Mr. AKIN. That sounds like freedom working, doesn't it?

Mr. BRADY of Texas. It is. Instead of government one-size-fits-all, why don't we give more freedom and more incentives for people to have a health care plan that fits their needs?

We have great ideas. My colleagues here tonight I guarantee you could spend a lot of time with these new ideas. But we need a President who will be open. We need a Democrat Congress who will quit rushing bills through this Chamber and give a chance for those good ideas to come forward.

Mr. AKIN. Just reclaiming my time, if I were to list off some things for small business, and you have run a Chamber and run your own small business, it seems like to me there are some things we are doing that I just wouldn't do.

The first thing is the death tax. That is a bad idea. We are having that death tax come back so some poor guy loses his business, I mean he dies, and his son is going to run the business, but now he has to sell half the business to pay the tax on it. What is the logic of that? That destroys jobs and destroys small businesses. So first the death tax.

The next thing it seems to me like dividends and capital gains, boy, did we see the economy jump when we limited that and allowed people to keep more liquidity in the economy. So that is another thing we could to.

Another thing, it seems to me, is when you say you are going to tax people making $250,000, a whole lot of money, those are the guys that own the small business. Do you want them to create jobs, or do you want to suck all the money away from them like some sort of leech until they are so dry and withered up they can't hire anybody anymore?

I think there are some things that we just didn't do. Just leave them alone and let them do what they do so well, which is follow the American dream.

I yield to my friend from Louisiana.

Mr. SCALISE. I thank again my friend from Missouri. You know, there are very critical areas of our economic problems that we have proposed alternative solutions to, three in particular I think that are critical to what is happening today that we presented to President Obama. Unfortunately, he hasn't taken them in the first 100 days. Hopefully he will take them in the next 100 days.

But if we talk about the overall economy, number one, the banking system, which is still holding back our economy; number two, energy policies, where we still don't have a comprehensive national energy policy; number three . . .

Mr. AKIN. Reclaiming my time, are you saying that hugging Chavez is not really a national energy policy? Is that what you are trying to say?

I yield. I couldn't resist that.

Mr. SCALISE. Well, if you start with the overall economy, one of the biggest things we can do, rather than just massively growing the size of government and adding trillions of dollars to our national debt, we can empower our middle-class families and our small businesses. We presented a bill to do just that, a bill that would actually cut taxes for middle-class families and for small businesses, who create the bulk of our jobs.

What some people on the other side have said is, it is the tax cuts that have gotten us into this problem. What they fail to recognize is history. Every time we cut taxes, you can go back to when John F. Kennedy cut taxes or when Ronald Reagan or George Bush cut taxes, revenues to the Federal Government actually increased. What was always wrong was that the Congress spent more money than came in from those tax cuts.

So tax cuts clearly have worked. It is the fiscal discipline in Congress that has always failed us. So maintain fiscal discipline, cut the taxes to get the economy back on track, go into the banking system—we had proposed alternatives that would actually get the banks working again.

Mr. AKIN. You are talking so fast and what you are saying is so good, you are really referring to three different times in history, where instead of doing what FDR did and Henry Morgenthau tried to do, and came before Congress and said it failed, it doesn't work, this stimulus idea, this Keynesian idea, what has worked was what JFK did, what Ronald Reagan did, and what George Bush did, three separate times at 20-year different intervals, and that was they actually cut the taxes, and this seems like water going uphill, and the revenues of the Federal Government went up.

That is kind of an interesting phenomena, but it has happened time after time. And the reason behind that, I will go ahead and yield and let the gentleman explain that.

Mr. SCALISE. The problem is fiscal discipline hasn't been maintained by Congress. For all of the new revenue that came into the Federal Government, Congress always went on to spend even more money. So that is one area you can address.

On the banking system, we still have major problems in our banking system, a lot of it created by irresponsible lending by groups like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, who gave loans to people with no ability to pay, and they were encouraged by government. We need to end that.

On a comprehensive national energy policy, we can actually use our own natural resources, continue drilling for oil, natural gas, cleaning coal up and using nuclear power and take that extra revenue with those millions of jobs we would create and fund the alternative sources of energy, like wind and solar, to get us to that next level of jobs, rather than a cap-and-trade energy tax that would run millions of jobs out of our economy and also raise taxes on American families.

So we have presented these alternatives. In the first 100 days, unfortunately, President Obama has not worked with us to embrace any of these ideas, but hopefully that will change as more people become concerned about this record level of record spending.

Mr. AKIN. Congressman SCALISE, I really appreciate your positives and giving very specific kinds of things that can be done to turn the economy around, to reduce this level of spending.

We are just about out of time. I appreciate your expertise and joining us tonight. I am going to just recognize my friend Judge CARTER for a minute, and then we are going to have to wrap things up and I will come back to you.

Mr. CARTER. I just want to point out there are a few things we haven't talked about, like apologizing to the terrorists; labeling enemy combatants, they are now foreign detainees; labeling the war on terror as international contingencies; labeling the terror attacks as man-caused disasters; hugging up to the Castro brothers, who tried to make their island a launching platform for intercontinental ballistic missiles within my life; and hugging up to Hugo Chavez, the man who hates this country more than anybody, and taking his book, which is all about venom against this country.

These are just a few of many, many other things we haven't talked about tonight.

Mr. AKIN. It was basically labeled a Communist rant and an idiot's Bible, I think, by various people that reviewed that book.

Going last to my good friend, a very senior and distinguished Congressman from Texas, KEVIN BRADY.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Well, I think the way you started this, and the issue is freedom, Thomas Jefferson said a government big enough to supply all your needs is big enough to take everything you have. It is important we keep that in mind as this country grows deeper, deeper, deeper into debt.

Mr. AKIN. I appreciate all of you joining us in this nice family discussion and hope that it has been of interest to our colleagues. I just ask us please to do a little better in the next 100 days.

FISCAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE COUNTRY

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

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, I am here tonight to talk about some of the fiscal issues that have affected this country and how they were caused and maybe a little bit of who caused them and who didn't cause them.

Over the last several months, obviously there has been a lot of debate about this and there have been a lot of people who want to point a lot of fingers at other people. And that is natural. We all tend to do some of that in our lives, and it is particularly natural here in Washington. People love to point fingers at somebody else when there are bad things going on, and people love to point fingers at themselves when there is something good that goes on.

