

Now, I disagreed with the decision back then. I remember reading about it in the news in 1973 and 1974. In fact, my recollection says also 1975, but I don't happen to have those notes, Mr. Speaker, but I do have the notes to draw from a report by CRS out of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I am saying that we can bring an amendment that shuts off all funding, notwithstanding any other section. All of the automatic funding that was enacted by ObamaCare can be shut off in an appropriations bill in a continuing resolution. It can happen next week in the United States Congress, and we can put an end to ObamaCare then until such time as we elect a President who will sign the repeal as, hopefully, the first act of office in January of 2013. That is my hope and my wish and my work.

But for those who might wonder that this is language that stretches the parameters of tradition, it completely does not; and here are two examples of the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring.

Here is one, a supplemental appropriations bill, not a CR, but a supplemental appropriations bill that is in 1973, and actually the date on it is August 15, 1973. It says this: "None of the funds herein appropriated under this act may be expended to support directly or indirectly combat activities in or over Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam and South Vietnam by United States forces, and after August 15, 1973, no other funds heretofore appropriated under any other act may be expended for such purpose."

So, Mr. Speaker, this supplemental appropriations bill that is dated enactment of August 15, 1973, and signed by the President July 1, 1973, says that none of these funds and no funds in the pipeline can be used to support directly or indirectly combat activities in Vietnam. If there were bullets that were on the way to be unloaded on the dock at Da Nang, they put the brakes on them and they went back. Those funds were on the way. They shut them down.

That doesn't mean they stopped everything, but none of those funds that were unobligated, would be a better way to put that, were allowed to be used by this act of Congress in a supplemental appropriations bill. Yes, the precedent exists. Yes, we can do this. Yes, it is a common practice, Mr. Speaker.

Those who might think this is a rare exception, I would go on down the line to another piece of legislation which actually was a CR, a continuing resolution. This is dated 1974, July 1, 1974; and this language in the continuing resolution then says this: "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on or after August 15, 1973, no funds herein or heretofore appropriated may be obligated or expended to finance directly or indirectly combat activities by United States military forces in or over or from off the shores of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia."

There is the language again: "No funds herein and no funds heretofore appropriated may be obligated or expended directly or indirectly." That is an all-encompassing example of language that we have used as a template to shut off the funding that is automatically appropriated within ObamaCare and, I think, inappropriately automatically appropriated within ObamaCare.

That is where I stand on this, Mr. Speaker. And for those who think that is an ancient piece of legislative history and something that hasn't been used in the modern era and so therefore isn't a model or precedent, we go back 200-plus years for those things. I don't have trepidation about the Constitution that was ratified in 1789.

But just in the 110th Congress, the first 2 years of NANCY PELOSI's Congress, Mr. Speaker, she forced 44 votes. They might have been some in the Rules Committee, most of them came to the floor; 44 votes by this United States Congress that were designed to unfund, underfund or undermine our troops. I have those all on record and spreadsheet with hyperlinks to the language and the vote results.

We stood here and fought this off through the 110th Congress because the effort by the then-Speaker was to end the war in Iraq by shutting off all the funding and forcing us to bring our troops back home again. I am very thankful that George Bush prevailed in the surge and we have the optimistic situation in Iraq that we have today because of that decision that was made by George Bush. But it wasn't with any help from Speaker PELOSI, who forced 44 votes. Many of them, and I have not scored it in this fashion, but probably most of them follow down the same lines as the legislative procedure that I am advocating here.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a very sound practice. It is a very constitutional practice. It is tried and it is true and it has been effective. It put the end to the Vietnam War, and we can put an end to ObamaCare if we bring language either as written into the bill or if we go back and have an Appropriations Committee, which I don't expect will happen, or if the Rules Committee protects my language so that the amendment can be legitimately debated here on the floor of the House and we can have a recorded vote. We can shut off 100 percent of the implementation and enforcement of ObamaCare.

If we don't take those steps, this Congress will not be allowed then, will not have been allowed at that point to work its will; and we have at best the chance to shut off \$1 billion, which amounts to 1 percent of the overall appropriations that are automatically enacted by ObamaCare. So we can come with a 1 percent solution and posture ourselves as we provided a solution, or we can come with a 100 percent solution with the best tools that the House has now to do the best job, to write the toughest bill that we can, send it over

to the Senate, because we know this: it is going to get worse in the Senate, and they are going to leverage back on us.

