Filner
Gardner
Gerlach
Gohmert
Gosar
Grijalva
Guinta
Gutierrez
Heinrich
Hirono
Johnson (IL)
Jordan
LaTourette
Meeks
Noem
Pascrell
Paul
Payne
Rangel
Rohrabacher
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Shuler
Sires
Stivers
Tiberi
Tsongas
Walsh (IL)
Young (FL)

□ 1914

Mr. BISHOP of New York changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mr. DENT changed his vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the Journal was approved.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for votes in the House Chamber today. I would like the RECORD to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 49.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 49, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I missed the one rollcall vote for the day.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote No. 49, on Approving the Journal.

COMMEMORATING ARIZONA'S CENTENNIAL

(Mr. QUAYLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. QUAYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a very happy occasion for every member of the Arizona delegation. I'm proud to have introduced H. Con. Res. 100, which invites the entire House of Representatives to join with the Arizona delegation in commemorating Arizona's centennial.

For the past 100 years, Arizona has stood as a beacon of opportunity for millions of individuals who came to the State to make a better life for themselves and their families. They came to Arizona and built the State we know today, a State with rich diversity, a soaring optimism, driven by an innovative spirit. They came because they know that Arizona embodies what's best in America.

I can't imagine a better place to live, and I'm proud to call Arizona home. I'm proud that it's the place that I've chosen to start my family, and representing this wonderful State is an honor beyond words.

Arizona has had 100 great years. We start the next 100 with the same spirit of optimism and determination that made our State great, and we still possess that same fierce independence needed to keep it great.

CELEBRATING ARIZONA'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. SCHWEIKERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, as many of you know, today is Arizona's 100th birthday. Think of this: 100 years ago there were only about 200,000 people in Arizona. Today there are about 6½ million.

One of the reasons I wanted to come behind the microphone today is, if you've been watching our Senators and some of my fellow members of our delegation, we've all gotten behind microphones and talked about the wonderful leaders, the Carl Haydens, the Morris Udalls, the Barry Goldwaters that have come from Arizona. But I actually want to say something special about the people of Arizona.

Think of this. In our hundred years, 6½ million have chosen to make it their home. And I believe it's both because of the wonderful lifestyle of Arizona, but also the people themselves. It's a unique population.

Think of this. You have a State full of people who have chosen to pick up their homes in California and the Midwest and back East and venture into a new life, and actually, that type of entrepreneurial spirit, that type of unique personality, I think, is actually what makes Arizona so special.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES OF OUR DAY

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege and honor to be recognized by you to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and to take up some of the issues of our day.

First I'd like to address the situation that we are in with regard to the payroll tax extension and the unemployment extension and the components that are being deliberated now as a conference committee is trying to get to a final solution.

I'd take you back, Mr. Speaker, to the lame duck session a year ago last December when, within, oh, 30 to 45 days of the election of this 112th Congress, the legitimized now-112th Congress, the lame duck session negotiations took place, initiated by the minority leader of the United States Senate, MITCH MCCONNELL, and the President, President Obama, to deal with a way of extending the Bush tax brackets to avoid the automatic imposition of a 55 percent death tax at midnight on New Year's, beginning on the first minute of 2011. It was the payroll tax holiday, and it was also the refundable tax credits, unemployment benefits extended, and the list went on.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just make the point that we had 87 freshman Republicans waiting in the wings during that lame duck session. They were the legitimate representatives of the American people. And when the United States Congress makes a decision to move forward on large pieces of legislation, any large piece of legislation, in a lame duck session, then it must be something that is urgent and mandatory that we take that kind of action. Our Founding Fathers did not imagine that we would—well, first of all, Thomas Jefferson said, large initiatives should not be advanced on slender majorities.

□ 1920

Large initiatives should not be advanced on slender majorities, but, Mr. Speaker, also large initiatives should not be advanced by lame duck sessions of the United States Congress. When that happens, you have a lot of people that are going home: 87 freshman Republicans, 9 freshman Democrats, they replaced all of them, people that were going home. So there's your math.

Ninety-six Members of this Congress today, and there have been several others that have been added, but 96 were waiting in the wings to be sworn into office here in the first week in January so they could do their just constitutional duty, and while that was going on, negotiations were taking place for a lame duck session, a large initiative lame duck session to address Bush tax bracket extensions, unemployment benefit extensions, and for the first time, the severance of the 50–50 relationship between employer and employee in the contributions to the Social Security trust fund.

Now, I've watched that Social Security trust fund since I came here to this Congress, and it was at about a plus of $1.74 trillion. It's grown to $2.34 trillion, one of the times I looked. It's moving quickly now because the higher the unemployment, the more damage it does to our Social Security trust fund because the contributions slow down.

As we're seeing baby boomers retire and qualify for Social Security and Medicare, there are more and more demands on the Social Security trust fund.

But the payroll tax holiday that was passed—and that's what it was called—but it actually created a $130 billion hole in the Social Security trust fund. Now, you can charge it against the general fund, and when the time comes to pay the bill, it will have to come out of the general fund because the Social Security trust fund is borrowed from by the Federal Government anyway.

But the accounting created a $130 billion hole. You can count that up proportionately and round $10 billion, $11 billion a month, each month that there is an extension of the suspension of the 2 percent contribution of the employee into the Social Security trust fund.

Now, that was one of the components from the lame duck session. We never should have, Mr. Speaker, severed the 50–50 bond between equal contribution to the Social Security trust fund out of the employer and the employee. As soon as that happens, it opens the door for class envy. It already had discriminated against the employer in benefit of the employee.