In this particular case, with the financial crisis that we have, instead of stepping up and understanding that, I believe every single American, including me, has some degree of blame in the current fiscal situation. Everybody tried to get a piece of the American dream. Everybody tried to punch up whatever retirement plans they had. Everybody tried to get better rates on their loans. Everybody tried to get better rates on their credit cards. Everybody tried to get more mortgages than they could afford. Everybody tried to do it. And, of course, some people in business were there to try to provide those things.

So I think it is a little ludicrous to try to blame anyone in particular, or actually any group of people. I think it is all of us that have some degree of blame.

As I heard some of my colleagues just a few minutes ago try to blame Fannie and Freddie or try to blame individual Members of the House or individual Members of the Senate, I think that is ridiculous, and I actually have more faith in the average American than to think they would think any individual or any one group could do it.

In this particular case, let's go back just a little bit. What were Fannie and Freddie created for? They were created to help the middle class be able to purchase a home. That is why they were created. Because before their creation, home ownership was limited to only about 20 to 30 percent of Americans. About 60 to 70 percent of Americans were never able to afford a home because banks simply wouldn't make loans unless they were absolutely guaranteed of always getting their money back. They wouldn't take any risk whatsoever.

So Fannie and Freddie were created in order to stabilize home ownership that was on the border. They were also created, most importantly, to expand the availability of mortgages to working people. And it happened slowly, over time. This country went from a place where only 30 percent of Americans own homes, to now in today's world approximately 70 percent of Americans own their own homes. That is in contrast to most of Western Europe, where it is about 90 percent of people own their own homes.

I personally think, having been raised in a middle-class, lower-middle-class family, that home ownership is still the best way to guarantee entry and maintenance of a middle-class lifestyle, because it is the largest purchase any of us will ever make, most of us will ever make. It is the most important purchase.

In the normal course of events, over time, you build up equity in a home. And most of us have to remortgage it to send our kids to college. That is how most of us afforded to be able to send our kids to college.

All that being said, Fannie and Freddie and their concept of a government-sponsored enterprise have created over time an immense number of homeowners, an immense number of people who would not otherwise have had an opportunity to get a mortgage.

□ 2000

I have no doubt. I totally agree that over the last 10 or so years, like everybody else, they decided to stretch some of the definitions to do some things that maybe were questionable, not necessarily for any nefarious reasons, but for the same reason banks were doing it, for the same reason hedge funds were created, for the same reason private equity firms were created, to get a little bit better return.

Now, there were many of us at the time, now I'm talking back in 2005 and earlier, who said, you know, maybe they've gone too far; maybe they've expanded it just a little bit too much; maybe they have to be reined back in.

And back at that time, our friends, the Republicans on the other side of the aisle, were in charge of the House, they were in charge of the Senate, and they were in charge of the White House. And we worked with them. We worked with Chairman Mike Oxley of the Financial Services Committee to try to come up with a bill that would address some of these very issues, and we did. We got a bill out of committee and on to the floor of this House in a bipartisan fashion that would have reined in some of the concerns that these people that have just talked have about Fannie and Freddie, and not just Fannie and Freddie. I don't want to pretend in any way that they were the only ones doing this, but they were also the ones that we were responsible for. It would have reined them in. And it was done in a responsible way, in a bipartisan way, with Chairman Oxley and at that time Ranking Member BARNEY FRANK and the White House, the Bush White House, not the Obama White House, not the Clinton White House, but with the Bush White House.

When the bill got out here some of the more extreme Members wanted to shut down the whole thing, having no clue how most of their own constituents were able to afford a home, and they raised all their concerns, all the same ones you've heard tonight, that government should have nothing to do with mortgage rates. Well, that's ridiculous. That is ridiculous. And they just decided to kill it. This is back in 2003, 2004 and 2005.

And if you don't believe me, we have quotes here from Chairman Oxley himself, who was quoted as saying—now, this is after the fact. This is dated September 2008, talking about those times. And Chairman Oxley himself, this is a quote from the Financial Times, not necessarily the bastion of liberal thinking. He fumes about the criticism of his House colleagues. This is a quote: ''All the hand-wringing and bed wetting is going on without remembering how the House stepped up on this,'' he says.

What did we get from the White House? We got a one-finger salute. When we tried to rein in Fannie and Freddie, the right-wing members of the Republican Party decided to say ''no.'' They decided to let it ride.

Now, I understand what they were doing for political purposes. I don't understand, still don't to this day understand what they were trying do for financial purposes or government purposes. But ideologues around this place never understand that sometimes doing what's right for people is better than winning an ideological argument.

In this case, if we had simply done that one thing, according to, again, this is the Republican chairman of the Financial Services Committee at the time, when the House was run by Republicans, the Senate was run by them and they had the White House. This is a direct quote. ''We missed a golden opportunity that would have avoided a lot of the problems we're facing now.'' That's his quote, not mine. I happen to agree with him, obviously.

We didn't take the opportunity. And what happened? A few years after that things got a little worse. Democrats finally took the House back.

What was one of the very first things we did? We passed a bill to reform Fannie and Freddie. We passed a bill to reduce and restrict subprime loans as quickly as we could. You can't put the genie back in the bottle. This was 2007, after most of the problems had been caused.

Now, that doesn't mean, I won't pretend that myself and others don't have some degree of blame. I am happy to accept my degree.

What did I do? What did people who agreed with me do?

I was happy to push to allow more people to qualify for mortgages. I thought at that time, and I still believe, that that is a good goal. I will admit, knowing what we know now, maybe we pushed a little too hard for some people. I agree with that. I understand that. That doesn't mean when times get better, people like me won't push again, because I still believe that the best way into the middle class and the best way to stay in the middle class is home ownership. And I don't know anyone who disagrees with that, except people that are already in the higher income brackets, who they have theirs, and they're more than happy to pull up the ladder for the next people trying to make it to the middle class.

People want to rewrite history. I understand that. It's not new. It's an old political game. But facts are facts. When the government agencies had overstepped some of their boundaries, we were there to try to help them, help get them back within those boundaries. We worked with Republicans. We got a good bipartisan bill out of committee, and then that bill fell into the hands of the Newt Gingriches and others of the world who just let their ideology control everything they do and everything they say.

