

that today's lead editorial deals with this under the headline, "ObamaCare's Great Awakening," with a highlight line, "HHS tells religious believers to go to hell. The public notices." Yes, Mr. Speaker, the public noticed.

Let me just read the opening of that editorial:

The political furor over President Obama's birth control mandate continues to grow, even among those for whom contraception poses no moral qualms, and one needn't be a theologian to understand why. The country is being exposed to the raw political control that is the core of the Obama health care plan, and Americans are seeing clearly for the first time how this will violate pluralism and liberty.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few days, a strategist in the President's campaign—not the Secretary herself or an administration official—has suggested that, well, maybe something can be done. Really, Mr. Speaker? Are we leaving dealing with First Amendment rights violations to campaign staff for resolution?

This latest controversy has given us yet another reason to repeal ObamaCare, a bill forced on America by the last Congress and this administration. Given the obvious willingness of regulators to force their value system on all Americans regardless of religious belief, the editorial comes to the right conclusion: "Religious liberty won't be protected . . . until ObamaCare is repealed." Mr. Speaker, the time for repeal is now.

PUTTING THE BRAKES ON RUNAWAY DEFENSE SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke testified on Capitol Hill last week and warned us that deficit reduction "should be a top priority" and that current spending projections are unsustainable. In response, the gentleman from Wisconsin, who chairs the Budget Committee, said that we needed to get our fiscal house in order, otherwise, "it's going to get ugly pretty fast."

To him, I would say: It's already ugly. It's really ugly for 13 million Americans who woke up this morning without a job to go to. And it would get uglier still if we embraced his vision of a shredded safety net and a voucher program that ends Medicare as we know it.

Here is what I find particularly distressing and disturbing: for my colleagues in the majority, every other sentence out of their mouths is about reducing Federal spending, and yet the programs they want to cut are the very ones that are keeping working families afloat. They never seem to aim their ax at the part of the budget that has shot through the roof the last 10 years and now eats up more than half of discretionary spending. I'm talking, of course, about the Pentagon budget.

It doesn't make any sense that the military industrial complex has gotten a virtually blank check while important domestic programs—and also important civilian international programs that promote national security—look for change in the couch in order to survive.

If we're in belt-tightening mode, then we should all be in belt-tightening mode. But if there are Federal dollars available—and there certainly are—I want to know why we can't make strong investments in the food stamps program, Head Start, or Pell Grants. If there's enough money to give the Pentagon a staggering \$700 billion-plus a year, I want to know why we can't make relatively modest, but meaningful, investments in paid family leave or early childhood education.

The good news is that the President of the United States gets it. With the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he is taking a strong first step toward putting the brakes on runaway defense spending.

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But I think that we need to do more and we need to be much bolder. When we spend more on defense than the next 10 nations combined, clearly our priorities are out of whack.

The Cold War has been over for 20 years, and yet we still have tens of thousands of troops stationed in Europe. This makes no sense at all. Something else that doesn't make sense: our presence in Afghanistan. And it's not just the peace and justice folks who are calling for the end of this misguided adventure. Lieutenant Colonel Daniel L. Davis, Army "brass," is asking, "How many more men must die in support of a mission that is not succeeding?"

He goes on to say, "You can spin all kinds of stuff, but you can't spin the fact that more men are getting blown up every year."

Mr. Speaker, what we need is a fundamental overhaul in the way that we think about protecting America. We need to be smarter about national security.

SMART Security means replacing weapons systems with humanitarian aid and development. It means a civilian surge instead of a military surge. It means peaceful diplomacy instead of military devastation. It means lifting up and empowering innocent Afghan people instead of occupying their country and perpetuating a war that has killed them by the thousands.

This SMART Security approach is not only the better way to protect our interests and keep our country safe, it comes at a fraction of the cost of what we are spending.

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of our national conscience, also for our national treasury, it's time to do the smart thing and bring our troops home. Don't ask me; ask Colonel Daniel Davis.

GETTING AMERICA BACK TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, small businesses are reluctant to expand today. With so much economic uncertainty, our local job creators don't know if they can afford the risk of hiring a new worker.

As a small business owner myself, I know the pressures of meeting a budget and a payroll. I employ 100 people, and for me that's 100 families. I have to make sure that I can ensure that we can provide health care insurance and other benefits before it is time to hire new workers.

Mr. Speaker, there are 29 million small businesses in our Nation. Here, in this body, I believe our goal has to be to create an environment that enables those small businesses to have the confidence to be able to grow and thrive, to be able to add that one new worker. And think about where we would be at that point in time, Mr. Speaker; 29 million businesses across the Nation all hiring just one worker, we'd have a different problem on our hands.

The partisan rhetoric and the lack of progress in Washington is hindering businesses from hiring more people. But I do believe we can come together and tackle some of these problems. Washington has to stop viewing legislation through a political lens and start viewing it through the eyes of the American people.

One area we can agree on is the payroll tax extension. The House voted at the end of the year to extend it for an additional year. The President has asked that we extend it for a year. The holdup is yet again in the United States Senate. Senator HARRY REID would rather play political games with this important measure, and now some Members are asking for a 2-month extension.

Mr. Speaker, I say enough is enough. We need to extend this tax holiday for the entire year. Small businesses don't have the luxury of hoping that we'll get it right. So let's come together today and pass the yearlong extension in both the House and the Senate. Let's give hardworking American taxpayers the relief that they need.

Mr. Speaker, new regulations are also hindering small businesses from expanding. Hundreds of pages of new regulations in the President's health care law, hundreds of rules that have still yet to be written in Financial Services with regard to Dodd-Frank are hindering the financial services industry. Small businesses do not know what new rules are coming next; and, thus, they can't prepare for the future and job growth remains, at best, uncertain.

But we can and must find common ground on regulations. No one is arguing for the elimination of regulation, Mr. Speaker. What we need is smart regulations. It's vitally important we