Now, if it had been a reduction of 1 percent from the employer and 1 percent from the employee, at least then the 50–50 bond would have been withheld. We have, in the past, adjusted the Social Security contribution rate so that we have a viable fund. But we have not in the past broken that 50–50 equal contribution, employer-employee. That happened in the lame duck session. It was one of those things that was agreed to in order to be able to extend the Bush tax brackets. Extending the Bush tax brackets at that time gets us just until December 31 of this year, and then all of the game changes again.

Now, it is a way to avoid having that be a debate while President Obama is up for reelection, just like the debt ceiling was timed so that the President can essentially direct a debt ceiling increase and avoid having a fight here on the floor of the House or the Senate to approve another debt ceiling increase. It looks as though we've negotiated some agreement to keep the President off the hook for holding him accountable coming into this Presidential election.

But to add into that agreement—the lame duck deal, I will call it, Mr. Speaker, when you add to that agreement the payroll tax situation that suspended 2 percent from the employee and didn't suspend any from the employer and broke that bond, we also had the extension of the Bush tax brackets, and we had an adjustment to the death tax, which was zero on the day that this was voted upon, but it jumped to 35 percent. It was automatically going to go to 55.

We also had an extension of unemployment benefits out to 99 weeks, Mr. Speaker. So 99 weeks of unemployment benefits are, as far as the charts that I have looked at and my memory, unprecedented in the history of this country. So the 99 weeks of unemployment, that and extension of refundable tax credits and a few other smaller programs, totaled $212 billion in outlays just for the duration of that bill, that bill that was negotiated by people who were anxious to make a deal.

Why? I have a little trouble figuring out why the Republicans were anxious to make a deal, Mr. Speaker, because we had 87 new freshmen waiting in the wings. The legitimate voices of the American people, the shock troops that they sent here, they sent them here for fiscal responsibility. Every single one of them ran on the 100 percent repeal of ObamaCare. They ran on fiscal responsibility. They ran on a balanced budget. And $212 billion went out the window with the lame duck deal without hardly any debate, $212 billion, most of it to extend unemployment benefits for 99 weeks, but some of it for refundable tax credits. That did not include the $130 billion created by the suspension of 2 percent of the contribution rate into the Social Security trust fund, that hole that was created

All of this so the Bush tax brackets could be extended beyond the reelection of the President of the United States.

That agreement, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, and it's a strong conviction, should never have been negotiated in a lame duck session. We should have allowed the new Members of this Congress, the 87 freshman Republicans, the nine freshman Democrats, to weigh in, to have a chance to debate, to configure a policy and to vote.

But meanwhile, they were waiting in the wings going through orientation while this vote was taking place. By the time they were actually seated here in this Congress, that horse was out of the barn. That plane had already left the runway.

The horse was out of the barn, the payroll tax was what it was, and it was set to expire at the first day of this year as we know. Now it's been extended for 2 months, and we're in the negotiations to see what to do with the rest of it.

But the problem is rooted back in a bad deal, the lame duck deal, and now this freshman class is being asked to address it, to solve the problem, and to not necessarily reach in their pockets and pay the price but to pay the political price to try to resolve this issue, which is going to go on and on and on until we put the pieces back together, Mr. Speaker.

We've got to put the pieces back together, and to get there politically, no one can paint that picture for me, no one can draw that map. And since I couldn't have drawn that map either, I wouldn't have gone there in the first place.

But we are where we are. It's $212 billion in outlays to extend unemployment benefits from the lame duck session a year ago last December, and it's $130 billion in the hole in the Social Security trust fund until you find it some other way, but that's what it is.

The result of extending unemployment benefits out to 99 weeks was that we had a lot of workers in America that were 63 years old that amazingly found themselves unemployed with unemployment benefits guaranteed with no obligation on their part except to sign up, out for the duration of their working career. So it amounted to an early retirement for 63-year-old employees or 64-year-old employees in America, unmeasured in its impact on our economy.

Meanwhile, the measure of what happens when you pay people not to work for 2 years is that their skills atrophy, they're out of the workforce, technology moves on. Not only are they not getting caught up with and staying caught up with technological changes and the modern shifts within our very nimble economy that we must have, but the skills that they had on that day are atrophying.

Now, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't have unemployment. We should have. The consistent duration of unemployment has been 26 weeks. That's a half a year. If you look at the data, when unemployment runs out people are far more likely to go to work than they are the week before it runs out. It is a fact; it is not an opinion. It's a fact, Mr. Speaker.

But my point here is that we're in this discussion today with a pretty difficult decision that's being made by the conference committee, by the Speaker, the majority leader, and others, but this difficulty we have now is rooted in what I consider to be a mistake in the lame duck deal.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, how I wonder how much different it might have been if we had waited and seated the freshman class, consulted with them, asked them if they wanted to sever that 50–50 equal contribution rate between employers and employees. Ask them if they were willing to accept on their conscience a $130 billion hole in the Social Security trust fund. Ask them if they were ready to face extending the payroll tax reduction, and doing so in perpetuity. As long as the other side is willing to play class envy, are we going to be willing to continue to dig a hole in the Social Security trust fund?

□ 1930

That is one question in front of us.