And we didn't have the votes. As soon as we got the votes, we addressed the issues, and we are still addressing them now. Yes, we're trying to fix the mess that we inherited and we will continue to try to do so. But we're also trying to make sure, while we're doing that, that these things can't happen again. And we have done that already, to some degree. We have a few more things that we have to do.

As a matter of fact, today we spent a fair amount of time in Financial Services passing a bill that hopefully will be on the floor next week, or the week after, that will continue that process, to make sure that future mortgages, Number 1, are given to people who deserve it, Number 2, can be paid back, and yet, that balance to allow people to continue to access mortgages, to continue to build themselves up in the middle class, and to continue to be able to stay there.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to yield as much time as she might desire to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN).

Ms. BEAN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank to you my colleague, Congressman CAPUANO for leading this Special Order tonight.

I wanted to just kind of go back and share with those who are listening tonight that when I came to Congress, I was elected in 2004, I came in 2005. I asked to serve on the Financial Services Committee. I had no idea at that time that it would be the busiest committee in 2009 as we've worked to address the economic downturn, the likes of which we certainly haven't seen in my lifetime.

But to reflect back on that history, what I was so pleased to discover, because we talk a lot about partisanship in the media and there's a feeling that there's never any working together in Washington, is I came to the committee in 2005 under the chairmanship of Republican Mike Oxley and Ranking Member BARNEY FRANK, and they demonstrated what work together really means. It was a committee that put partisanship aside. Both leaders of both parties recognized hard work and good ideas; it didn't matter which side of the aisle it came from. They worked hard to find common ground. And I was very happy to be there and learned a lot from Chairman Oxley and respect him, as I've also come to see that Chairman FRANK, as he took the gavel in 2007, has continued in that tradition. It's exciting to see what's possible in committees when ideas prevail over ideology.

As I mentioned, it's been a busy committee, and we haven't slowed down. And we have a chairman that's very deliberative and consensus-driven. Unfortunately, when Chairman FRANK took the gavel in 2007, he was faced with some serious challenges. The subprime mortgage crisis, the issue of bringing proper oversight to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and he really stepped up to those challenges. In fact, prior to that, we'd already been working. In fact, prior to the recent problems with the mortgage crisis, in 2007, we immediately passed legislation to address the subprime crisis and, in fact, Chairman FRANK made sure that we passed robust oversight for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. That did pass and become law.

Unfortunately, the mortgage reform went to the Senate, where it did not move and get to the President for signature and did not become law. And we are now, just this week in committee, and, in fact, today, we were marking up another mortgage reform bill that we'll be bringing forward, and we're more hopeful that the Senate and the President will act on that and it will become law so that we can eliminate the lending practices of the past that introduce too much risk to the system and set up people to fail. It's not home ownership if you're only there for a little while and ultimately can't make your payments.

We have to move beyond the lack of due diligence and proper underwriting standards that allowed no doc, low doc loans, drive-by appraisals, triple A rated securities that really weren't triple A that contributed to an economic downturn of not just systemic proportions domestically, but international ramifications. And we're continuing to work hard on those issues.

We've worked to address foreclosure avoidance. We've worked to address the credit crisis. And all of this has been led by a chairman who continues to respect good ideas, regardless of which party they come from.

I find it interesting that many have chosen to demonize particular individuals in the Congress, or suggest that one Member, particularly when he served in the minority, somehow could bring the downfall of Fannie or Freddie or our system in general, when, in fact, well, for over a decade, many on both sides of the aisle talked about the need for proper oversight to these large institutions, Fannie and Freddie. And yet, it wasn't until Chairman FRANK had the gavel that we actually moved from rhetoric to resolution and passed that resolution in the House so we could bring that oversight. Unfortunately, by the time it did pass, it was too late to preclude government takeover of these institutions.

Let me move on to a couple of other areas that we've been working on in committee and, again, where there's been effort to work together. Let's talk about the TARP funding. One of the things that I was impressed with was that when past President Bush came and Secretary Paulson at the time came to Congress requesting funds to support greater stabilization of our financial institutions, Chairman FRANK didn't hesitate to bring some sincere bipartisan effort to the equation. He didn't accept the request as it was, which was, essentially, a blank check. He demanded greater accountability and more specific definition of the purpose of those funds, and has continued to fight to improve that ever since.

But what he also didn't do is he didn't lay blame. He didn't step back and say, that's another party's problem. He brought constructive solutions forward. And that's what we all need to do in this body if we're to address the challenges we continue to face.

We've had countless hearings, not only in the past Congress, but in this Congress, to address issues about agency abilities and lack of abilities; if you look, for instance, at the Madoff scandal and the SEC's inability to have addressed that long before they finally did and when it was too late.

We've had hearings about the AIG fallout and does that bring about the need for a greater Federal role in insurance regulation.

We've had hearings about systemic risk and how we can bring a greater authority to have an umbrella oversight beyond the functional regulator so we can determine where there might be risks in the system that, in a future downturn, could do what happened recently, affecting all of our businesses, our families' savings for retirement and for college, reducing the values of our homes. And we need to avoid that type of systemic fallout when we have future downturns, which we're always likely to have in normal cycles.

We've talked about providing resolution authority so that, as the FDIC has been able to wind down failing banks in a way that has not been disruptive to businesses and families who are depositors of those banks, but to reorganize those institutions in a way that doesn't bring further panic to the system, we don't have, and our Federal Government doesn't have, clear authority relative to someone like an AIG or other institutions that don't fall under FDIC's ability to do that.

So as we continue through these hearings and continue our hard work, I think it's important that we focus on solutions and not playing the blame game. This is my fifth year in Congress, and I've never come to this floor to attack an individual or a party, and I don't ever intend to do that. But I thought it was important to come, at least call it as I see it and lay the record more clearly where there have been those who have cast blame clearly in the wrong direction.

