulating the traffic flow, the government. And then you drive to work and you see your employees, and you know what, they were educated in public school, the government again.

And after all of that help you turn around and said I did it all myself, and I don't want to pay these taxes because they're reaching in my back pocket, wait a minute; we've been helping you every single step of the way. Maybe the invention that you sell was on a government research grant.

So many opportunities are afforded us because we come together, because we are a society that operates for the common good, and yet, we have some people who only want to say that it's all me, I did everything, it's just me, I don't want to pay any taxes, I don't want to help anybody out, I don't care about any poor people. I don't care if a husband had a mental health issue, couldn't maintain his livelihood; she ends up having to turn to a welfare system which really is a caring society. I don't care about them. I don't care about those three kids. I don't care about those homeless people.

That kind of psychology is why we exist to try to tell people that we're better off together than we are apart. We're not trying to stop you from being able to do your own thing, but don't forget about the rest of us as you do your own thing.

The taxes are what we pay to live in a civilized society. The taxes are what we pay if we want good roads, good water, clean meat, if you want to be able to eat a peanut and not fall out from salmonella poisoning. This is what it's all about.

If you want to make sure that some of those women who were not as lucky as you, maybe who didn't have those job skills, maybe just weren't as fortunate as you, but we do have a system in place to do workforce training so they can get these skills and take care of themselves because we all want to be able to take care of ourselves. This is why the Progressive Caucus exists.

So let me yield back to you again.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Well, just to finish this thought, every person we help who gets back on his or her feet pays back to the community and to the greater good.

Mr. ELLISON. That's right.

Ms. WOOLSEY. And that's what happens to most people who get help; some, not, but most do.

So, knowing that, the fourth issue we have of asking of our conferees in our Progressive Caucus letter that our two co-chairs signed is investing in America's health care.

Mr. ELLISON. Very important.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Fewer Americans have access to insurance and health

care. The House appropriately invested in immediate and preventive care. The Senate bill cuts \$5.8 billion that was directed towards grants and contracts to prevent illness through health screenings, through education; malnutrition, immunization, nutrition counseling; media campaigns and other activities related to health.

The House actually had set aside \$3 billion for prevention and wellness, and furthermore, the Senate version cut \$5 billion that is intended to help unemployed workers pay for health insurance, reducing the Federal subsidy under COBRA coverage to 50 percent from 66 percent. That's something I have no idea how somebody can be out of work, living on unemployment, and afford COBRA. I mean that would eat up one whole person's unemployment or both family members that are working.

So, practically speaking, the Senate bill ignores the fact that many States who have unemployment insurance benefits that are covering or need to cover the newly unemployed workers will receive less money for the unemployed workers and for pay for food or housing, and that's going to really wipe out our States. And then individuals who have to pay COBRA health coverage, that wipes them out, and we're not going to help them if you don't change that in the conference.

So that's health care that's not going to be supported like it should.

Mr. ELLISON. So let's look over the four things. Number one, the Progressive Caucus is in there pitching hard for education; two, for aid to the States; three, for homeownership; four, health care. The Progressive Caucus is fighting for America's people. I'm so proud of the leadership that you and Congressman GRIJALVA offer to us.

Let me also add on this health care front, the pandemic food preparedness. That's a serious health care issue, and the House version included \$900 million for food and the original Senate proposal only had \$870 million. That could be a big difference for people who really need the help.

I also want to just add on a few other items if I may. You mentioned the neighborhood stabilization program, very important program, and I want to mention that which I believe was the third item that we asked for in the Progressive Caucus letter.

The neighborhood stabilization program helps local communities say that, look, if you have a bunch of foreclosures on a block, we're going to try to go in there and do something with that abandoned house because you know that if you have never missed a payment on your mortgage, you up-keep your property, you do a great job with your house, the second you get a foreclosed property next to you, your property value has just dropped. If somebody doesn't move into that house, and oftentimes they don't, the lawn may not get cut, the pipes may burst, people might steal the copper

out of them, and it just creates a real nuisance to the whole neighborhood and drags the whole neighborhood down.

Again, back to this idea of some people believe, well, I don't want to help anybody out of foreclosure because I paid all my bills. Well, look, if you can have the value of your home protected by making sure that people don't get foreclosed upon or that if they do, the foreclosed property doesn't just go down, that is helping you. That is helping you. But it's helping you in a way that recognizes you're a member of the community and not out there all by yourself.

I also wanted to mention, as you mentioned, as we talked, there are other things like infrastructure development we've got to keep fighting for. Rural broadband access. In the Senate compromise, funding to increase broadband access in rural areas and other underserved parts of the country was reduced from \$9 billion to \$7 billion. That's more than twice as much as the House has offered.