If it were just me, we could hold our ground. But; it isn't just me. So, Mr. Speaker, my advice to my colleagues whom I adore the privilege of serving with and whose judgment and statesmanship I greatly respect is this: We can't have people blink in this Congress, not when the destiny of America is at stake. And if you are wondering about blinking, just sign up with me, wait until I blink, and when I do, I guarantee my eyeballs will be dry and so will yours. But we must hold our ground. We must not blink.

We must send the language over to the Senate that cuts off all of the funding of that up to and perhaps exceeding \$100 billion that would be used to implement and enforce ObamaCare, that will be used aggressively by the Obama administration to send the roots down and grow this malignant tumor and metastasize this malignant tumor. We can pull it all out by the roots. We can do so if we move my amendment and make it in order under the rule or write it into the bill. If not, the America people will look back on this time and say, Where were you when it was time to stand up for the will of the American people?

Mr. Speaker, I have had my say. I appreciate the privilege of addressing you here this afternoon, to be on the floor of the House of Representatives. I entreat my colleagues to join with me, and let's get this job done. Let's repeal ObamaCare; let's pull it out by the roots, lock, stock and barrel, a 100 percent repeal, not a 1 percent repeal.

□ 1700

THE FUTURE OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Over the past several weeks, I have had the incredible privilege and honor to be traveling up and across my district, the First District of Minnesota, from the plains of Worthington to the Mississippi River Valley at Winona, listening and holding grocery store stops and hearing what the American people are talking about. They're not talking a lot about ObamaCare. They're talking a lot about jobs. They're talking a lot about moving the country forward. And this is a place that, I have to tell you, it was 18 below zero yesterday when I left. These are hardy folks. They're used to weathering tough times.

They're also the place that gave root to, in a collective effort, the Mayo Clinic. They're also a place that is one of the top leading producers of food in this Nation in feeding the world. Also, a place where we generate—the fourth

largest of any State in the country—the fourth largest amount of wind power and innovating down that road. To be able to walk those streets, to go to those grocery stores—and in Mankato, where my office is located, you hear a lot of people talk about Main Street. That was the Main Street Sinclair Lewis was talking about. That's where he lived when he wrote his famous novel about what it means to grow up in rural America and what it means to collaborate together to grow this country.

And listening to those folks talk about things like the national debt, talk about how we invest in our infrastructure, how do we keep our schools strong, how do we make sure we care for our veterans, how do we keep this Nation safe by adhering to our ideals of freedoms and liberties and being that beacon for the rest of the world, those are things that people are talking about while we're seeing improvements in the economy that no one would argue by early 2008 was the worst economy we had seen since the Great Depression. And for those who said, I guess we should have done nothing, I'm here to tell you today I'm glad we're not repeating the Great Depression. I'm glad we're not seeing our markets collapse all the way. And I'm proud of the work we did to move back.

Now we're seeing exports grow. We're seeing GDP grow. We're seeing consumer spending strong over the holidays. But I have to be very honest with you. The people who came to see me in those groceries stores in Owatonna and Worthington, Minnesota, those don't really matter if you don't have a job. If you don't have a job to pay for groceries, if you don't have a job to pay for the gas in your car to get to work, those are the things that matter.

So I have to tell you these people know something about struggling through tough times. Their ancestors went to those plains of Minnesota and carved out not only a living, they carved out world-class agriculture production, world-class delivery of health care, world-class innovations in manufacturing and energy on the premise that this country provided incredible opportunities. But we couldn't do it alone. We needed to do it in a collective effort to view the future and to bring the best out in individuals.

So as we face these challenges and as we pay down debts that have been generated for decades, and when Dick Cheney sat in the Vice President's office and said, We proved deficits and debt don't matter, he couldn't have been more wrong. They do matter. But we can't be penny wise and pound foolish with our children's future. It makes no sense to talk about paying down the debt if we're going to collapse our education system, our investment in science and technology. If we're going to let our infrastructure deteriorate, we will never pay the debt down, because what's happened is the revenues have shrunk. The pie has shrunk.

Instead of trying to figure out how to carve up a smaller and smaller pie, let's bake a bigger pie. Let's get a handle on our energy needs. Let's create homegrown energy and quit sending a billion dollars a day to foreign nations who hate us. They will hate us for free. We can keep the money at home and create jobs. We can create the security we need to make sure that when great revolutions on democracy rise up in Egypt, we're watching it based on what's best for human rights, what's best for the stability of the world, not worrying about what the price of oil is going to do when we can get that right out of the Midwest with our innovation.