□ 2015

Many economists are telling us this is the worst crisis we have seen since the Great Depression. We have been forced to make hard choices, and we are going to continue to make hard choices. And we are going to make some mistakes along the way, but our intent needs to be, on a bipartisan basis, that we roll up our sleeves, we work together, and we find the best solutions possible. I am glad that on the Financial Services Committee we have a chairman and a ranking member who both step up to bring that kind of leadership in the continued tradition that was here when I came in 2005 under Chairman Oxley and then Ranking Member FRANK. I am glad to be on that committee and will continue to do my part.

I will mention one other thing. I happen to vice chair a coalition that's called the New Dem Coalition, which is a pro-growth caucus. And we have been very focused on pro-growth, pro-innovation solutions to some of the challenges that we are facing. I also happen to chair the task force for the NDC on Financial Services regulatory reform. And I have also appreciated the chairman's deliberative approach and feedback to some of the suggestions we have made to him for committee consideration relative to regulatory reform.

We are focusing on regulatory performance. Clearly, the SEC's inability to determine that there was a problem that ultimately resulted in the Madoff Ponzi scheme suggests that we don't need more regulation, but better regulation, and a greater degree of best practices in the agencies who should be accountable for it.

We are also working on addressing issues of market stability and transparency, making sure that we bring to the table some counters, or countercyclical mechanisms to offset the procyclical nature of our system as it occurs currently, which has contributed to repeat cycles of booms and busts and booms and busts. And we need to be more prescriptive in working with our regulators to ensure that they consider and have the flexibility to weigh in on things relative to capital requirements. So as we see a bubble in formation, maybe increasing some of those requirements so as to encourage some deleveraging where clearly we were overleveraged. Conversely, when we are in a precipitous downfall, as we have all experienced recently, that is probably the time that the regulator should have the ability to consider easing up on those capital requirements so it doesn't require forced selloff of other equities as it did when we had the mortgage crisis, which created a more systemic-wide problem.

We have to improve consumer and investor protections. And so we look at things like the credit default swap market, which has been roughly a $62 trillion unregulated market that left many counterparties out there and ultimately required Federal intervention to assist AIG in their downturn.

Those are the kinds of things that we are working on. And we don't have all the answers, but we are working together on a bipartisan basis to find those solutions—and had a late night dinner this week. Those are the kinds of things that we are going to have to continue to do to bring real solutions to the table and help create an environment so that our businesses and our families are on a solid foundation that supports sustained growth as we turn our economy around.

Thank you. And I yield back.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take two seconds and show this chart.

As you can see, this chart shows the number of subprime loans over a period from 1996 to 2005. Pretty obvious what happened. Within the first couple of years, subprime loans were reasonable, and a number of them given out. This entire time the House was controlled by the Republican Party, the entire time of this chart.

As you can see from this hashed section, that is when the White House was taken by the Republican Party. And you can see what happened to subprime loans, they skyrocketed. They skyrocketed. And they didn't stop until 2008—actually, they didn't stop. They started slowing down in 2008 and they stopped in 2009.

What happened in 2007 was the Democrats took over the House and they passed legislation to deal with this. That same legislation—or similar, I shouldn't say the same, but similar legislation was passed through the Financial Services Committee in the year 2005 that would have done the same things earlier. Now, it wouldn't have stopped the problems, but it would have lessened the problems. And this chart speaks for itself.

It is amazing to me that people can blame others when the ones on the receiving end of that did not control this House, did not control the Senate, did not control the administration, did not control any of the appointments to any of the regulatory agencies, yet somehow they can be blamed for a lack of action. That is unbelievable rewriting of history. And I just think the people who know the facts will draw their own conclusions.

With that, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Colorado for as much time as he would like.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thank you, Mr. CAPUANO. And I appreciate the comments that you have made.

I have a chart that shows exactly how much was done under the Republican Congress and the Republican administration in terms of reforming and revamping the GSEs, or, in other words, the Federal National Mortgage Association or the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, and what was done to deal with subprime lending during the Bush administration, and at the same time when Congress was in the hands of the Republican Party.

My friends earlier today from the other side of the aisle were blaming everything on Democrats when they were in charge. Now, it is nice to try to lay blame when there is a realistic argument for laying that blame, but they can't do that. It simply is a fact that nothing was done to try to deal with what was becoming a tremendous housing bubble; that there were excesses in the way that lending was taking place, that restraints didn't exist, that regulation was being eliminated or ignored. And as a consequence, we had a tremendous burst of a bubble.

And it is under the Democratic Congress, under the chairmanship of BARNEY FRANK, that there has been a real effort to try to rein this in. So instead of having zero, this Congress, one of the very first things it did under the Democrats and under Chairman FRANK's leadership was to begin reforming Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. It was one of the very first bills that the Congress in 2007, when I was elected, when Congressman ELLISON was elected, it was one of the very first things that we did, knowing full well that there were excesses with Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the subprime lending. We still didn't have much success with the Bush administration. Certainly, the Obama administration is going to deal with this directly.

We are in the process of working on subprime loans and predatory lending. We did finally get some Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac legislation passed at the end of last year. And now we can start regulating these kinds of vehicles, this kind of lending in a serious fashion, not one that is going to bring the market to a halt, but one that respects the fact that you can get out of control, and that is precisely what happened.

I know my friend from Massachusetts read the quote from Mr. Oxley, who was the Republican chairman who tried to do something but was stalled by the Bush administration. But I think it again bears reading. He says, this was last summer, when we actually passed the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac legislation and all of a sudden there were a lot of Republicans saying the Democrats should have done something about Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac earlier before there were any kinds of financial problems. And he said something, he fumes about the criticism of his House colleagues—this is Republican former Chairman Mike Oxley, "All the handwringing and bedwetting is going on without remembering how the House stepped up on this. What did we get from the White House? We got a one-finger salute."

So when there was an attempt, even under the Republican Congress, to try to reform things, the White House refused to do that. So that kind of gives you this big zero, what actually happened.

The subprime chart that Congressman CAPUANO showed a second ago was another sign of the excesses that were taking place under the Republican Congress and the Bush administration. And then you see what we get from all of that.

My friends on the other side of the aisle were complaining about the deficit and the debt that is being incurred right now, but it is that debt that was created under the Bush administration. The Obama administration has inherited a $1.3 trillion deficit; that's where they start. That is where this administration starts. And it starts with a banking crisis, a $1.3 trillion deficit, loss of jobs, and a housing crisis.

