

with the belief that no one would be prosecuted.

So I'll be introducing legislation that will immediately suspend all Federal funds of any institution that is found to have covered up—employed someone who has been engaged in sexual abuse and no one reported it, including the prosecutor's office, who are now just saying that they will be looking at this in the State of Texas. It will exclude scholarships and Pell Grants. I intend to introduce that legislation and stop the funding now for any institution that thinks that they are above the law and will watch a grown man perform a sexual act on a child and refuse to do something about it. Refuse to do something about it. It is an outrage.

JOB CREATION AND WHY IS OUR CONGRESS SO DYSFUNCTIONAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. RIGELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RIGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to address two matters that are of great concern to the good folks of the Second Congressional District of Virginia and, I believe, to every American across this great land. Those two issues are job creation and why our Congress is so dysfunctional. As a businessperson with a lifetime of experience in creating jobs and fixing things, I really want to emphasize the practical solutions that I think we can bring to bear on these two important issues.

I don't think, Madam Speaker, that there is a family in America that has not been affected in some way or another by this painful economy. Unemployment continues to hover around 9 percent. My wife, Teri, and I have two dear families in our lives who have lost their business because of the economy and how difficult things are. They are small businesses. We watched them and walked with them through as they had to file bankruptcy and let go of their employees. And, Madam Speaker, the problem is particularly acute in our black community. For black men, the unemployment rate is over 19 percent. This should concern every American and command our full attention.

Madam Speaker, this is my first elected office—I have been up here about 10½ months or so—but I've had 30 years of experience in job creation. The first business that my wife and I started when I was 22 years old was a cleaning business, and we started it because we had more money going out than we had coming in. I had a couple of options, and it seemed like the best one was to start a small business, and we did—a cleaning business. We hired two people: Teri hired me and I hired her.

□ 1920

That is how we got started. I know, and I fully understand what an entre-

preneur, a small businessowner or a potential small businessowner, experiences when they're trying to put capital at risk to get what I refer to as an entrepreneurial return. I know that healthy fear that really inspires you to work long hours. We would call it key-to-key, open your business and close your business at night. I know the great joy of being able to say to someone these wonderful words, "you're hired." I also know what it's like to sit down with a banker, a good friend, a person who stood by us in difficult times, but yet they've come to the end, and they say, Scott, I can't help you, meaning they can't approve a critical loan. I understand what that's like.

It all revolves around, whether you own a big business or a small business, there's something in common, and that is every business has a financial statement, an income statement. And if we look at the income statement, that document that is being looked at by entrepreneurs across America and if we start at the top and you just go down line by line and if you see the intersection of what we're doing here in Congress in our Federal Government, you see the intersection of the actions that we're taking with each line on a financial statement.

I'd submit, Madam Speaker, that the evidence is clear that the steps that we're taking in this Congress—well, at least on our side I believe the Republicans are taking the right steps, but the cumulative effect of what's taking place in this Chamber, in the Senate, and in the White House has made it ever more difficult for the American entrepreneur to make it, to give them a reasonable expectation that they could achieve what we refer to as an entrepreneurial profit.

Listen, if a person is okay with a 2 percent return or a 1 percent return, they'll just leave their money where it is. It takes a lot of courage, I think, for a person to put a second mortgage on their home, to call a family member to borrow money or save up over years and maybe put \$15,000 at risk. They have to be able to earn a better return than that. And in doing so, they'll start to hire people.

Let's just take a look at a basic job creator's financial statement. Now, it may look slightly different from one industry or one business to another, but it always starts out at the top with this category right here: sales. Nothing happens until you sell something. It could be anything. It could be cupcakes like some wonderful entrepreneurs in our district. It could be automobiles, it could be homes, and it could be energy and those companies that supply and help us become more independent.

Let's look at this critical area. We have over \$500 billion a year that is flowing out of our country, capital that should be circulating within America. Is it here? No. It's going outside of this country to folks like Hugo Chavez. They do not share our values, and we are funding them because of our fail-

ure—Republicans and Democrats—year after year after year in failing to move this great country toward energy independence. It is hurting us, Madam Speaker.