Another one that's in front of us—and one I'd like to ask the freshman class also—is:

Did you ever really think that 99 weeks of unemployment was the appropriate thing to do? How did you intend to fund that? Would you have found a pay-for if you'd thought 99 weeks were the appropriate way to deal with an unsettled employment situation in America? Do you have compassion for the employers who are looking to build their businesses with employees when it's difficult to hire them off of the unemployment rolls?

We had a hearing before the Small Business Committee, Mr. Speaker. Before that committee, we had four or five small business employers—there might have actually been six—but I asked them going down the line:

Have you had any kind of luck hiring from the unemployment? They invariably said: Once the unemployment expires, I can hire them just fine. One employer out of the list said that she had hired off of the unemployment rolls on one occasion.

That's fairly typical. I will tell you that I know of businesses in my neighborhood that look around the neighborhood, and they see that there are employees they'd like to hire. They know, when their unemployment benefits run out, they'll be knocking on their doors 1 week or 2 weeks before the unemployment benefits run out so that they're in line to hire them. We have employers who are lining up to hire the unemployed, but they know they can't get that done as long as unemployment is being paid.

Now, yes, there are people who are unfortunate; there are people who can't find jobs; there are especially people in parts of the country who have an economy that's far worse than that which I

represent in northwest Iowa, Mr. Speaker; but we need a logical unemployment plan, perhaps one that ratchets those benefits in an incremental way so that it slowly provides more of an incentive for people to go to work. It's not just that you as an unemployed can't find a job in the community you live in and in the profession that you happened to have been practicing before you were laid off. No, Mr. Speaker. There are many more aspects to this.

There is such a thing as travel: Go and get a job where you can get one. Relocate there if the job is good enough. Go check it out. Call for your family if that's good enough. That has happened throughout the history of this country. Yet our Federal Government is essentially saying to people, You're not going to be obligated to relocate. Some of the people over on this side of the aisle think that somehow we ought to take the jobs to where people live.

It puts me in mind of an article that was researched and written—I happened to have read it in the Des Moines Register some years ago, more than a decade ago, I'm certain, Mr. Speaker. They had gone into a neighborhood in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, into a residential neighborhood, and interviewed every household there—all the residences in a six-block-by-six-block area, 36 square blocks. As they interviewed the families and—I guess I can't say the word—analyzed the families and identified the characteristics of the families, they didn't find a single male employed head of household in all 36 square blocks of the residential area in Milwaukee.

The history of that area was that the people in that neighborhood had predominantly been descended from those who had moved up to Milwaukee, right after prohibition ended, in order to take on the brewery jobs, the good brewery jobs in Milwaukee. They brewed a lot of beer in Milwaukee, and they created good jobs there right at the end of the prohibition era, and people were willing to move from the Gulf States up into those neighborhoods to go to work in the breweries. So that would be the thirties, from the thirties to the nineties, a 60-year period of time so to speak. Thomas Jefferson would call that three generations. I'd say probably so. One generation arrived in Milwaukee at the dawn of the aftermath of prohibition. Another generation was born and raised, and the grandchildren were still living there, but they didn't have a single employed male head of household in 36 square blocks.

The story was about the lament, Mr. Speaker, in that we couldn't bring jobs to the people in that neighborhood; but, truthfully, their ancestors—their parents or grandparents—had moved to Milwaukee from the Gulf States for the jobs. Yet it didn't occur to the person writing the article that people could also move for jobs in the modern era. That is what you must do. If we're going to have a flexible, mobile economy, we've got to go to where the work is.

But the disincentive is there from the Federal Government that discourages such things, and we don't ask very much the question about why is it that not a single male head of household is employed in this entire six-block-by-six-block area of Milwaukee. The biggest answer to that is that the 72 different means-tested welfare programs that we have are disincentives for people to find jobs. Now, that sounds shocking to the hyperventilating liberal left, Mr. Speaker, but it's just a fact. It's a fact of human nature. So the discouragement from finding a job has created neighborhoods of people who don't have a tradition of working anymore.

America was built on high productivity and on the efficiency we have, and the intuitive nature, the instinctive, innovative nature of Americans, has been what has made our economy so strong; and it's a very sad thing to think that here we sit with this discussion about whether or not unemployment should be 99 weeks or 79 weeks or 69 weeks. Mr. Speaker, 26 weeks have been long enough for almost all of the history of this country. We are not in an economic situation that matches that of the Great Depression's at this point, although the debt that has been accumulated does match that of the Great Depression's and then some.

I recall the President coming before our Republican Conference on February 10 of 2009, shortly after he'd been inaugurated as President, to make the case that we should advance his economic stimulus plan—his $787.5 billion, grown into $825 billion, shovel-ready, spend-now, pay-interest, and pay-principal-later plan. He said to us that FDR's New Deal actually did work. It worked, but FDR lost his nerve. He got worried about spending too much money, so he pulled back. When he pulled back in the second half of the thirties, it brought about a recession within a depression. These are President Obama's words. In this recession within a depression, unemployment went up, and then before the economy could recover, along came World War II, which was the greatest economic stimulus plan ever. That was the President's presentation to us.

President Obama convinced me and, I think, everybody who was listening that day that he will not lose the nerve that he believes FDR lost. President Obama is the lead Keynesian economist on steroids in the history of the country and, I believe, of the world in that he believes that borrowing money and spending money will stimulate the economy and that, as that economy rolls, the benefits of it will create jobs. He believes if you borrow money and hand it to people, not in exchange for a good or a service that has been produced but just get it in their hands one way or another—if they'll work for it, fine. Then give them something for working. If they won't or if you can't give them something—because they can surely be busy spending as they've got more time do that if they're not working after all, and spending money stimulates the economy; and, Mr. Speaker, Keynesian economists believe that: that spending money stimulates the economy.