I do think there's lessons to be learned there. Going out and getting back to traveling throughout my district, the one thing I can tell you, the countries watch this, and the folks who sit in this institution we get even enamored with.

I had no illusions. When I was elected in 2006, with no elected experience—a high school teacher; never ran for office, didn't know my county chair, and I think most of my students didn't know my political affiliation. What they knew was I cared for the community, I served in the National Guard, and I wanted to get things right. I wasn't under any illusion that people elected me based on Democratic ideology. They elected me because they wanted to hear about solutions; they wanted to hear how we work together to solve things.

And when they did that in 2008 and expanded that, and then when the country swung back in 2010, I think my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, need to recognize the American public wasn't talking about critiques on ObamaCare. And I heard my colleague mention we need to rip that cancer out by its roots. The cancer being treated is a young boy who sits in New Hope, Minnesota, who didn't have care before and now is seen at the Mayo Clinic and is actually having a real cancer treated with the best quality care. And the Mayo Clinic said this bill was a step forward and we should not step backwards.

So I think what I'm hearing from my constituents is, Can't we get beyond the partisanship? Can't we focus on those things that aren't imagined about ourselves and find the 90 percent of things that we share in common? And we should never give our passions on differences. We should never compromise on our core principal values. But we should always recognize the interesting thing about this great country is the previous Speaker's district—and is a good friend of mine—borders mine. You might, when you hear us speak, think we're on opposite sides of the world. We are not. Neither are our constituents. But we need to come together with a recognition that the things we do here are meant to lay the framework, and that framework is the thing that's always made this country great—opportunity.

Yes, there's safety nets when we're down. Yes, those things need to be there. And we talk about those things in a tough economy. But what the middle class cares about is opportunity. No one guarantees you success in this country. But we should guarantee the opportunity to achieve success on your own. And the way we do that is by ensuring we have world-class educational institutions. That no matter if you're in Windom, Minnesota, New York City, or Tampa, Florida, that child has access to it. Not only is it the right thing to do; it strengthens our Nation.

We can bring those things today. We can continue to innovate. The can-do spirit that has been here since the inception of this country understood that's how we needed to move forward. We need to find those common grounds. We need to lay the groundwork. Unfortunately, that rung of opportunity, that ladder of opportunity by having safe and quality schools, by having transportation systems that serve all, by having affordable housing, by having access to basic health care, those were the rungs that allowed a person to pull themselves up and achieve success.

I think of my own family in this case. When my father died and my brother was 8 and I was a young man out of high school, Social Security survivor benefits were there for my mother and my young brother. When people say in this country you should pull yourselves up by your bootstraps, I agree. We just didn't have any boots. They were lent to us by Social Security. And we have paid it back ever since—my mother going on becoming a nurse, my younger brother going in and becoming a teacher like myself. I used the GI Bill that was afforded that was not just about enticing people to serve their Nation. It was the idea that those who are willing to serve are going to be assets to our community and to our country.

At this time of tough economic solutions the easy thing to do is say, Posture. We're going to have spending freezes. Well, here, that's fine. We have to get a control on spending. But don't leave the other side of the ledger out. The economy shrunk. And don't tell people this. If you freeze those numbers, be honest. You have just frozen programs that should be cut to zero, and you've just frozen programs that provide opportunity.

We've got people now that seem to think after they climb that ladder, after they believe they built that ladder themselves, they want to pull it up behind them. What we're talking about here is creating those opportunities, unleashing the American spirit, and winning the future. And I have seen it. I heard it in my district.

There's a company called Angie's Kettle Corn. Somebody might have seen it—my colleagues here, Mr. Speaker. It's sold in Costco and sold across the country. It started as a mom-and-pop business literally in a garage in Mankato, Minnesota. And this

last week they were on with Martha Stewart. They sold it at the Twins Stadium, and it's selling across the country now. That started with a passion, with a dream. It started with the ability to have local input and local ability to entice businesses to be there. It started by investments in transportation that allow you to move goods made and manufactured in Mankato, Minnesota, to the coast as efficiently as possible. That's how we've always competed. That's how we've always out-produced the rest of the world.

And at this tough time when people are saying, We can't spend any money now because we have a national debt, I agree we need to get a handle on the debt. I have been saying it needed to be paid down for years. But if we make the mistake and don't invest in infrastructure, don't invest in the correct ways in the future of providing opportunities, we are going to make drastic mistakes that will be hard to overcome.