Recently, I stood and clapped for our President as he walked in this Chamber, and I listened intently on September 8. He drew us together as Congress and said, I have a bold message for you. I desperately wanted to hear our President address energy independence. I waited expectantly, sitting right back over there. I didn't even get a chair. I think I was behind everybody and had to stand up. That's all right. The Chamber was full.

There were some things I agreed with, and I said, yes, Mr. President, I can sign up for that. And I looked forward to improving or voting for the veterans bill and the reversal of that 3 percent withholding that would hurt so many contractors within the Second District of Virginia and also across this great country. And it also has a wonderful tax credit in it to help those who are helping and hiring our veterans. I look forward to supporting that and enthusiastically want to vote for it, and I support what the President is doing.

But absent in his remarks, a 4,134-word address to Congress, was the word "energy." Certainly absent was the phrase "energy independence." This is a tragic mistake. It hurts America. It hurts employment in the Second Congressional District of Virginia and across this great land.

We have so much opportunity to put folks at work with great-paying jobs. I'm talking about \$70,000, \$80,000-a-year jobs, and some of them will pay even more—good-paying jobs. We have great potential. And if there were any question about where the President stands on this issue, he made it abundantly clear last week. He said nothing, nothing off the coast of Virginia. The energy resources that are there will be locked up while residents of the Second District are hurting because they don't have employment opportunities.

Madam Speaker, I would submit that our pain in America is largely self-inflicted. We are regulating ourselves out of our prosperity at every opportunity. It's wrong. We can and we should take a different direction.

Let's look at the expenses faced by our small business owners. I just hit one area of sales. I could have gone a lot longer on that. Let's just go down to some of these expenses that we see here. Interest, well, interest rates are extraordinarily low right now. I'd say that is a positive thing. It's only because there's a near collapse of confidence in the European economy. That's why folks are still rushing over here to America, driving down interest rates. Do not be fooled. That will not sustain itself. There is a risk, and I would say it's backed by the evidence that folks ought to be mindful that interest rates can go up, and I think they likely will.

When I talk to the bankers in our area, I'm not talking about the big shots in New York. I'm talking about homegrown banks—our neighbors, our friends—small banks, the ones that sponsor the Little League. They say, SCOTT, listen, we're not hiring account executives to go out and meet with your business and other small- and medium-sized businesses. We're hiring regulatory analysts just to deal with what's coming at us from Dodd-Frank. I had the president of a local bank tell me the other day, he said, SCOTT, listen, we're getting out of this line and this line of business because we just can't handle the regulatory burden.

Now, I am not a no-regulation person. I hate to disappoint my libertarian friends, but I'm not a libertarian. I have a libertarian streak in me, but I'm not a libertarian. There is a proper role for government and, indeed, an essential role for government. I am for wiser, smarter, lighter regulations that will free up the greatest job-producing engine the world has ever known—the American entrepreneur.

Let's look right here. We've covered interest and even the availability of capital. We're paying banks a small interest rate, a small return on their money, the government is; but we're not requiring them to loan it out. It's really a bizarre situation and one that's hurting our ability to grow our economy.

□ 1930

Look at health care. The Affordable Health Care Act, if anything, has exploded the degree of uncertainty. I do not know a fellow entrepreneur in my district who can tell me where their costs are going other than they're going up. The Affordable Health Care Act, which still is an evolving document as it becomes kind of flushed out by the regulators, those who are writing all these regulations, is a moving target; people just don't know where it's going. So we've got uncertainty there on health care.

Look at legal fees. We are the only country in the world that runs about 10 percent of our gross domestic product in legal fees. We are a litigious society, and our laws encourage that. It's wrong, and it puts an unnecessary burden on the American entrepreneur.