What we are doing is to provide some funding so that people can buy homes at an interest rate that is reasonable. We are trying to stop the foreclosures that are occurring. So we are trying to stabilize the housing market and we are trying to stabilize the financial market.

Now, much of what we did to try and stop the crisis or the fall of the financial markets was done last fall, really under a bipartisan effort of the Democratic Congress and the Bush administration, but it was in free fall. So the Obama administration is trying to get the financial markets on the right path again. It appears that that is going on.

And then we really, this Congress and that administration, also under the leadership of BARNEY FRANK, we came up with a stimulus bill, which is going to spur more jobs, creation of jobs, as well as a new energy economy, revamping education, and dealing with health care costs.

Now I would like to give my friend from Minnesota an opportunity to speak about this, and we will then have a conversation.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentleman would yield, I want to ask the gentleman a question. Did the stimulus package also include the Neighborhood Stabilization Act, which is money, passed through the Democratic Congress, that would allow the neighborhoods to get money to help buy up some of these foreclosed properties? Did that happen?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. It has. The underlying principle of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the stimulus bill, is jobs, jobs and stabilizing the housing market, financial market. But what it does with the Neighborhood Stabilization Act is it starts to absorb foreclosed properties, takes those foreclosed properties, upgrades them, rehabilitates the properties, and makes them energy-efficient homes. So not only does it stabilize the housing market, it creates jobs by upgrading these homes to energy-efficient standards, and then helps us move to a new energy economy, which is one of the key points in the stimulus bill. So it really has so many facets to it, the stimulus bill does, to get us back on track after falling off a cliff, as you can see what happened under the Bush administration.

I would yield back to my friend from Minnesota for any further comments; or I know my friend from Massachusetts is to be guiding all of us tonight, so wherever you would like to go.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know what, I appreciate that, but I am going to toss it back to the gentleman from Massachusetts, who I think is going to toss it to the gentlelady from Wisconsin. I am happy to wait my turn in the line since I was one of the last ones here tonight.

But I do appreciate the gentleman from Colorado's comments; I think they were dead on the mark. And I am very happy to be here tonight sticking up for the Democratic record and the leadership of BARNEY FRANK on Financial Services reform.

Mr. CAPUANO. There are just a few things I want to say before I pass it off to the gentlelady from Wisconsin.

There are a couple of things that people have to understand; yes, Fannie and Freddie have some blame in it, like we all do, but they didn't do anything that everybody else wasn't doing as well. They didn't create credit default swaps. They didn't create excessive leverage. Yes, they did invest in them heavily. Why did they invest in them heavily? They did it because the rate of return was so high they couldn't walk away, because that higher rate of return allowed them to then put more money up for mortgages. They didn't do anything that everybody else wasn't doing.

So yes, we are talking about them tonight because they are government-sponsored entities, but a lot of this was created by people other than them, the private market.

There is one other thing I do want to say. The other thing I have heard an awful lot of is that somehow the CRA, Community Reinvestment Act, is somehow to blame for all of this.

□ 2030

The CRA was a law that was passed because banks were happy to take money out of poor and lower income neighborhoods without putting any of it back in. People were allowed to deposit their money, but they weren't allowed to get mortgages. Simple law says, if you take the money out of these communities, you have to put some of that money back in.

Nothing in the CRA says a single loan should be given that is inappropriate. Nothing in the CRA says a single loan should be done in an unsafe or in an unprofitable manner. That's not what it says. As a matter of fact, it says things just quite the opposite. It simply says, if you want to do business in a certain community, you have to then do business in that community. It's quite simple.

One little fact: In 2006, 84 percent of the high-cost loans were originated by non-CRA covered banks. I'll say it again to make the point. Eighty-four percent of the loans given that were high-cost loans—all of these loans that mostly get a lot of people in trouble—were not given by banks covered by the CRA. How could they possibly then or how could that law possibly have caused this trouble if they were only giving out 16 percent of the troubled loans? No one else is to blame, just the ones that they don't like.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Would the gentleman yield for just one second?

Mr. CAPUANO. Absolutely.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I just have to go back to the quotes from Mr. Oxley, the Republican chairman at the time, trying to deal with excesses within the mortgage market. This is from the Financial Times, dated September 9, 2008.

He says, ''We missed a golden opportunity that would have avoided a lot of the problems we're facing now if we hadn't had such a firm ideological position at the White House and the Treasury and the Fed.''

With that, I'd yield back to my friend from Massachusetts.

Mr. CAPUANO. I'd like to yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin for as long as she might take.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Well, thank you so much, the gentleman from Massachusetts, the gentleman from Colorado and the gentleman from Minnesota. I'm very happy to participate in this Special Order tonight.

I think that, while we're talking tonight, it's really important to raise some really uncomfortable issues. I have heard many people on the other side of the aisle talking about CRA—the Community Reinvestment Act—and about Freddie and Fannie as causal of our current meltdown of the financial market. Let's get real about this. CRA and Freddie and Fannie are all proxies for a discussion of race, so I want to talk about race and about the whole history of the Community Reinvestment Act.

You know, I was out there, demanding as a community organizer that banks reinvest in communities in which they took deposits. I was one of the people demanding that they do it. Through extensive research, I was inspired, quite frankly, by a professor—now a professor at Georgetown University—who was a professor at the University of Wisconsin, Greg Squires, who found that minorities and particularly African Americans were being discriminated against in terms of getting prime loans.

What Professor Squires found is that, even when you controlled for income and when you controlled for other indices of creditworthiness, African Americans were less likely to get a prime loan and that redlining was the rule of the day and that, if you lived in a minority community, especially in the black community, no matter what your income, no matter what your credit score, no matter what your creditworthiness, being black—being an African American—would either not get you a loan at all or it would get you a subprime loan.

So the Community Reinvestment Act encouraged federally insured banks and thrifts to meet the credit needs of the entire communities that they served, including low- and moderate-income areas, that were consistent with safe and sound banking practices. The law was enacted in response to those of us who were out there who were concerned about disinvestment, and we produced evidence that lenders were systematically denying credit to certain communities, particularly to minority and low-income communities. They were actually practicing redlining.