□ 1710

There is another great company in my district, a company called Peerless Chain. This one is fascinating because I think these are things that people forget about, one of which is the idea that you can no longer compete in manufacturing in America because other countries simply are going to pay their workers less.

Well, I'm not interested in a race to the bottom. Yeah, we're probably never going to be able to pay low enough wages to compete with China on its wages, but we can beat them on innovation; we can beat them on quality products; we can beat them on moving things to market.

Peerless Chain is now one of the top producers of all forms of chain in the world. In fact, they provided all the chain to the booms after the oil spill in the gulf, protecting the gulf coast. This is a company founded by immigrant veterans after World War I, a company which is now hiring veterans and is manufacturing large, heavy-duty steel chains in Winona, Minnesota, stamping them "made in America," and shipping them to China.

That's a future that makes sense. That's a future that creates jobs. That's something we can embrace. I've got to tell you, as to the people working there, I don't give a dang if they're Democrats or Republicans. They don't care either. They have American jobs with American security. They are living the American Dream.

Do you know what that dream is? Having the chance for an opportunity to maybe own your own home, to maybe make it and, by the time you get there, to be able to buy a boat—or a snowmobile in our case—and be able to put your kids through school, and know that those children have that opportunity.

It's not good enough for us in this place to make policies that incentivize work to go overseas, to give tax breaks

to those companies, and to make it harder for Peerless Chain to produce right here. Those are the things that we can do together. Those are the things that we can agree upon. Small businesses make it. They're the things that make it in America. They've provided the jobs. They've done the things that need to be there.

What you're hearing here—and I have to be very honest with you—and what the false dichotomy of choices here is that the government can't do anything right—the government is us. It's the schoolteacher from Mankato. It's the construction manager from Iowa. It's all of us together trying to decide. No, we're not going to do everything right, but together we can create something that is bigger than any individual person here. I think, as we move forward, we're going to have to be willing, all of us—myself looking in the mirror first—to be able to reach across and find common ground, to be able to find those things that create opportunity and to then have the courage to go forward and talk about investing.

I want to give a couple of examples of this investing. When people say that the government can't do anything right, the trick is not to have the argument about big versus small government. The argument is about effective government. Does it do what the people want at the most efficient/effective cost available? Anything less, and now the police don't respond when you call 911. Now we aren't correctly making sure we're managing the ingredients in the food that people eat, and we have contaminated food, or we have lead in our children's toys as anything more will hamper business growth.

So, when I watched the President sit right up here underneath where the Speaker is and talk about "let's get smart reforms," it's not an either/or about getting regulation one way or adding regulation on.

An example of what we can do together to make things work happened in a hearing today. One of this Nation's major banks, for whatever reason—and it will be determined in time—was foreclosing on the houses of servicemembers who were deployed overseas. This Congress has determined that one of the things we will do if you're willing to serve this Nation is to give you protections while you're there, serving in a war zone, against excessive interest rates, foreclosure and things like that.

Since the beginning of this country, we've understood if you're fighting in a war zone and if you're worried about your family—your wife and child—being thrown out of your house, it's pretty difficult to focus on your job. Yet they continue to do it, and they continue to make it happen.

Well, that young marine and his wife came today to testify in front of Congress, Democrats and Republicans. They said, no, there need to be safeguards over that; there needs to be oversight; and yes—a horrible word I'm

hearing here—there need to be some regulations enforced so that we don't do that to our members. That's not antibusiness. That's not hampering business growth. That's coming up with the collective decision that, if you're going to serve this Nation in war, then we should have a business ethic that says we're going to do the right thing since it's law. I have to tell you those are compromises we can come to.

Investments. We have a project in southwest Minnesota. It's in combination with the gentleman who spoke before me and with our friends in South Dakota. In southwest Minnesota, northwest Iowa and southeast South Dakota, about 800,000 people altogether in rural areas do not have access to drinking water.

In 2009, I met with a woman who, still today, gets her drinking water by collecting it in a cistern when it rains and snows. It's not poverty. It's necessity. There is no wealth. So a project was designed, an incredible project, of bringing together local municipalities, States, and the Federal Government to divert water from the Missouri River to the Lewis and Clark Rural Water Project. This is not a "nice to have" thing if you think it's an amphitheater or something. This is drinking water and water for businesses. I have communities in my district that cannot add one single home because they don't have the capacity for water in order to hook up to the sanitary sewers. I have businesses, large ones—some of the largest packing plants in the country—that can't continue to expand and create jobs because they don't have access to water.