I believe this, that we here in America have to produce goods and services that have a marketable value and that can be sold competitively here and abroad. We need to produce our way out of this economic doldrums that we're in, not spend our way out of it. They believe that if you spend billions of dollars—and in the President's case, I have to give him his due of trillions of dollars, of 4 or 5 or more trillions of extra dollars of debt that have been piled upon us—that that comes back to you severalfold.

In fact, the statement was made by our Secretary of Agriculture that, for every dollar in food stamps that gets spent, it stimulates $1.84 in economic activity. Now, if that's the case, why don't we give out a lot more food stamps. That's because people have to produce the food and because they have to deliver it, stock it, shelve it, and those things. Well, if that's such a good economic stimulator, why don't we just do all of that, throw the food away, and then we can stimulate the economy, too. But who's going to pay the debt?

Here is what I do believe, Mr. Speaker. If we borrow money and if we hand it to people and say, Spend it, spend it, spend it—it's your patriotic duty—it may stimulate the economy for a short while. I call it a sugar high. It may be just for a little while that you can get that little bump—very, very temporary. The trade-off is that the trough that you might otherwise be falling into may not—not will not but may not—be as deep as it would be otherwise.

□ 1940

But the result will be, you have to recover, and you have to pay off the interest and the principal. So even though you might not fall as far, you have a much broader trough to recover from.

We have to pay the interest, and we have to pay the principal on all of this debt that's been accumulated over the last 3-plus years. And it doesn't mean that the Bush administration is somehow forgiven for the debt that's been driven up. But during the height of the Iraq war, the Bush administration came within $160 billion of balancing the budget. Now $160 billion sounds like loose change today compared to the President's budget that he rolled out, which is minus $1.33 trillion. You run up a deficit of $1.33 trillion, and you increase taxes by more than $1.5 trillion in that process, you can see what happens, Mr. Speaker.

This budget that the President has offered should be the news of the day.

And maybe we ought to be looking at what's in it. But what we really hear instead is that it's dead on arrival, that his budget will not be brought up—certainly it will not be brought up here in the House. At least I don't think so here in the House, unless it's to illustrate its lack of support.

Last year, President Obama's budget was brought up on the floor of the Senate. And of all the talk about giving the President his due and working with the President on his budget, his budget was voted on in the Senate and voted down 97–0. Mr. Speaker, I don't know that I've had a piece of legislation come to the floor of this Congress that had that kind of unanimous—well, I guess I can't say ''support''—unanimous rejection. That would be tough on my ego if I couldn't get anybody to agree with me after I had all that staff put that big budget together. But they didn't want to be held accountable for what the President's budget said.

The President now has a political document—not a fiscal management document—that he'll run around the country, talking about his budget. He will use it to beat up on Republicans that don't support his budget. And maybe he'll realize that it isn't just Republicans; that last time it was HARRY REID and all of the Democrats who voted on the budget over in the Senate. We didn't support it over on this side either.

We had a couple of budgets come to the floor here in the House of Representatives last year, Mr. Speaker. One of them was the RSC budget that balanced in 8 to 9 years. And the other one was what we call the Ryan budget, the Republican Conference budget. That's the one that actually passed here on the floor of the House. And even though that budget had a level of austerity to it, and even though it was ground-breaking in the boldness with which it addressed a path to prosperity, it wasn't strong enough, Mr. Speaker. It went in the right direction. And it was bold by historical standards, but not particularly bold by the standards that we need to envision the future.

Yesterday we had the chairman of the Budget Committee make the statement that we have 2 to 3 years, and we have the potential of becoming one huge Greece. I have been making a similar statement over the last year and a half or so. And what I believe is that—by the way, Greece is relatively easy to bail out, if you wanted to do that, because their economy is only 2 percent of the EU's GDP. And that's the EU's gross domestic product, just in case the acronyms are bothering people, Mr. Speaker. So 2 percent of the EU's GDP, not that hard to fix.

Here in the United States, we have a different kind of difficulty. The Ryan budget a year ago, though, didn't balance for 26 years and left us with a national debt at the end of 10 years of $23 trillion. We walked into it with $14.3 trillion in national debt and ended up 10 years down the road with $23 trillion in national debt. But when the debt ceiling deal was made last August, it broke faith with the Ryan budget, which projected $23 trillion in national debt, and became $26 trillion in national debt. But in fairness, without applying the Ryan budget, we were looking at $28 trillion in national debt 10 years from now. From $14.3 trillion to $28 trillion. The Ryan budget dialed the $28 trillion down to $23 trillion. The debt ceiling deal dialed it back up to $26 trillion in national debt in 10 years.

It's hard to declare a victory over a $1.2 trillion cut on a debt ceiling deal if you're reducing the projected national debt from $28 trillion down to $26 trillion. And if you are dealing with a budget that no longer is binding, having broken faith with at least the big numbers within that Republican Conference/Ryan budget, on a budget that didn't balance for 26 years—I have to go back and look at my three sons who are grown—they're in their thirties right now—and say to them, Sorry we didn't have a balanced budget in the previous decade. We haven't had an effective balanced budget, I don't believe, passed in this millennium. And in 26 years, if all goes well—and we've already said it's probably not going to—we might see a balanced budget. But you will, my sons, be eligible for that Social Security that will be paid for out of the trust fund that has, by then, hundreds of billions of dollars, if not trillions of dollars in holes created in it by paying for things now that make us feel good or we avoid the political confrontation of it.