As you indicated, the gentleman from Massachusetts, you were incorrect to say it was 84 percent of the high-cost loans that were made. It was 84.3 percent of these high-cost loans that were made in the 15 largest metropolitan areas. So what happened?

We went from CRA, which was a very good law, and Freddie and Fannie—these government-sponsored enterprises. We found that, in 2004, our former President, George W. Bush, demanded that Freddie and Fannie take on more of these mortgage-backed securities that were being produced by these subprime lenders, the 84.3 percent who were non-CRA lenders, and required them to buy more of these mortgage-backed securities. Now, mind you, Freddie and Fannie didn't write one single subprime loan, but they also became prey to the predators.

Now, why was there such a change of heart with respect to providing loans to minority communities? Because they found that there was a whole lot of money that could be made from these products, that there was a lot of money—a lot of moola—that could be made from these subprime loans. Low-income communities—minority communities—were targeted for these subprime loans.

So they went from not lending them money at all to providing loans to then forcing Freddie and Fannie, without getting regulation or with no one watching, to buy these mortgage-backed securities.

So I just want to get it straight here that, indeed, there were many, many, many loans made to African Americans and to Hispanics—people who were creditworthy, people who deserved prime loans. They didn't deserve these ARMs. Research and data are conclusive that African Americans, in particular, were given subprime loans even though they were worthy of prime loans. So I just don't want to hear it anymore.

When you hear CRA, the gentleman from Colorado; when you hear Fannie, the gentleman from Minnesota; and when you hear Freddie, that's a proxy for ''we loaned to all of those black people, and that's why we're having this worldwide crisis.'' No. The reason we're having this worldwide crisis is because of greed, because of fraud, because of lax regulators, because of fraudulent appraisers, because of the 84.3 non-CRA—non-Community Reinvestment Act—financial institutions in the marketplace, and because of race.

Race was the single factor in determining over the course of the past 30 years, first of all, who would not get a loan, who would be redlined against, and now currently who would, in fact, get a subprime loan.

I would yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts in response to this. I know that race is extremely uncomfortable for people to talk about, but I think it's important to keep it real.

Mr. CAPUANO. It certainly is uncomfortable for a lot of us, and it certainly is real. I totally agree with everything the gentlewoman just said.

By the way, if it were a race item, in reality, wouldn't everyone losing their homes today be black? The answer is that it's not. It's across all lines. Blacks are losing their houses. Whites are losing their houses. Hispanics are losing their houses. Why? We've all been victimized. I want to be clear. I want to repeat again:

Fannie and Freddie didn't do anything that everybody else wasn't doing. I'm not saying they're not without blame. They are as I am and as, I think, everyone is. We all have some degree of blame. Okay. At the same time, what about those who were in charge at the time? I'll go back to the chart of subprime loans.

During that entire time that subprime loans were charging upward, this House was controlled by Republicans. The Senate was controlled by Republicans almost that entire time. Particularly when they went through the roof, that's when they took over the White House. Why? Why did it happen overnight? Nobody sat down and said, ''Let's do subprime loans.''

What happened is we got an administration at the White House that said, ''We don't need regulation. Let the market do whatever it wants. Let human greed go unregulated.'' Now, there's nothing wrong with human greed. We're all greedy. It's what drives a lot of us—we all want more—but unfettered greed, unregulated greed, unlimited greed always leads to disaster. It always does. We had an administration that believed the market could regulate itself, period. Now, the market can regulate itself to some degree, but when you say to the SEC, ''Do nothing. Look the other way on credit default swaps. Sit on your hands when anybody comes up with new instrumentations and when banks have special investment vehicles that are off the books,'' this is the result.

Congress has some blame. No question about it. Personally, I should have screamed louder. Now we have the votes. Those people with the votes should have done something.

I want to point to the chart behind the gentleman from Colorado again. During the time period when Republicans had control, they did nothing. Nothing. Since we took over—and I'll go through the litany later because I'd like to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota—we have taken action. With action sometimes—there's no question about it—the horse is out of the barn to some degree. You can only do so much when that has happened, but we have done what we could do when we could do it. We will continue doing it this week and again next week.

With that, I'd like to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, actually, I'd like to address the question that was raised by Congresswoman GWEN MOORE from Wisconsin. I'd like to pose a question to her, and this question is going to take a little buildup, so bear with me.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Okay.

Mr. ELLISON. Now, if you were responsible for deregulating the markets and if you were responsible for unleashing the wildest impulses in human nature—greed among them—and if you presided over a catastrophic increase in the budget deficit as you cut taxes for the wealthiest Americans and if you let loose a war in Iraq that should never have been fought, after it all came crashing down, wouldn't you be looking for somebody to blame? Well, you might just blame the people who are the most vulnerable in our economy, and that is what is at the very root of the CRA mess.

You can't possibly expect people to accept responsibility. Look, when you look at these crossed lines here, this is when the party opposite ran the whole shooting match. This is when they had the White House and this House and the other body—the Senate. They ran the whole shooting match, and we got a big, fat, enormous, giant goose egg out of it as it relates to any kind of financial regulation.

As soon as the 110th Congress broke out and when we finally got a chance to do some regulation, what did we see? Through this House, we passed the shareholder vote on executive pay, the so-called ''Say-on-Pay.'' If you were upset, frustrated, angry or were in any way annoyed by the AIG scandal and by the executive pay or by any of this stuff, you can know and feel good about the fact that it was the Democratic Congress and the Financial Services Committee, under the leadership of BARNEY FRANK, that passed Say-on-Pay, which said, ''You know what? We're going to let those investors have a say-so over these executive pay packages. We're going to do that.'' That was passed in the 110th Congress, but it wasn't made law. It was passed through the 110th Congress.

Not only that, we did pass legislation to bring in regulation and oversight to the Office of the Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight. OFHEO was moved out, and the Federal Housing Financial Agency was moved in.

So, yes, the problems that the gentleman from Massachusetts identified with Fannie and Freddie were there. They did buy too many of these mortgage-backed securities. But what happened in the 110th Congress? We responded. We did something. We did not leave it to go unattended.

Not only that, we passed the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights in 2008, and we passed it again, and we're going to pass it again on the House floor tomorrow. I'm so excited about that. Let me just say something about it as we slow down to talk about it.