And let's pause for just a moment and kind of define the American entrepreneur just for a moment. I'm not talking about highly sophisticated folks and MBAs and all that. I'm talking about the moms and the dads and the young people who are starting businesses out of their homes and relying on maybe some borrowed money from family or friends or a small second mortgage on their homes if they own a home. These are the burdens that we're putting in their way that makes it more difficult to, again, get a return, an entrepreneurial return on their investment.

Accounting, accounting services. I love the CPAs out there in our commu-

nities, but they are having to deal with things, for example, our Tax Code, that is incredibly complex and unnecessarily so. I have found in my 10½ months here that the halls are filled with lobbyists. Now, some I think can provide us with good information; but some have only one mission, and that's just to find a strategic advantage for their industry or sector, and that is expressed in our Tax Code. And I, along with my colleagues—and I certainly can speak for my Republican colleagues and, I trust, for my friends who are Democrats—we can, we must, we will simplify our Tax Code.

When I would sit down with our accountant every year as a small-, medium-sized business owner, my good friend David would say, Well, here's a tax return, Scott. And I would go through it, and with even 25, 30 years of business experience, I would say, David, I just don't understand this. I'm doing my very best to keep up with you. I just don't understand this.

It is not right when an American wants to pay his or her fair share, whatever is expected and the law requires to pay, and there's not a person out there, including within the IRS, that can even confirm that you're paying it correctly. If you call the IRS and ask for guidance, that is no defense if you do it incorrectly. It's not right.

EPA compliance at every turn. Look, we have a moral obligation to leave our children with clean air and clean water and clean soil. I'm a recreational fisherman. I don't have much time to do that now. That's okay. But I used to go out to the second and third island on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel—and those in the Second District know where I'm talking about—and when the strippers are there and they're running, well, it's a fun evening. I never want to catch a striper that has a lesion. I have a great passion to make sure that we meet the deep obligation that we have to the next generation of Americans to be proper stewards of the environment. What I so often disagree with, with my friends who would profess to love the environment more than I do—which is something, frankly, I don't concede—is this: We are headed so often to the same place. Sometimes it's a matter of timing. Are we going to get there over 3 years or can we stretch it out over 10 to 15 so that we can give industry a reasonable time to adjust?

As I've listened carefully to the administration and to my colleagues here on this proverbial other side, I think it, in some ways, can be boiled down to this: that there is this general debate taking place—and I frame it this way—that the administration believes there is a role for the American entrepreneur to play in job creation, but its reliance is principally on government; its belief is principally in stimulus spending—that is, borrowing money to buy things through the government. I think the evidence of this is clear. The administration has doubled down in the jobs bill on a stimulus-driven mindset.

Now, in sharp contrast, we, as Republicans, believe there is a role for government, a proper role for government, but our reliance is upon the American entrepreneur, the small business owner. When we wake up in the morning and when we go to sleep at night, we know that the key to getting through this, to unleashing the great potential of America, is the American entrepreneur, America's small business owner.

Look, I applaud the President for putting forth a jobs bill, but let me share with you this: We've passed a lot of jobs bills. It's right here. And I want to take a moment—this may seem tedious, but we need to slow down and get our facts right. I'd like to cover, briefly, a summary of the 22 jobs bills that we have passed in this body with bipartisan support that are now stalled in the United States Senate.

Now, as a new Member here, I have just found it incredibly frustrating that we have passed good bills, bills that I know would move our country forward in job creation, and they're met with this response from the Senate Majority Leader: Dead on arrival.

Really? Dead on arrival? I think I learned in about eighth or ninth grade in a civics class that here is what's supposed to happen: The Senate passes its own bill or amends ours, and then we go to conference. That doesn't happen very often; very seldom.

Here is a summary of the bills that we have passed in this body.

I am very proud of my party in this respect. And when there are issues with our party, I'm quick to say that, too. And we'll cover those in just a few minutes when we answer the second question: What's wrong with this body?

Let me read just a few of them here, Madam Speaker. H.R. 872, Reducing the Regulatory Burden Act.