And you'll never have worked and paid taxes in the United States of America for an entire career and known that a balanced budget is passed out of the United States Congress.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, those sons in their thirties that have been working for well over a decade going through an entire career, knocking on the door of Medicare eligibility, Social Security eligibility, having watched a hole created and expanded bigger and bigger in the Social Security trust fund every year while they're closer and closer to being able to finally qualify for Social Security and Medicare, and we can't fix this problem now? And the Federal Government is running a deficit for all of those years: 26, 28, 38, add 10, 12,—40 years, 40 years of deficits are what are staring us in the face now, before we can get to the point of paying off the first dollar on our national debt. And that's if we would stick with Ryan's budget of last year. And I'm hopeful we'll do better this year.

But the President, who spoke in his State of the Union address in front of where you are seated right now, Mr. Speaker, when he came for this much anticipated State of the Union address a couple of weeks ago, he made no mention whatsoever of a balanced budget. He didn't make mention of fiscal responsibility, let alone austerity. He laid out his agenda of spending. And I guess I know now why he didn't address the promise that he made 3 years ago in which he said he was going to cut the deficit in half by the end of his term. Well, no, that hasn't happened. That would require a deficit proposal by his budget of roughly a half-trillion dollars, somewhere in that neighborhood. He has got red ink in his own budget of $1.33 trillion. And he says, This is not the time for us to tighten our belts. This isn't the time for austerity. The economy can't stand it now. Well, the creditors are not going to be able to take this much longer either.

As I sat asking a series of questions over in the German finance minister's office not that long ago, we went through the national debt of the countries that are in trouble, those who have had their bond ratings just lowered by the news that I saw today. And if you add up the national debt of those countries—and I will name them: Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Belgium, those countries. If you take the national debt of those countries, not including France, for example, but just the countries that have been, for months now, hanging in the balance of facing the fear of default, their total cumulative national debt, if they paid off everything that they owed as a country, the sovereign debt of those countries that I have mentioned totals $4.5 trillion.

Now the President already met that. Running up the debt within the first 3 years of his office, he had already arrived at a little over $4 trillion. So we're in the same neighborhood. The red ink spent under this administration was enough red ink to pay off the sovereign debt of the nations in the EU that are having trouble. I'm not suggesting that we should have done that. But look at the austerity that Greece is having to accept and the fires in the streets, when the streets of Athens go aflame when they find out that about 15,000 government jobs have been cut in order to meet the budgetary guidelines that they must meet if they're going to be able to borrow money from—who are the players in the European Union? It really comes down to Germany now today.

□ 1950

Fifteen thousand government jobs cut in Greece alone, a little old country that is 2 percent of the GDP of the EU. And we're here, and we cannot tighten our belt. We have a President that puts a budget out that will not even speak of moving toward balance. He will not speak about tightening our belt. But he will demagogue people who will propose such things, and that includes PAUL RYAN.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm suggesting that we call upon the Presidential candidates who are seeking the Oval Office and ask them, renew your efforts. Declare and ask for the support of the American people; that if you are elected to the highest elected office in this

land as President of the United States, call for a mandate from the American people for this Congress to pass a balanced budget out of the House and out of the Senate and message it to the States to begin the ordeal of the ratification of a balanced budget amendment in the 38 States that are necessary in order to implement an amendment to our United States Constitution.

And the balanced budget amendment must have a GDP cap. I'll stand on 18 percent. That's the historic take-out of the GDP for the Federal Government, 18 percent. And it must require a supermajority in order to raise taxes.

Mr. Speaker, this country will not survive in the long run with less. The will to balance the budget does not exist in this Congress today. It doesn't exist in the House. It surely doesn't exist in the Senate. The push from the President for deficit spending is one of the factors. But if you remove the President of the United States and put a new individual in there who is fiscally responsible, we still have the problem of the tendency to overspend and the unwillingness to tighten the belt and the unwillingness to listen to the American people that insist that we balance this budget.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I want to see the Presidential candidates call for a balanced budget amendment. I want that to be actually the second plank in their platform. The first plank needs to be the full, 100 percent repeal of ObamaCare. That's an essential component for us to get our liberty back, and it is an essential component to balance the budget.

We can't afford ObamaCare. It takes away our liberty. It takes away our freedom. It takes away our choices. And we're dealing now with the national debate over right to conscience.

Never in the history of this country have we seen a President that had the level of audacity to believe that he could sit in the Oval Office and dictate the terms of health insurance policies to every American. And the President did so. Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't Kathleen Sebelius sitting in her office with some of her trusted advisers over at HHS that decided they were going to compel, especially the Catholic but the faith-based institutions who were providing health care services, to provide also for their employees health insurance policies that 100 percent of them would cover birth control pills, other contraceptives, that 100 percent of them would cover sterilizations, tubal ligations—vasectomies in particular.

That 100 percent of the health insurance policies would cover the morning-after pill or the Plan B pill that comes in after the morning-after pill, the ella pill; the ella pill that is prescribed to bring about an abortion up to 5 days but is effective up to 22 days. That would be 4 days after the baby's heart starts beating, I might add, Mr. Speaker.