While we were debating the bill on the floor today, we had a good friend of mine speak, a gentleman whom I actually quite enjoy listening to, a gentleman from Texas. He's a fine man, but he's fond of saying, ''Okay. You guys are talking about predatory lending, but what about predatory borrowing?'' You've heard this phrase, right? Well, let's talk about predatory borrowing for a minute.

□ 2045

When somebody gets an extra amount of money called a yield spread premium to steer you to a high cost loan and it makes them money to do so, that's how you get people getting into loans they are not supposed to get into. They get into loans because the people they trust, the mortgage originators who they rely on, are incentivized to do so.

What are we doing about it in the 111th Congress? We're addressing this practice right now to try to say no, it's your job to look out for the borrower. You have got to look out for the borrower. You can make more money by doing a lot of loans, you can make more money doing bigger loans, but you can't make more money simply by steering somebody to a high-cost loan. That is going on now.

We passed the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights Act in 2008, and we're going to pass it again very soon, and, God willing, it will be law in the very near future.

But not only that, the gentleman from Colorado talked about passage of the Neighborhood Stabilization Act. This is a bill that directed the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to make loans to qualified States, metropolitan cities and urban areas in accordance with HUD approval grants to carry out eligible housing stimulus activities, which included greenification—is that a word? Greening. Renewable energy. And also buying up houses so that you wouldn't have these vacant, boarded-up places that were an attractive nuisance for everything from arson to young people getting dragged into these places and copper strippers and all the rest.

I submit today that the Democratic Congress, since we became the majority, has been actively engaged in financial regulation. We have been actively engaged in trying to look out for the American consumer. We have been trying to bring stability and liquidity to the financial markets. And I will submit that in the 110th Congress and the 111th Congress, the majority has demonstrated—and some Republicans have been smart enough to vote with us—and say yes, America is a free market society. We believe in the generative power of markets. We believe markets should be allowed to run, but we know human nature needs some restraint sometimes, and we need to have some rules to this game, and thank goodness this is happening right now.

So look forward to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which put real financial change in, the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights Act of 2009, and the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act which was passed in 2007 but hopefully will become law in the weeks to come and which should be on the House floor in the very near future. That's what I call being a good steward, that's what I call being a financial leader, and that's what I call the leadership of Barney Frank from Massachusetts. I am proud to be on the committee.

Mr. CAPUANO. I would like to thank the gentleman.

I would like to just read one little fact. May 25, 2005, there was a vote in the Financial Services Committee of the House that was then under the control of Republicans. The chairman was Mike Oxley, who's been mentioned here a couple of times. I knew him. I served with him. He was a good man. He was a true conservative. But he was a good man. He fought for his ideals as we all fight for ours. And he, at that time, had control. He won a fair number of times, but he would talk to you openly, honestly, and didn't pull any punches.

Chairman Oxley at the head, Representative FRANK as the ranking member of the minority party, May 25, 2005, H.R. 1461, a vote of 65–5. Every single Democrat and, obviously, most of the Republicans on that committee voted for a reform bill of Fannie and Freddie. That bill came out, went to the Rules Committee, and was changed. Dramatically changed. Why was it changed? Pure ideology.

The Republicans—as the Democrats do now—if the Democrats stick together, we can pretty much pass any bill we want out of Financial Services or any other committee. That's the way the House works. At the time, the Republicans were in the majority. They could have passed any bill they wanted without a single Democratic vote if they chose to do so. Chairman Oxley preferred to take an important issue and work hard to get bipartisan support. And he did.

My colleagues here all serve on the Financial Service Committee. You can't name me too many times we have a rollcall vote that we get a 65–5 vote on any issue of major importance today or almost ever. I have been on the committee 11 years now. It almost never happens. That is hard work. That is work that deserves credit. That is work that says it's a serious issue that should rise above ideology of either side. The bill wasn't perfect, in my opinion, but it was pretty good. And it was the best we could get at the time. We were in the minority. Understand that. Something is better than nothing.

So 65–5, the bill comes out and gets tossed aside by people that didn't know much about the issue, yet ran this House, because of ideological purposes. That tells you—I think it should tell you—there was an attempt to take action even in 2005. When that happens, you send the bill out, the committee has done its work, you think everything is going well, you think people are in agreement; and when the leadership of this House says, ''Forget about it. We're doing what we want to do on an ideological basis. We don't care about this bipartisanship,'' that tells you, don't even try this again. Don't waste your time. And there was nothing else that happened until Democrats took the House back, and we acted quickly. Representative ELLISON just listed a whole bunch of those items, and as he said, we're doing more today.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. CAPUANO. Yes, I would.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And I think that's the important point here. We want to explain to anybody who might be listening within this House. This is in an effort to be bipartisan. There was in 2005. There was when we took the control of the Congress in 2007 and 2008 and now 2009. BARNEY FRANK seeks that in every single vote and every single bill as we go through this, and then so does the President of the United States, Barack Obama. But we're not going to sit on our hands and allow the country to just stall out.

I mean, some of my friends on the other side, their mantra is ''Just say no. We like the status quo.'' We can't afford the status quo any longer. So we're going to stabilize the housing market and the financial markets, we're going to stimulate this economy, and we're going to place back into the system reasonable regulations so that America can really get back on track. And we see signs of that today.

It's going to be a rocky time and a steep hill for us to climb, but we are turning the corner. I am just proud to be part of this Financial Services Committee with my friends here under the chairmanship of BARNEY FRANK and under a presidency of Barack Obama.

With that, I return the message to my friend from Massachusetts.

Mr. CAPUANO. I recognize the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Thank you.

I really agree with your sentiments, the gentleman from Colorado, that it's time to move forward. I only arrived here in the 109th Congress, and I was here for one session in the minority. But what I experienced then was BARNEY FRANK consistently working to try to reduce the systemic risk even before Paulson and Bush came and said, we're having a problem.

I remember the Federal Housing Financial Reform Act, to try to provide a good regulator for Freddie and Fannie, something that hadn't happened under Republican control. And, of course, no action was taken in the Senate. So thank God we've got maybe 60 votes now so that that won't be stalled out.

I saw BARNEY trying to provide what we did today, the Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act of 2007. He tried to do it before today. Of course, that stalled in the Senate. So thank God we have 60 votes now. Maybe some of his initiatives can go forward.