If you think through this, we are addressing individual lines on a financial statement, each one of which would give breath and life and hope to the American entrepreneur, saying, You know what? I really think I can do this. I'm going to go ahead and take that second mortgage out.

H.R. 910, the Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011; H.R. 37, disapproving the rules submitted by the Federal Communications Commission; H.R. 1230, Restarting America Offshore Leasing Now Act; H.R. 1229, Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act; and H.R. 1231, which would have reversed the Offshore Moratorium Act.

It goes on and on, Madam Speaker, on and on. These are good bills. I encourage Americans across this great land to take a look at what we are doing as Republicans in leading the way toward true job creation.

I know we can get our country back to work. There are clear steps that we can take so that, when you get to the very bottom, this profit after tax equals a return on investment that is attractive, that makes folks want to put capital at risk.

I want to cover one more thing before I go to that critical question of why our Congress is dysfunctional—taxation. I will just give you one example of how this is having a detrimental impact on our country.

We have a wonderful manufacturer in Virginia Beach, part of the Second District, called Stihl. You may know them from their chain saws, a high-quality product. It's a beautiful, well-run, efficient plant that they have in Virginia Beach. And they shared with me, they said, SCOTT, look, we are competitive with our sister unit in Asia. We are competitive with our sister unit in South America that produces essentially the same parts and the same products. We are competitive on a cost-per-piece basis, but here's where we're not competitive. We are not competitive on an after-tax basis.

Now, whether we like it or not, we are in a global economy. We are competing with countries around the world, not just with our neighbors here in North and Central and South America. We are competing with countries all across the world.

□ 1940

So our tax rate, our tax structure has to move America in the direction of making America the best place to start a business and, particularly, manufacturing.

Madam Speaker, this is the manufacturing base. The fact that we are producing less here in America, I believe that is the principal reason there's a shrinking of the middle class. And so we need to come together as Democrats and Republicans and independents and improve our manufacturing base. The 22 bills that I mentioned address that directly and head-on, and they should be passed by our Senate and then sent to our President for signature.

Let's tackle that second question, Madam Speaker. Why is our Congress so dysfunctional? I believe there are three principal reasons. The first is the harshness of our tone. Both parties are guilty of this—both parties.

Let me give you an example on the Republican side of the ledger. I don't use the term ObamaCare because I believe it's pejorative. Right out of the get-go, it personalizes the debate. My objection to the Affordable Health Care Act has nothing to do with the President, himself. It has to do with what's in the bill. But when we use a term like ObamaCare, it is unnecessarily interjecting into the conversation an angle which so many in our country find divisive.

I've spent a lot of time with our black pastors and bishops in the Second District of Virginia. What a joy it is to go across our great district and worship in different houses of worship and when I sit down with my good friends, our bishops and pastors principally in the black community, and we start talking about these matters, and they say, SCOTT, where are you on the Affordable Health Care Act?

I say, well, pastor, I don't support it. Here's why. But you know I don't use the term ObamaCare. And they said, yeah. Often times they'll say, SCOTT, they see it as a racist term. And I don't speak for every black pastor in my district certainly. But I'll tell you, I've talked to enough to know that some do see it that way.

Why would we use a term that unnecessarily alienates us from our friends and moves us apart as the American people?

And I'd submit to you, Madam Speaker, that what's taking place in this body is hurting every American family. And if wasn't, quite frankly, I wouldn't be here. But it is. It's putting our country at material and serious risk. There's a harshness of tone. And I think the way to respond to that and head in a different direction is to think, well, what would your mom say? I know how my mother taught me to speak to others: with respect.

And, Madam Speaker, I would say this: We should not mistake civility with weakness. We can and should be firm on principle. Civility is not an indication that one does not hold core values.

Now, the second aspect of what's, I think, hurting this body and hurting every American family is this: the misuse and oftentimes the complete dismissal or deliberate failure to reference facts.