To compel any religious institution, any person of faith, let alone the Catholic Church, which is the largest single institution standing for life and marriage in the United States of America, the White House understands that if they can plow through the Catholic Church on life and marriage and matters of conscience, then there is no institution left that can stand up to the President of the United States and his radical, social, transformative agenda would have no serious impediment from that point forward.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, the American bishops understood what was taking place when Kathleen Sebelius made the announcement, which was actually the order of the President of the United States to compel religious institutions, in particular Catholic institutions, to fund, provide and pay for birth control pills, sterilization, and abortifacients.

That was a violation of the right to privacy. It was a violation of the religious right to conscience, a right to conscience which is guaranteed in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, freedom of religion.

But for the Federal Government, and I should probably not use that term quite so benignly because this is, for the President of the United States to issue such an order, tells us how radical and aggressive his agenda is, maybe how out of touch he is with the faith community in America.

But I compliment the American bishops for taking such a bold stand, Mr. Speaker. And the stand needed to be taken. When you think about the martyrs of history, it's not a hard stand to take here in the United States of America. You're not going to be crucified. You're not going to lose your head. You're not going to be stoned to death for taking a stand like this. You might be ridiculed, but when you stand on principle, how can that hurt. It doesn't. If you believe in the principle, it doesn't.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the American Catholic bishops took this position. They said it was a violation of a right to conscience. And they wrote: We cannot, we will not, obey this unjust law. The strongest language that I have heard read from the pulpit in my years as a faithful Catholic. We cannot, we will not obey this unjust law.

A bold position, a bright line, uncompromising. And I know the question was posed that the delay of 12 months in implementing the rule was to give the religious institutions an opportunity to make accommodations and adjust to the imposition of the Federal Government in requiring them to violate their conscience.

Mr. Speaker, I'd submit that one does not violate their conscience. If it is a conscience clause that protects you, that's one thing, but it is your conscience that prohibits you from crossing the line.

The lives of babies are ended by morning-after pills, by the ella pill; and it is a direct violation of the teachings of the Church and no government can compel a church to violate its conscience. Nor can a government compel individuals to violate their conscience. This rule that was imposed was designed to do that, and I believe the President calculated that he could fracture the Catholic Church in doing so. And if he were successful in doing that, then there would be not an impediment in the way with the other components of the radical social agenda.

But, Mr. Speaker, that didn't happen. It's not going to happen. The bishops listened to the President's ''accommodation'' and bought a little bit of time and said we're going to study this and deliberate and we'll give you an answer. And they did. They studied it, deliberated, and they came back with an answer in a short period of time. It was less than 48 hours, as I recall, and rejected the President's accommodation because it still violates conscience, and it violates the conscience of many faithful Americans and Americans of all religious denominations. Particularly, it runs directly against the principles of the Catholic Church.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we now have a bright line drawn along the line of conscience protection, and we're having a good American debate on conscience protection, and I'm hopeful that we'll be able to get that established. But I would caution this body, Mr. Speaker, if I were addressing them instead of yourself, that we should not accept the idea that we can go into ObamaCare. All this power and authority is rooted in ObamaCare. ObamaCare grants this authority to the executive branch. The President assumes the authority because he makes the appointments within the Department, such as Kathleen Sebelius.

But to make changes in ObamaCare that essentially lower the pressure, the 1099 squeal forms component, well, this House passed a bill to repeal it. And you've got other components of ObamaCare that have been egregious and efforts made to repeal a little piece here, a little piece there. The medical equipment tax would be one of those. And now we have the violation of conscience that imposes that everybody in America pay for everybody else's contraceptives and their sterilizations and their abortifacients. My conscience won't let me do that, Mr. Speaker.

□ 2000

But yet the President of the United States believes he has the power built into ObamaCare; and every time we come to this floor and pass a piece of legislation, it takes some of the pressure off from a legislation that would amend out the most egregious aspects of ObamaCare. I remember some of the language back when ObamaCare was passed, and some of the leaders within this Congress—and I count you all as leaders here, as I address you, Mr. Speaker—have said, We will repeal the most egregious aspects of ObamaCare.

The most egregious aspect? Mr. Speaker, every aspect of ObamaCare is egregious. It is because it's a violation of our American liberty. And if we repeal one egregious aspect after another after another after another, each time we do that, we take the lid off the pressure cooker, and we lose that opportunity for the heat to come up where we can solve the whole mess.

So I have argued since the beginning, we need to hold the lid on, keep the pressure on and let the heat increase until such time as we are all ready to pass a repeal of ObamaCare and send it to the next President. This President, we have an idea what he would do with it, but the next President will sign the repeal.

And so I've worked on that relentlessly over the last couple of years and worked with each of the Presidential candidates on this, and every Republican candidate has taken a pledge or an oath multiple times for a 100 percent full repeal of ObamaCare. Almost all but one of them have pledged to rip it out by the roots, to repeal 100 percent of ObamaCare and not leave one particle of it left behind.

It's what we must do if we're going to keep faith with our Founding Fathers. It's what we must do if we're going to protect, preserve, and refurbish the liberty that is God given to us as Americans. It's what we must do if we hope to have an economic future in this country with an unsustainable ObamaCare staring at us. It's what we must do if we're going to have research and development in the health care industry and if we're going to continue to lead the world in providing health care. It's what we must do if we're going to preserve and protect the Constitution of the United States, which we've all taken an oath to uphold.