So we came together on this, and here is what happened: the local municipalities and the States agreed in concert with the Federal Government to pay their taxes ahead to accelerate a project with the promise that the Federal Government would fund the program. Those promises were made, and then they were broken.

What ends up happening then, as a Member of Congress and those who posture on this floor that we certainly can't have earmarks, is elected Representatives of the people of South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa don't have the access to redress the grievance that we have invested millions of dollars, with our citizens paying ahead, with the idea there would be some help.

Yes, those tax dollars will come from across the country, but my State is one that is a net return on tax dollars. We send more to the rest of the country, but I understand how that benefits us all. We can create food and export it elsewhere. Manufactured goods are created elsewhere and sent to my district. That's the idea of the 50 United States. That's the idea of federalism. In many cases, I think some of my colleagues get confused, between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution, of where we're at. That's a project where people say, We can't spend a penny on

that. Now we will end up spending more money, stopping economic growth, and making sure that people in this country don't have access to drinking water, all with the idea that we're going to be fiscally responsible.

It will do nothing but add to the debt. It will do nothing but deprive people of a basic commodity in this country, a basic commodity that you'd like to believe you have access to, which is water, and it was paid for ahead of time locally.

Those are the types of things that we need to have honest discussions about. There is no doubt that we've got budgeting situations. If we do not handle the national debt, our children and grandchildren will pay a heavy price for it. They will pay a price in some very simple things. As interest rates begin to climb, their buying power will become less. Their ability with the dollars they make are already shrinking for the middle class. As our real wages decline, they will have a lower standard of living. It will be harder to go to college. It will be harder to buy a house. It will be harder to buy a car. That all translates into the American Dream slipping a little further away.

So we have a responsibility to pay our fair share. That's why, when the bill came up in December, asking for changes to the Tax Code or whatever, I don't think it was that bad to ask for 140 million people to get the tax cut in a time of economic downturn. That had to happen. That cost us money. There is no doubt about that. It will add to the debt. The idea behind that is that money will be spent. Businesses will only grow if consumers spend money and if there is a demand for goods. The problem many of us had was that the other half of that money went to 6,600 families; \$154 million to 6,600 families. Yeah, let's slice it down the middle.

There has always been a sense of fairness in this country. We applaud success. We applaud people who achieve greatness. If you have a large business and if you're employing a large number of people, we're happy for you, but keep in mind we're educating those children in our schools; we're getting those people to your jobs on our roads that all of us are paying for. There has always been the assumption that there would be a fairness to our Tax Code, that you would pay it back.

All of those things create a balanced budget; they create economic growth, and they have done the one thing that America has done better than anybody else—provided innovation and opportunity for growth for the middle class to continue to be able to achieve.

So what we're going to see over the next couple of years is a turning point in this country. I believe we are going to get it and are going to figure out what the American people said on November 2. I'll tell you they didn't say in 2006, "Do it all the Democratic way." They didn't say in 2008, "Do it all the Democratic way." I can tell you they did not say on November 2 of last year, "Do it the Republican way."

They said, Solve problems. Get together. Move us forward. Create the infrastructure and the opportunities for the middle class. Then get out of our way. Stay out of our civil liberties. Stay out of our personal business. Allow us to do that and create the type of country that we were founded on, one that understood that the Constitution was not a static document.

The Constitution was one about the birth of a new Nation and the idea, the audacious idea, that you could take a high school teacher from Minnesota and plop him down in the very place where Abraham Lincoln spoke and say, Go and speak.

I will tell you, when you sit down on this floor, Mr. Speaker, and when you wonder, how in the world did I ever get here? the good thing is you meet all of your other colleagues, and you say, how did they get here? Then you understand the great diversity of this country. Then you understand that our strength lies in our ability to have different and competing opinions with a common goal—a strong, fair country with equal opportunities, a country that rewards hard work, that rewards achievement, but that understands you can't always control life's circumstances.