I'm a businessperson. I don't know any other way to make a decision other than to first gather the facts. If I start making decisions off of how I feel or where I think the decision ought to go, I would not only not prosper; I would go into bankruptcy. And I think, in some ways, that's where we're headed as a country, because we're not relying on the facts.

Let's take a couple here that just jump out at us. Now, I would say to my friends who are Democrats, let's consider this. Historically, we've been around 19 percent of expenses as a percent of our gross domestic product. Right now we're over 24.5 percent. This is putting America on a perilous course, and I believe it threatens our country in a fundamental way.

Now, to my Republican colleagues, let's look at the other side. Historically, we've been around 18 percent, plus or minus revenue as a percent of gross domestic product. And right now we're less than 15 percent. That too is a problem. Any Republican who will not admit to this or confront it and discuss it head-on is not dealing with reality. These are the numbers. It's not how you feel; it's where the numbers lead us.

We need to be a leadership team here, a body that respects, seeks out and is guided by the facts.

My colleague, who I respect very much, Representative SCHWEIKERT, he was down here one afternoon. I was watching him on C-SPAN. I was in my office and watching him, and he had a wonderful presentation. And what he

did was he put into perspective—it was sometime ago, probably 6 weeks or so, maybe 8—this debate that was taking place where there were some charges coming from our friends on the other side, and they were basically saying, you know, you're trying to crush Medicare on the backs of the poor, giving oil breaks to oil companies. And he did this. He kind of broke it down.

He said, okay, we're borrowing about \$4.7 billion a day. Let's look at all tax cuts for all Americans. If you eliminated every single one of them, it would be about 28 minutes out of that 24-hour day if every tax break was removed. And I'm certainly—you know, we'll walk through which ones we can support; 28 minutes of a 24-hour day could be addressed by these tax cuts.

Tax incentives provided to oil companies amount to about 2.2 minutes under his calculation, and I'm quite confident in his math. So about 2.2 minutes out of a 24-hour day could be addressed by eliminating the tax cuts to oil companies.

And the tax treatment for corporate jets, if you remember that discussion, is about 15 seconds of a 24-hour day. Yet, in this body, right here it was presented as either fix Medicare or eliminate these tax breaks, or hold on to them, rather. It was a false argument.

I mean, you could agree to every single reversal, and we'd still be faced with an enormous, an enormous fiscal challenge. As we head into the days ahead, it looks like a ski slope. Our expenses look like a ski slope. Yet our friends on the other side would present it as, well, all you have to do is basically eliminate these tax breaks and, you know, kind of a no-pain option.

So I think—and both sides do this. You know, you look back—I targeted my own party on the first point of harshness. You know, I could give examples in each category of each party.

Now, questioning of motives here. This has been a most interesting experience as a new Member of Congress. I've sat in this body right here and watched my colleagues—Democrat colleagues—stand up and with great bravado say, you don't care about the poor. You don't care about the elderly. You don't care about our minority communities.

Madam Speaker, how can one judge another's heart? How can one judge another's intent?

I would say to my Democrat colleagues, you may care as much about our environment, but you do not care more. You might care as much about the poor, but you do not care more. You might care as much about ensuring that our seniors have medical coverage, but you do not care more.

Indeed, that is why I voted for the House Republican budget. That is why I voted to ensure that we take the steps now so that Medicare is solvent. The President and I agree on this matter, that without changes in 9 years, we're bankrupt in Medicare.

□ 1950

That's unacceptable. I think it took political courage for our party to put that on the House floor, and I think that's a good segue to this account that I have right here, this idea of questioning people's motives.

I was on my way to a Veterans of Foreign Wars town hall with our fine veterans. I have the great privilege of representing, again, the Second Congressional District of Virginia. It has the highest concentration of veterans in the country. What an honor it is.

So I'm on my way to a VFW breakfast meeting, and these good men and women get up early. I think it started at 7:30. I got a call from our district director. She said, Congressman, she said, MoveOn.org is here. I said, Okay. How many? She said, Oh, I think one or two. And I said, Shannon, there will be more, and don't worry about it.