All of these are reasons for the full 100 percent repeal of ObamaCare, Mr. Speaker. It needs to happen. It needs to happen in the first weeks of the next Congress, and the repeal needs to be set upon the podium on the west portico of the Capitol, prepared there for the next President of the United States so, when he takes the oath of office, his first act of office can be to sign the repeal of ObamaCare right there at the podium, the west portico of the Capitol. I hope to have a good seat for that glorious occasion, Mr. Speaker, and I'll intend to do my share of the work to continue this argument to position us so that this Congress is prepared to pass that repeal.

I believe that we should just go through a warm-up drill here fairly soon. Now, this is St. Valentine's Day, February 14. Sometime in the next 30 to 60 days would be appropriate, Mr. Speaker, for the House of Representatives to renew and refresh our vote to repeal ObamaCare again. Perhaps the people over in the Senate have understood how important it is and have changed their mind, but I believe that this Congress should remind the American people that we are still—100 percent of the Republicans—in a bipartisan way in favor of the full 100 percent repeal of ObamaCare. That's an important message to send.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also submit that the repeal of Dodd-Frank is an essential component, too. We've got to do a lot of undoing of this administration before we can get turned around to doing what we need to do to start the reform process over again. We will have lost 2 or 3 or more years before President Obama, and being locked up in a Congress that's led by NANCY PELOSI then and HARRY REID on the floor of the Senate, and we'll have lost 4 years of the Obama Presidency. We've got to make some progress. We've got to make some progress, and that can't come as long as ObamaCare sits in the way. It can't come as long as Dodd-Frank sits in the way.

The decisions that were made by BARNEY FRANK and Chris Dodd to presumably reform the financial world, the solutions came from some of the people that contributed to the problem. And I would suggest that we do this as a financial package, Mr. Speaker, and that would be in the early days of the 113th Congress to pass the repeal of Dodd-Frank, to pass the repeal of the Community Reinvestment Act, and to move Fannie and Freddie even more boldly towards privatization. And some of those, I understand, are in the agreements that are being negotiated right now. But it won't be bold enough or strong enough, I'm convinced of that.

And, by the way, let's repeal Sarbanes-Oxley while we are at it. If we do that—running the table is what I would say—repeal Dodd-Frank, Sarbanes-Oxley, the Community Reinvestment Act, and move Fannie and Freddie toward privatization, all of these things will lay a foundation where we can write some reasonable regulations in on our financial institutions and open this country back up to do business again, Mr. Speaker.

I think it would be appropriate of this Congress to move the repeal of Dodd-Frank that MICHELE BACHMANN has introduced. She has carried that legislation with her around on the Presidential campaign trail. She is the lead on repeal of Dodd-Frank. And I think a great way to welcome her back to the conference after a brilliant run for the Presidency would be to bring her repeal bill forward here on the floor, the repeal Dodd-Frank. And it sends a message, Mr. Speaker. The message that it sends is the House is for repeal of Dodd-Frank. The Presidential candidates are for repeal of Dodd-Frank. Send it over there to the Senate and see what they want to do about it. But getting that marker down helps encourage the Presidential candidates that this Congress is in and will be in lockstep with the Republican nominee.

Those principles that are universal among all Republican candidates at this point should be moved by the Republican majority in the House of Representatives. For example, passing official English. Eighty-seven percent of the people in this country support English as the official language. It sits there as a dormant issue because it seems as though the only agenda that this Congress has is jobs, jobs, jobs. Well, people earn better pay and better benefits in their jobs when they have English skills.

We burn billions of dollars—and that means ''consume'' or ''waste.'' That was a hyperbole, so to speak. We waste billions of dollars in multilingualism, when the strongest and most powerful unifying force known to humanity throughout all of history is having a common language. It's more powerful than a common religion, a common background, a common race or ethnicity. It's more powerful than a common sex. It is the most powerful unifying source in the world.

When God looked down at the Tower of Babel and He said, Behold, they are one people, they speak all one language, and they are building the tower to the Heavens with the arrogance that we remember. He said, Behold, they are one people, they speak all one language and nothing they propose to do will now be impossible for them because of having a common language to bind them together. So God scrambled their language, and that's where the Tower of Babel came from, and they began to babble. They couldn't understand each other, and they split up to the four winds. And that's the Old Testament story about how we ended up with so many different nations.

We also know historically what has happened. People move into enclaves and live in those enclaves. They communicate with each other. If they do that and don't have a language, they'll create their own. But even if they go there with a language, the language morphs into something else if it doesn't interrelate with the other communications in the region, in the neighborhood, and in the world.

So we have encouragement going on in this culture of encouraging language enclaves instead of the success of assimilation. And I think we should move the H.R. 997, the English Language Unity Act, here right away. It's an 87 percent issue. I know nothing more popular than that. If I've got an agenda here, Mr. Speaker, that is as popular as 87 percent among the American people and I can't get a vote, meanwhile, the President can offer his budget and 97 Senators reject it and he gets a vote, there's something really wrong with that. There's a lot of disparity between the two.

So I think that's another thing that needs to happen. Let's move English, and let's move the repeal of Dodd-Frank. Let's move the repeal of ObamaCare. Those pieces would be good messages to send to the American people. They're good pieces of policy to be established to lay on the desk of HARRY REID that can join the cordwood of the jobs creation legislation that

this House has sent over to the Senate and help set the stage for the next President of the United States who needs to come in with a strong mandate from the American people, from the United States Congress, with a clear vision that Americans support our new President to take us where we need to go as a people.