Also Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, let me tell you these help fund a lot of the police departments around the country. The fact is that we cannot stop protecting the public just because we have a recession. A lot of police departments, local governments as we talked about before, are under a lot of pressure, and the Senate proposal trims additions to the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program which provides formula funding to State and local police. And the compromise would cut \$450 million from Byrne grants, reducing funding from \$1.5 billion to just about \$1 billion, and that's not a good thing. We need to be able to stick out there.

And I also can't neglect home weatherization services, where the House bill allows for a Federal program that provides funding to increase energy efficiency for low-income families. The Senate allocates only \$2.9 billion for the program, while the House had 6.2. And of course, LIHEAP, I know that's a favorite program of everybody. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, unlike the House bill, the Senate version does not include additional funds for LIHEAP, which help low-income families pay utility bills.

So, again, the House bill is much better, and we hope that the conferees fight for the House version of the bill because that is what would help America much better.

Ms. WOOLSEY. And if the gentleman will yield, nine-tenths of the list that you read off creates jobs. I mean, it doesn't just upgrade the home and keep and make it energy efficient, which is so important, but the people doing the work are employed, and they're employed in jobs that pay a livable wage, and that is so important.

And one of the things we asked, not as one of the four key areas of the conferees, but that we let them know that we're concerned about the Senate's

package in their investment in jobs because we wanted them to focus on green technology, and we wanted them to focus on veterans, and we absolutely are insisting that they maintain the prevailing wage. I mean, if we're going to have Federal funds, if we're going to be creating jobs, we do not want to create jobs for slave labor, and we want jobs that can make the worker independent and able to take care of his or her family.

Mr. ELLISON. A good, livable wage, green jobs.

Let me say that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which is moving its way through Congress at this time, different House and Senate version, 90 percent of it overlaps but there are some important differences we just talked about.

The bill, the Democrat bill quite frankly, H.R. 1, which passed through the House, would create about 3.7 million jobs. That's a lot of jobs. The House Republican plan would only create 1.3 million jobs.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Still a lot of jobs but we can do better.

Mr. ELLISON. We can do more than twice as better. So we can't just do as the little we can do. We've got to do as much as we can do because unemployment is a serious issue.

It's important to understand that jobs lost in the last 13 months is we've lost 3.6 million jobs. So, if we want to recover what we've lost in the last 13 months, we've got to have a bill like the House plan, and if we don't, we're going to be in a real situation.

And folks need to understand—and I know you understand this very well—you know, if I lose my job, then I'm not going to get that haircut because I really cannot afford it. That's a 20 bucks I'm not going to spend. So now the barber didn't get that 20 bucks. Maybe there's a few other people who can't get their hair cut. So now maybe the barber's not making enough money to make his rent. So now he has got to say maybe I can't do barbering, maybe I've got to close down my little shop now because I don't have the volume of traffic coming in. So now this is a person out of work. So now maybe the barber would go to the diner across the street and eat lunch every day. They're not buying meals.

So this thing has a ripple effect. So that's why it's important for us to pass a jobs and stimulus bill but a smart bill that invests in long-term recovery.

You know what, I want to show you another jobs chart up here, and again, you very clearly pointed out the individual human toll. But just to do a little numbers for a moment, Job Losses in Recent Recessions. Now, if you look at that blue line, this is the recession of 1990. This is the 1990 recession. We were coming out of George Bush, the First, and that was the 1990 recession with the first George Bush. And so we had a recession then, and that was a Republican time and we had a recession, and those things seem to go together for some reason. But anyway,

we had another recession in 2001 when Bush came into office. You know, Bill Clinton left America with a budget surplus.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Right.

Mr. ELLISON. And you know, the other party got in and they took care of that surplus real quick. But the 2001 recession dipped us down. We lost the volume job loss relative to the peak month. This is way down.

□ 2200

Now, the current recession is off the chart. That is the green line. Pow. We are not even measuring how far down. We don't know how far down we are going to go.

Ms. WOOLSEY. This is not finished.

Mr. ELLISON. This is not finished. And the fact is that the job losses that we are looking at—3.6 since when the recession started in December, 2007. Something must be done. We have to act now. Anybody who knows anything about economics knows that.

And I will say this: while I really want the Senate version to improve, and I really am going to fight for that and encourage people to get on those conferees and have a better bill come out, I know that we have to do something. No action is no option.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Right. We need to pass the stimulus. The other thing the economists tell us, and they are absolutely right, we know that, besides—the first thing they tell us is, It's got to be big enough to make a difference. The second thing they tell us is, It's got to be done quickly.

So we really have to come to agreement this week and get on with taking care of the recovery that people need in this country. We need to be making people first, we need to have people in need—we need to help them. We need to create jobs, we need to spur innovation, and this economy can and must get back on track.