We pulled up there and the door to the entrance was quite far from where we were on the road. There was quite a distance in the parking lot. And there were a couple of protestors out there—I think by that time it was three or four—and I told my good friend Esmel Meeks who works with me every day, I said, Esmel, stop the car. He said, What are you going to do? I said, Esmel, it's okay. I just want to get out and talk and listen.

I got out of the car, and I said, Good morning. I'm SCOTT RIGELL. The gentleman said, I know who you are. I said, Look, I appreciate you being here this morning. I respect you for getting up early. You care about this topic of Medicare. You care enough to get out here and meet with me or at least send me a message. I said, What's on your mind this morning? I think that caught him off guard a bit.

But as we went through the conversation, he said, Well, you're giving all of these oil subsidies and crushing Medicare. I said, Well, we've got something in common here. Let's talk about this. I don't believe in oil subsidies. I said, I'm looking at this matter right now. It's taking me a little time. It's a complex matter. There are several different areas of tax treatment for oil companies.

I called in one of the most progressive groups in America to give me their take on this: Tell me why these are tax subsidies. And as I met with these young folks in my office—they were first a bit surprised that they found themselves in my office, but I was delighted to have them there. I said, Help me to understand why these are tax subsidies.

There are a number of them, and they started to go down the list, and I almost immediately noticed a problem. I'm a businessperson. I've been in business 30 years. I said, Wait a minute. Some of these are just regular tax deductions that any business would get whether they were a mom-and-pop operation or a large corporation.

Now, these over here, they sure look like tax subsidies to me, and if I deter-

mine that they are, I'll vote to repeal them on the House floor. And I went back to those that were not true tax subsidies, and I said, Listen, don't use hyperbole to make your point. It actually diminishes your argument.

We got through that, and I shared a little bit of that story with this good gentleman from MoveOn.org that met me outside the VFW town hall. And then after that I said, You've accused me, or I should say, You're certainly taking a shot at me here for not caring about the elderly. I said, No, this is why I voted for the House Republican budget. This is the best way to ensure that we protect Medicare.

I said, Do you know how long it takes us to balance the Federal budget under this plan that you say is extreme? He had called it extreme. I said, Sir, do you know how long it's going to be under the Republican plan of borrowing money each and every year? He said, No. I said, I do. It's 25 years. Under the plan that's called extreme, it's 25 years of continuous borrowing. And that's the boldest plan out there right now. At least it's gotten serious consideration. And of course that plan, too, sits in the United States Senate without action.

In the Second Congressional District of Virginia, we are blessed with water. It's all around us. You can't go down a street for four or five miles before hitting beautiful water. And in those waters is one of the most precious and delicious little creatures known to man, the blue crab. And if you're lucky, you can put a couple of chicken necks in a crab pot, throw it in just about any part of the Chesapeake Bay or one of the estuaries in these little bodies of water and little creeks off of the Chesapeake Bay that we're blessed with in the Second Congressional District, come back in about 4 or 5 days, and if you're lucky, you'll have 10 or 12 blue crabs in there.

If you pull the crab pot up on to the dock, as I've done many times, one thing is pretty striking about that. As you look at these crabs, they have no idea what their fate is. And they're just going at it. Claws are flying. Occasionally a claw will be severed and pinched off, but they just keep fighting. They are oblivious to their fate.

If they had any hope, any hope at all, what they would say is, Hey, wait a minute. We're all in this together. This thing is not headed in a very good direction. And they'd say, Listen, our only hope is when this man opens up that little trap door, we all gotta rush him and maybe a few of us at least will make our way back into the water, maybe all of us. But our only hope is to do this together.

Madam Speaker, I would submit to you that in more ways than we might imagine, we are like crabs in a crab pot. We're fighting each other; we're not making good decisions as a body, and it's putting us all at risk.