□ 1720

At times, there is going to need to be a safety net, and the idea that we're going to rip out ObamaCare, please keep in mind, I don't want to go back to the days when 47 million of my fellow citizens had no access to health care, for several reasons. One, I don't think it's ethically right. Two is I know I'm paying for it anyway when they go to the emergency room and it's more expensive. So why not get the preventive care in the best possible manner, deliver that care, and quit spending twice as much as any other nation, and start using that money to invest in innovation and job creation. That's how we pay down the debt. That's how we move forward. That's how we start to get a handle on what the core values of this country are and the things that have always made us great.

So we're going to have an opportunity to discuss these issues. I'm disappointed. When I was back home and I heard people talk about all these things, jobs, jobs, jobs, the economy and the future, I came back last night to a bill that was never debated. You heard about this new open rule. Well, here is the fact: not a single debate on it, not a single amendment, not a single minute of discussion on this floor, and you know what that bill was? The Patriot Act, determining if you as an American citizen, if the government can listen on you. I don't know about you, but I hold a lot of those values that I am very, very nervous when somebody is listening to my conversation. And I don't buy this, you don't have anything to hide, you don't have anything to worry about. That's no-

body's business. There's legal ways to go about this. We can keep this Nation safe by doing that.

But the new majority, who told us about how things have been done so poorly, the first time we had the Patriot Act up on the floor, we debated it for weeks. We talked about it. It was discussed. Last night, it came in on a suspension calendar, and I have to tell you this, I applaud the people here who said "no" and those people didn't say "no" to national security. They didn't say "no" to stopping terrorists. What they said "no" to was we are not willing to sacrifice our liberties for a little bit of false security. We want that balance to be struck, talked about here, and agreed upon.

So as we talk about jobs, as we talk about what's going to be going forward, bringing in the Patriot Act on Tuesday evening with no debate and voting for it on the floor just that quickly, when a Member of the Republican majority, a new Member, somebody who I know because they ran against me on this, asked, did you read the bill, did you read the bill, said he hadn't read the bill, but he voted "yes" anyway, and he said, well, we will have time to work it out.

That's what America was tired of. That's what America, if they were speaking out on November 2, was; and here's the thing. We have a choice and I say "we" being me. We have a choice that's said on this floor: Are we going to be part of the solution, or are we going to continue to push problems forward? I think the American people deserve better.

I think that listening to that soldier today who did his duty, he needs a government that's speaking for him. It doesn't matter how big that bank is to get it right, and then here's the thing. I'm not saying that bank can't do good. In this instance, they did not, and I simply don't want to leave it to them to make the decision.

So together we've got some opportunities. We're going through some growing pains, but here's the thing. Our grandparents and our forebearers made it through civil wars. They made it through the Great Depression. They made it through the civil rights movement. They made it through there. We are the product of all that struggle. We are the ones that now have to rise to that challenge. We are the ones that have to get beyond the petty political bickering that can divide us for short-term political gain that's not looking towards the next generation.

We have an opportunity. I saw it everywhere across southern Minnesota last week. I saw Republican and Democrat come together, and those people coming in that grocery store, one man came to me and said, at least I got the courage to come up here and tell you, Tim, I didn't vote for you. I'm like, well, that's no big deal, almost half the people didn't vote for me, but you're here. You're expressing your citizenship. You're expressing solutions that

can go forward. That's how the country gets back together, and we shook hands. We talked about things that can be better, and we walked out of that grocery store thinking that tomorrow can be a better day.

That's what the thought in this country has always been. The future and the ability for our children can be better than we're at today. We can handle our energy needs, and we can create those jobs at home. We can make health care accessible, pay for it, continue to innovate. We can manufacture and make it here at home and out-compete any nation in the world if we choose to invest in our greatest natural resource, our people.

So now is the time to be smart on budgeting, pay the debt down, get a handle on things, get a handle on spending, make taxation fair but don't shortchange the next generation, invest in education, invest in infrastructure, invest in research.

And I'm looking forward to the next 2 years, and I think the American public deserves nothing less than the best that we have to offer here, the voices across this country offering up solutions, debating them in a fair manner on this floor, voting for them, and then realizing that just because you disagree with someone doesn't mean they don't love this country. Just because they don't vote the way you wanted to doesn't mean they're a communist or a socialist or un-American.

What it means is we have the golden gift of being able to disagree, to debate on this House floor, and to take that debate to the American public in a civil, respectful manner with the understanding our neighbors love this country every bit as much as we do.

HOW BUSINESS GETS DONE IN WASHINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to take some time to talk about how business gets done here in Washington. Now, I guess you can call this the lessons of a rookie. I'm starting my third year here, my second term; and during my first two years in the 111th Congress, frankly, it was like it was politics as usual, and I think the American people have had enough of that.