Mr. ELLISON. Now, I want to say, if the gentlady yields back, that the American people are behind us here. Sixty-seven percent approved of President Obama's efforts to pass the stimulus. Only 25 percent disapproved. The Democrats in Congress scored a 48 percent approval rating. That is way up from before.

And we had 42 percent of those disapprove of actions in Congress' majority. Unfortunately, the party on the other side of the aisle, the Republicans in Congress, have an approval rating of only 31 percent. But I think they could do better if they support the bill. I would love to see them improve their popularity by supporting the bill.

It will be great to have a bipartisan bill. The first time it went through, we couldn't get one Republican vote, even though President Obama came to talk with them, even though he reached his hand out, even though he extended himself to try to get to this post-partisan world that we all really, really want. But he put his hand out and they left him hanging.

Maybe it's going to come back around, and we can get a few Republican votes next time. But I just want to make clear that the American people are on the side of a stimulus package that will help them get back to work, and they believe that the President's doing the right thing by pushing this bill.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Also, Congressman, they knew who dug this hole. I mean, this is a deep, deep hole that our new President, Barack Obama, inherited. And expectations are that he dig us out of it and go forward at the same time. Now that is going to be very hard. But we are going to do our part in working with him to make sure this can happen. But it cannot happen overnight. We have to know that that hole is so deep that we don't know where the bottom is yet.

So it seems so odd to me that the same people who dug the hole are the ones who are saying, We want to keep doing it the way we did it all along. The only way to solve this problem is to cut taxes some more.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentlady would yield back, you know the definition of insanity, right?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Doing the same thing over and over.

Mr. ELLISON. And expecting a different result. Deregulation and tax cuts got us into this mess. But fair regulation and shared prosperity is going to get us out. And that's why the Progressive Caucus is here tonight, talking about the progressive message.

Here's the Web site right down here. Congressional Progressive Caucus. Here's the Web site.

If the gentlady from California feels that we made our point tonight, what we are going to do is hand it over. But I think before we do, any parting comments you would like to make?

Ms. WOOLSEY. I would just like to thank you, Congressman ELLISON, for what you're doing here to help the country see what the progressive "ask" is. We have a progressive promise that will go over with them one of these days soon. But right now the most important thing we can do is stabilize the economy for those in this country. And it's going to affect everybody.

I believe you're totally right. People are with us because they get it. If they are not hurting themselves yet, they certainly know many people who are.

Mr. ELLISON. That's right. So this is the progressive message, this 1-hour Special Order that the Progressive Caucus comes to the American people to talk about what is really happening, Mr. Speaker. We have been fortunate to have the chairperson of the Progressive Caucus, who's been offering tremendous leadership, not only on economics, not only on an inclusive economics system, but also on war and peace. That's another thing that you have done such a great job on.

How many 5-minute speeches have you given on the issue of peace?

Ms. WOOLSEY. Over 290.

Mr. ELLISON. I don't think there's anyone who's done nearly as many. I think you probably have, like, broken a record somewhere along the line.

Ms. WOOLSEY. People say to me, Why do you do that? You're just talking to an empty room. First of all, it's not an empty room because people are watching us. But that 5 minutes is the only 5 minutes I have every day that I can control my subject without it having to be part of what everybody else's agenda is. And, I am telling you, I said I was going to keep talking until our troops were home from Iraq. And, guess what? They aren't home yet.

Mr. ELLISON. So you're going to keep talking.

Ms. WOOLSEY. I am.

Mr. ELLISON. Let me say, just like you have been there day in and day out, talking about peace, bringing our veterans home, we are going to be here week after week doing a Special Order with the progressive message. We are going to be encouraging people to get involved. It's not just about an outcome, it's also about a process.

We want to encourage people to get involved. What can you do? You can write, you can call. You can raise your voice and let your voice be heard.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairwoman of the Progressive Caucus, and we will yield back our time.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. It's an honor and a privilege to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. It's interesting and intriguing for me to listen to the dialog that flows forth from earlier this evening, the gentleman from Texas, and now the voices of the Congressional Progressive Caucus as they put their poster up on the floor that directs people to their Web site and make their argument as to the things that are in this stimulus package that they believe should stay and the things that are not in and may have been taken out that they believe should have stayed in or be put back in.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that this debate that we have is much deeper and much more profound than the components that have been discussed here in the previous hour. I think it goes to our vision of America itself. And the question that is before this country is, in some sense, What will we do in the middle of this economic crisis, this one that came tumbling down upon us on September 19, the date that Secretary of the Treasury Paulson came to the Capitol and very intensely insisted that we provide \$700 billion for him to spend at his discretion, without a lot of oversight, perhaps with no oversight,