I believe there is a deep resolve. Notwithstanding what I just shared, I be-

lieve there is a deep resolve among both parties. I trust and I pray that there is because the matters before us are so great that there is a deep resolve to do the right thing; to listen to each other; to treat each other with respect; to watch the harshness of our language and our tone; to bring back a civility in our public discourse; to let the facts guide us to good decisions; to not question the motives of others. This will bring us together.

Yet we know that there will still be spirited debate. This is a good and natural thing. It has been a characteristic of this body since our very founding and even prior to the founding of this great country. There will continue to be spirited debate.

How are jobs created? I have given you, Madam Speaker and others, my core belief on how jobs are created and how we'll unleash the greatest job-producing engine the world has ever known: the American entrepreneur. Some disagree with these priorities. I don't see how. I like my view. It's been tempered by 30 years of reality and experience.

But if we come together under the terms and conditions and under the umbrella of civility that I just outlined, I really believe that we'll meet that deep obligation that we have to the next generation of Americans to pass on the blessings of liberty and freedom.

I close with this, Madam Speaker:

I shared with this body earlier that I had the great privilege of representing the Second District, which has the highest concentration of men and women in uniform in the entire country. My weekend was filled with wonderful events honoring our veterans. Young veterans and older veterans, like my father, Ike, at 88 years old, an Iwo Jima veteran—my favorite veteran, by the way. But as we walked through these events from parades and marathon races and just a host of different events, it was just evident to me that we have so much more in common that binds us together, the full fabric of our community.

Every community, every minority community, every community, old, young, is represented in these wonderful events, our veterans, what they have fought for in this great country. And I believe the best way to honor our men and women in uniform surely is, of course, to stop on Veterans Day, to pause, to look them in the eye to thank them.

But I would say even more importantly, and I think our veterans would agree, they'd say, You know, I appreciate that. But better yet, and indeed your duty, elected official and every American, is to take the legacy that was gifted and handed to you at a heavy price and ensure that we pass it on to the next generation.

□ 2000

So I implore, Madam Speaker, every American to get engaged in this noble

fight for the future of our country, for our children, and for our grandchildren. My favorite modern-day President, President Reagan, said it this way: Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We did not pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for and passed on for them to do the same; or one day, in our sunset years, we will tell our children and our children's children what it was once like in America where men were free.

Indeed, we will meet our deep obligation to the next generation of Americans. And as we come through this Veterans Day, may God watch over our veterans, our troops who stand watch tonight, and may God forever bless the United States of America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

CBC HOUR: POVERTY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I want to again thank our leader, NANCY PELOSI, and the Democratic Caucus for allowing the Congressional Black Caucus to have this Special Order hour once again.

Before I begin my discussion today, though, I want to take this opportunity to wish a very happy birthday to my daughter Karida Green. I am blessed to have two wonderful daughters and four fantastic grandchildren, whom I was able to spend the past weekend with as we celebrated Kobi's, one of my grandsons, 5th birthday.

I also want to extend congratulations to the Federal team that's now in place in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Congratulations to our new district court judge, Wilma A. Lewis, who joins Chief Judge Curtis Gomez and Senior Sitting Judge Raymond Finch in the district court of the Virgin Islands; to congratulate U.S. Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe, who had his investiture this morning; and also Chief Marshal Cheryl Jacobs, who was sworn in about 2 weeks ago. We welcome all of them and thank President Obama and Attorney General Holder for their nominations and the Senate for their timely confirmation.

And let me once again thank all of those men and women who have served in our Nation's Armed Forces and those who serve today for their courage and their sacrifice, and I also want to thank their families who serve and sacrifice along with them. We in the Congressional Black Caucus and, indeed, I think, the entire Congress look forward also to sometime in the not-too-distant future to honor the Montford Marines with a well-deserved and long overdue Congressional Gold Medal.

