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## House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

### FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Madam Speaker, over the past months, we have witnessed firsthand the potential consequences of allowing the national debt to continue growing out of control. Greece borrowed heavily during the last decade during the boom and the bubble and found itself at risk of default when global credit dried up. Now the country is facing financial disaster.

The crisis should serve as a warning to Washington. This country's debt is now \$12.9 trillion and is approaching unsustainable levels. We must address the fiscal imbalance here before it's too late. Washington must start by making major changes to the budget—changes that go beyond freezing spending and instead look to make significant budget cuts. That means we have to crack down on the consequence-free spending culture in Congress. Washington needs to put a priority on eliminating waste and finding cost-effective ways to achieve this country's goals.

Budget cuts are not always easy or popular, but business as usual in Washington is not working. Greece's rapid spiral shows that it is past time that we start to take serious steps—both big and small—to address our fiscal health.

### NET REGULATION WILL HARM INVESTMENT AND INNOVATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MARKEY of Colorado). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, a recent announcement by FCC Chairman Genachowski to impose new, burdensome regulation on the Internet and on Internet transmission appears to me to be a political maneuver to regulate the Internet. Several weeks ago, he indicated he was not going to push for net regulation. Now he is. There is no economic or legal justification for this move and the result will be a freeze in the investment and innovation we have seen over the past 20 years. The Internet is the most powerful platform for innovation ever created and, by his actions, Chairman Genachowski is endangering the Internet's deployment and ultimately its innovation.

Our current free-market, pro-investment policies have served us well. In fact, according to the FCC's own National Broadband Plan, 95 percent of all Americans have access to broadband and approximately 200 million subscribers have broadband at home today, up from 8 million just 10 years ago. By comparison, it took 90 years to go from 8 million voice subscribers to 200 million under the old Title II Common Carrier Regulations. Ironically, the chairman's laudable goal of maximizing broadband deployment and adoption will be most harmed by his announcement.

Will Rogers once said that, "Things in our country run in spite of the government, not by the aid of it." He was not, of course, talking about the Internet, but his words still ring true today. The rise of the Internet itself is a truly great deregulatory story. What started as a government-run network for sharing research has now exploded into a force for mass communication, entertainment, and commerce, when we

turned it over to the private sector and lifted restrictions on its use by commercial entities and the public. The unregulated Internet is now starting to help spur a new technological revolution in this country. Where there were once separate phone, cable, wireless, and other industries providing distinct and separate services, we're now seeing a confluence and a blur of providers all competing against each other for consumers, offering broadband, voice, video services, and much more.

The Apple iPod is a perfect example of the confluence of the Internet, the TV, and the computer, which will then be followed by other exciting products. Lines of technology are being blurred all the time. In fact, a few years ago, you had to have separate platforms for each additional individual TV technology. Now, your computer becomes your TV, your TV doubles for your computer, and your wireless device becomes your TV, your computer, your phone, and camera. We will see more of this convergence in the years to come if we remain on the current deregulatory path. However, the FCC appears to want to change course. In response to the FCC's announcement, I introduced a bill today, H.R. 5257—the Internet Investment, Innovation, and Competition Preservation Act—that would prevent the FCC from regulating the Internet or Internet transmission, absent a market failure.

□ 1245

My bill would require the FCC to conduct a rigorous market analysis before mandating new network regulations. The FCC would need to prove that regulations are, indeed, necessary. Chairman Genachowski has said on numerous occasions that he wants to make sure that the FCC is the most data-driven agency. Well, let's see the data. Let's see the data showing there's a need for regulation before you do it, Mr. Chairman.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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