The American people are at a point where it's not about Republicans, it's not about Democrats. What they're looking for are problem solvers; and, fundamentally, I think that is what's most important as we go forward as problem solvers because we know this country is facing some tremendous issues. We are at record unemployment, the highest sustained level of unemployment since the Great Depression. We have a national debt that has amassed to over \$14 trillion, impacting

our children and our grandchildren's future.

We have all kinds of significant issues facing this Nation, and we need solutions; but the solutions, they have to be solutions, I believe, that are not politics as usual. They need to be solutions that are, frankly, based on what I call the principle of leadership. It's the very foundation of how we make our decisions, not based on a political agenda, not based on the whims or the will of a few or many but, frankly, based on principles; and that's what I want to spend some time this evening talking about, principled leadership.

In my time in Congress, I've seen us make a lot of decisions, an awful lot of decisions. Many of those impact not just the Nation but the world, and I see decisions made by different Members using different methodology. For me, I really do fall back on principled leadership. I actually fall back on values, principles that I learned as a youth. Frankly, I take them from my experience in Scouting, 41 years. This is my 41st year in Scouting. It's a great organization. It serves boys and girls and develops them into fine young people, productive, active citizens.

When I make a decision, I ask myself four questions, and it may sound a little old fashioned for some folks, but, frankly, it works for me and it works consistently. I ask myself four questions, principles that come from the Scout promise, actually. The first question I take from that Scout promise, that first question is when I'm making a decision, I'm faced with an issue and I need to decide, first question is, what is my duty to God? Is the decision I'm making, is it righteous according to God's word? Is it according to my faith? Frankly, if the answer is "no," I don't go any further on to question two, three, and four.

If I do go on, the next question is, what is my duty to the country? That is, frankly, what does the Constitution say about the decision that I'm about to make?

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Is it according to the rule of law? Is it according to those liberties, those freedoms, those rights, and the distribution of powers that are outlined within the Constitution? Because there are certain things the Federal Government is supposed to do, according to the Constitution. That amount of responsibility is literally very tiny, though, compared to what the States have retained for rights; and that is small compared to what we, as individual citizens, have as all those rights that are provided through our creator.

So my second question I ask, what is my duty to country? The third question I ask myself in terms of principles is, what is my duty to others? Now, others for me are what I call the 660,000 really smart people that I work for in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District. It's pretty easy to determine what the intended consequence is and

the intended impact on the citizens that I serve and, frankly, that all of my colleagues serve. Because on the first page of any bill—I don't care if it's a one-page bill or it's 2,000 pages, that intended consequence is pretty easily and clearly articulated. It's the unintended consequences, however, that you have to work at. It's the unintended consequences that can have the most impact on the lives of the people that we serve. And that's why communication is such an incredibly important responsibility with our constituents, including why we're here in Washington using different methods and an open-door policy and receiving, soliciting input, feedback from our constituents.

But also certainly when we're back in the district, and we're in those communities and we're communicating with people, and they're talking about the situations that they're in, and how the Federal Government—the things that are going on are impacting their lives. That is tremendous, valuable information that we gain when we are back in the district, and that is what district work weeks are all about. It's about communications and feedback with your employer, and it's the people that you work for.

Finally, for me, the fourth question I ask myself in terms of principles and principled leadership has to do with duty to self. And, again, I borrow from Scouting, my years and decades in Scouting. The questions I ask myself are: am I prepared to do my best on each and every decision I make? And that is, have I worked hard to get all the information that I need? Have I worked hard to reach out to my constituents to find out, as I've read a bill, to make sure that they have access to it so that they understand and I can determine and solicit from them their feedback and what the unintended consequences are. Am I prepared to do my best?

Those are principles that have served me well these first 2 years, and I certainly continue my commitment and follow principled leadership going forward in serving both this country and certainly the citizens of the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District.

Another set of principles that I'm pleased to share tonight came from a group of citizens within the area of the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District, and these are principles that were outlined by citizens who were concerned. They were concerned over the past 2 years with the things that they saw going on in their Nation, in their country. They came together because they were afraid. They were afraid of what the future held. And this was in Lycoming County of the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District. But you know what, these are principles that I have actually seen put forward by everyday citizens all over the Nation, certainly throughout my congressional district.

And I appreciate the fact that they took the time to put this together. I