But this evening, Madam Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus continues our focus on the need for jobs and to reiterate the call for the leader-

ship of this Congress to bring legislation to the floor that would create jobs. But tonight we also want to call our attention to the continuing plight of the poor in this country and how the budget and other battles that have been fought on the floor of this House and over in the Senate have been hurting them and what is at stake for them also if the supercommittee does not come to a balanced agreement that would reduce the deficit by \$1.2 trillion or more—and, I would say, hopefully more.

Earlier this month, nine Members of the House joined the Fighting Poverty with Faith initiative and took the food stamp challenge. We agreed to live on what is the average food stamp allotment for a week, \$31.50, and I can tell you that it is not easy.

There are over 48 million Americans today who are food insecure. More than 16 million children live in households that are food insecure in the richest country in the world. Millions face hunger every day in this country, a fact that we should all be ashamed of.

These numbers are only getting worse, not just because of the recession but because almost all of the growth of wealth in the past decade went to the top 10 percent of people in this country. For most Americans, their incomes dropped; their incomes really crashed. And the gap between the rich and the poor got wider, a dangerous trend for a country already struggling to maintain its leadership in the world, something everyone should want to do everything in our power to maintain.

For all of our 40 years of existence, the goal of the Congressional Black Caucus has been to close the gap that leaves some communities behind or some out altogether; to close the income gap, the job gap, the housing gap, the health gap, the education gap, and all of the disparities that have been so doggedly persistent for some communities, not because those on the losing side didn't want them to change or didn't work for change but because the opportunity too often was just not there.

Colleagues, America is the land of opportunity and all of us, not just the 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus but all 441 or, really, all 541, need to be working together to make sure that it is for all and not just for some.

This country was founded on the principle that all men and women are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights, not to be separated from us. Inalienable rights—the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Many times even when we pass programs that should have helped, they don't reach communities that need them most. Those communities in some cases are not prepared to compete or they may not be priorities for the Governors of those States who often get to decide where those programs go. And that's why our assistant leader,

JAMES CLYBURN, joined with Congressman RANGEL to develop the 10-20-30 program, an initiative that they have taken to the White House and to the Republican as well as the Democratic leadership.

Under this initiative, which seeks to help out the most chronically distressed communities, 10 percent of all funding and programs would go to communities with 20 percent or higher poverty levels for 30 or more years. And it may surprise everyone, but two-thirds of all of the jurisdictions that would qualify for that 10 percent are in Republican districts. I think if it were under any other administration or if it were proposed by someone on the other side of the aisle, perhaps this would have been passed long ago; but today those communities, not all of which are racial and ethnic minority in makeup—many are, but not all are—would continue to suffer and, in essence, be denied those inalienable rights, and that's not the country that we know and love.

At our annual legislative conference in September, we heard from researchers who reported on persistent poverty and its impact on health and the quality of life in the communities that are chronically distressed. Their report tracked the stubborn persistence of concentrated poverty in U.S. metropolitan areas over a period of nearly 40 years. Neighborhoods with poverty rates above 30 percent have been recognized as places with few opportunities for employment and education, high levels of disinvestment and crime, and meager civic participation. Living in such neighborhoods over extended periods of time reduces the life chances of children, whether their families are poor or not.

The report also looked more deeply at a subset of urban neighborhoods that can be characterized as the "original ghetto," extensive areas whose cores were almost exclusively nonwhite and poor in 1970. The report showed that the Nation continues to suffer from racially and economically divided cities, undercutting efforts to reach important goals for our country, for health, for education, for employment and civic engagement.

More specifically, that report found that concentrated poverty has risen substantially since 2000. About one in 11 residents of American metropolitan areas, or 22.3 million people, now live in a neighborhood where 30 percent or more of their neighbors live in poverty. Such neighborhoods suffer from private sector disinvestment, poor public services and schools, and unacceptable levels of exposure to crime, natural hazards, and pollution. The number of people in high-poverty neighborhoods increased by nearly 5 million people since 2000, when 18.4 million metropolitan residents, 7.9 percent of the total, lived in high-poverty neighborhoods.

□ 2010

The rise since 2000 is a significant setback compared to the progress of