□ 2010

But the components of the agenda of the next President need to include a balanced budget—a balanced budget amendment, a commitment to that balanced budget amendment, and a mandate from the American people to get that balanced budget amendment passed. It's the only way that I can see that we get that accomplished, Mr. Speaker. We need to call for the Presidential candidates to call for a balanced budget amendment.

So I will go through these issues again: pass a balanced budget amendment, one that has an 18 percent cap on spending of GDP, one that requires a supermajority to raise taxes, that has legitimate exemptions for a declared war or a case of a serious national emergency. Balanced budget amendment, repeal ObamaCare, repeal Dodd-Frank and the other financial components that I said, and let's move forward with a country that's based upon freedom, upon liberty, upon free enterprise. If we do all that, Mr. Speaker, the American people will take care of the rest.

We still have interest that we've got to pay and principal that's got to be paid down before we can get rid of the interest bill. This is a huge credit card that has been run up. The debt of the countries in trouble in the EU is $4.5 trillion. And now President Obama's $1.33 trillion added on to his $4-plus trillion threaten to take his term of the Presidency well over $5 trillion, knocking on the door of $6 trillion in accumulated debt in his time in office.

Whatever we do that's good, we still have to pay the interest and have to pay the principal on that debt. So the recovery time, the depth which we might have otherwise fallen a little bit further, it takes a lot longer to recover when you borrow the money to do so. That's the nature of the free enterprise system. That's the nature of capital and investment and risk. That's the nature of Keynesian economics that the President has embraced.

I am a supply-sider. I don't believe that borrowing money, handing it to people, telling them it's their patriotic duty to go out and spend that money is how we're going to recover from this economy. We're going to recover from this downward economy by producing those goods and services that have a marketable value here and abroad. We do that, we'll sell, we'll compete, we'll rebalance our trade deficit, we'll make American industry strong again, and we will again be the powerhouse of the world. When that happens, we are strong culturally, politically, we are strong militarily, we are strong economically, and we will continue to be looked up at by the rest of the world.

If we fail economically, if we become one huge Greece—as Chairman RYAN is concerned, and as I am and many others—if we become one huge Greece, there is no one to bail us out. There's no one there. We can hold our tin cup out, but no economy will be big enough to put enough in the tin cup that we can get a meal. We would be in a situation of default. It would be a sad, sad day in America. It would take generations to build our credit back again. It would take generations to recover. In fact, the trajectory of this country would be so altered that we could never recover.

Power abhors a vacuum; it fills it. If America has an economic crisis, as I'm suggesting looms in our future, that power, that global vacuum will be filled by our competitors. Much of that power that is projected around the world has been paid for in treasure and blood, Mr. Speaker. We must maintain that for the future destiny of our country. We must maintain it out of honor for those who have sacrificed so much to protect freedom and liberty around the world.

We are a great country. We're the unchallenged greatest Nation in the world. We derive our strength from Judeo-Christianity, western civilization, and free enterprise capitalism. We need to understand those underpinnings of American exceptionalism, those pillars of American exceptionalism. We need to celebrate them. We need to teach them. We need every child to understand the pillars of American exceptionalism and be able to recite them in the same fashion that the seven sacraments are recited in the very Catholic Church that's standing up for our constitutional rights today, along with the other faith-based organizations.

It's a big picture we have going on in this country, Mr. Speaker. It's a great country that we are. It's a great country filled with great people, people with individual spirits, individual sense of self-sacrifice, willing to tighten their belt, willing to carry their share of the load.

And what do they want out of it? An opportunity to work, prosper, raise their family, live free without an oppressive government reaching in and regulating every aspect of their very lives. They want to be able to utilize the God-given liberty that was articulated by our Founding Fathers, and promote that kind of liberty to all humanity throughout the world, wherever they may be.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your attention to the discussion that I've had with you this evening, and I would yield back the balance of my time.

MAKE IT IN AMERICA: MANUFACTURING MATTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALAZZO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I'm joined tonight by two of my colleagues, Mr. TONKO from New York and Mr. ALTMIRE from Pennsylvania. We're going to be talking about the President's budget and about one of the issues that we think really will propel America back to the leading edge of the world's economies.

We've had some tough times, but we've seen some progress. If we can once again make it in America, we're going to see this economy grow, we're going to see the middle class come back to life. We're going to see an expansion of wealth and the opportunity for families to make it in America when we make things in America.

Let me just start off this discussion with the progress that's been made. Some of our colleagues here would like to say that nothing good has happened over the last 3 years when, in fact, this chart, which is from the Department of Labor Statistics office, points out very, very clearly where we have come from since the Great Recession began.

If you take a look at this, the gold columns over on the far left—or far right, depending on your perspective—you can see the great decline that took place from 2007 until January and February of 2009, when President Obama came into office. Since that time, we've seen a steady improvement in the number of jobs in America. So even though we were seeing here in this particular 2009 period a continued decline, each week that went by we saw improvements, less of a falloff, and we began to emerge from the depths of the Great Recession.

So beginning here in about 2010, we began to turn around and we began to see positive job growth. Every month since that time we have seen positive job growth in America—not enough, not enough to satisfy any of us on the Democratic side and not enough, I'm sure, on the Republican side, and certainly, as President Obama said when he appeared here at the State of the Union, not enough to satisfy the President.

So we're now looking at the President's budget going forward, proposed, came to the Congress yesterday. That budget lays out how he would like America to move forward, and how we in the House of Representatives and the Senate can put into place the laws, the programs, and the money to pay for the advancement of the American economy.

□ 2020

So we're going to spend tonight building off the President's budget and the things that are in there.