I remember taking a codel with BARNEY FRANK to London and Brussels where we talked about systemic risk, worldwide, long before anyone was owning up to the financial meltdown.

So BARNEY FRANK has really been on point, and hopefully with a Democratic majority and someone in the White House, his continued efforts to rein in systemic risk will not be stalled out as they have in the past.

Mr. ELLISON. BARNEY FRANK with a tremendous intellect, with a tremendous sense of humor, with a bipartisan spirit and an even hand has shepherded great legislation to help stabilize America and begin our ascent once again.

I want to say that even on the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights, a bill that I am emotionally involved in, I feel so good about, we got nine Republican votes and a bunch of Democratic votes.

Look. Even a lot of Republicans know that we have been doing the wrong thing by neglecting regulation. It's time for us to put all this squabbling aside and say no matter what the party is, no matter what party you may belong to, Democrats are just better at running the economy. I like Republicans. Some of my best friends are Republicans. My dad is a Republican. I think they're great.

But if you want good regulation that helps the economy grow, you can look at the 110th and 111th Congress for an example of who knows how to do that. It's happened successfully. It will continue to happen. And I bet you when that Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights hits the floor of this House and I bet you when the anti-predatory lending bill hits the floor of this House, we're going to get a bunch of Republican votes because even they know that the Democratic Party is a good financial manager.

TIME TO LET GO OF THE PAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAYSON). 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. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In listening to the dialogue that has taken place here in the previous hour, I think it's time for a little bit of information to unfold, and, that is, it's time to move on. It's time to let go. It's time to take responsibility. It is not any longer time to come to this floor and spend your time beating up on George W. Bush. He's not the President today. Or beating up on Dick Cheney. He's no longer the President of the United States Senate today. And neither is Denny Hastert the Speaker of the House. And neither is MITCH MCCONNELL the majority leader of the United States Senate. All of those things have changed, and they have changed recently, Mr. Speaker.

So to listen to this dialogue that's here tonight—and, by the way, fairly devoid of humility—with the exception of seeking to impose that on others—but 60 minutes of defense of, whose name came up more often than George Bush's and Dick Cheney's? BARNEY FRANK. Members of the committee here on the floor spending 60 minutes describing how it is that BARNEY FRANK's leadership was the correct path to follow throughout all of this time and explaining that we can't afford the status quo, that Republicans wanted the status quo.

I would just take you back, Mr. Speaker, to think about this. They talked about 2005. I remember the debate here in 2005, and I remember the exact date. It was October 26. And it was an effort to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, a piece of the subject matter from all of these highly informed people from the Financial Services Committee. They seem to forget that Republicans weren't satisfied with the status quo; it was BARNEY FRANK that was satisfied with the status quo. The one who said over and over again into the record, on committee, here on the floor in debate, specifically on that date that I mentioned, that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were just fine, they don't need any more regulation. He would resist, and he aggressively resisted the effort to try to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Mr. CAPUANO. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of Iowa. I would be happy to yield to the gentleman. I had engaged in this and I was hoping you would come back.

Mr. CAPUANO. Well, I am leaving in a few minutes, but I will come back.

I don't have the records in front of me, and that's fine.

Mr. KING of Iowa. And I don't either.

Mr. CAPUANO. And that's fine. But would the gentleman agree that the Democrats didn't run the House?

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I would easily agree to that and that's the point I am seeking to make—that now today you do. That time has passed. Now you have President Obama and you have Speaker PELOSI and you have Majority Leader HARRY REID. And so that whole scenario that you were using to describe this in past Congresses, today it's a new world. It's time to move on.

Mr. CAPUANO. I totally agree.

Mr. KING of Iowa. That's my point.

I thank the gentleman for coming back and engaging. I always enjoy it.

Mr. CAPUANO. It's nice to agree for a change.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Continuing on, Mr. Speaker, that debate here on this floor, October 26, 2005, was about seeking to regulate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

There was an amendment that I recall that was brought by the gentleman, Mr. Leach, who believed strongly that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were underregulated, undercapitalized and I agreed with him, and a good number of the rest of us agreed with him.

But the defense was of Fannie and Freddie coming from the current chairman of the Financial Services Committee who has not only been all over the airwaves playing self-defense in this economic calamity that we're in the middle of but who, on the eve of our departure to go home for Easter vacation, came to this floor for a 60-minute Special Order to explain how it was that he was right and the rest of us were wrong.

And now I hear a committee that comes down and deploy themselves across the floor, and it's essentially the same thing. And they dig back into the Community Reinvestment Act and they argue that in that reinvestment act, there wasn't a requirement that there be bad loans made into bad neighborhoods.

□ 2100

That's true, Mr. Speaker. There wasn't a specific requirement that required lending institutions to make bad loans in bad neighborhoods. It was simply this: You will not expand your operations if you don't make bad loans in bad neighborhoods. And we know that there were people that came and sought to intimidate the lenders and pushed their desks around. And sometimes it was Members of Congress. I may have actually heard a confession here on the floor tonight, Mr. Speaker, to intimidate lenders into making these bad loans. And lenders put people on their payroll in order to fill out portfolios and be able to hand to the regulators their case that they had been complying not just with the letter of the Community Reinvestment Act but what they perceived to be the intent of Congress, the changing intent of Congress, in the Community Reinvestment Act. That act was part of the foundation for the financial problem we have today. Not the only reason. It wasn't the only reason at all. But it laid a rotten foundation for the other things that were built on top of it.

And when the gentlewoman from Wisconsin makes a statement that many, many loans were made to African Americans and Hispanics, I long for the day that there is no box to check in a loan application. I think we all should be treated equally. I think that we should be color blind. I think someone who qualifies for a loan should have that loan granted to them without regard to race, creed, religion, ethnicity, national origin, or any other characteristic. I don't want to see people that are God's children categorized by skin color or national origin or sexual orientation, for that matter, or any other component that we are obsessing with here in this Congress.

This is about dividing people. This is what's going on. It's pitting Americans against Americans. You can hear it in the tone in the previous hour, where there's some more virtue in one ethnicity than there is in another. I don't believe that, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I heard the statement made that they