

promote and enact policies that keep our middle class strong and provide opportunities and a safety net for those striving and fighting to become middle class and to get into the ranks of the middle class, to enhance their quality of life. But far too many Americans are continuing to suffer joblessness and have dropped out of the middle class and into poverty because of this Republican do-nothing Congress.

Republicans in Congress have continually blocked efforts to extend and expand vital safety net programs which safeguard millions of American families and children who face stark realities of unemployment, hunger, and homelessness. Further, their continued blocking of critical Federal support to our States and localities has caused widespread layoffs of dedicated public servants like teachers, police officers, and firefighters in communities all across the country.

This attack on our country's public servants has had a particularly hard impact on communities of color and on women across the country. I just have to tell you, African Americans and women have long found job opportunities in the public sector, in public employment. African Americans, in particular, often found work with the city or the State because of racial bias and barriers and obstacles in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, the American people know that you can't have it both ways. Government spending cannot kill jobs on one hand, when spent on hiring teachers and police officers, and create jobs on the other hand. And those services are desperately needed throughout our country. We need more police officers on the street.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle must begin to accept the reality of history. Federal investments in our Nation's infrastructure, in our schools, and in programs that help struggling families are critical to boosting our economy and spurring our economic recovery.

Tax cuts for millionaires don't pay for themselves; they create massive deficits and weaken our country.

Markets don't regulate themselves. Deregulation allows rampant fraud and creates massive bubbles that inevitably burst and threaten our entire economy.

We need a balanced approach that ensures that every American pays their fair share and is invested in a united and prosperous future for all Americans of every background. We need a balanced approach that ensures that millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share so that we can reignite the American Dream for all.

How this Nation treats the least of these is not just a measure of our Nation's moral priorities, but it will directly impact whether the American Dream survives and thrives for all. Let us not forget that our greatest strength is the freedom and opportunity that our democracy created to allow us to work together to build the

largest and most prosperous middle class the world has ever known.

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But this means that we must reduce and we must eliminate poverty. And I hope in the few days that we're left that this Congress will come together and figure out a way to pass the President's American Jobs Act, because in that legislation we have critical investment to rehire our police officers, teachers and firefighters who desperately need their jobs, but also the services are desperately needed in our communities.

COMMEMORATING NEIL ARMSTRONG

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

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I represent Alabama's Fifth Congressional District, home to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, home to the Saturn V rocket that carried American astronauts to the Moon.

Today, the Fifth District's talented scientists, engineers, and others work tirelessly to develop the Space Launch System for manned space flight both to and beyond low Earth orbit.

In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy challenged America to do the impossible, send an astronaut to the Moon and safely return him. As a young boy in the 1960s, I vividly remember the Earth tremble, dishes rattle, and windows pulsate as America tested our Saturn V rocket on nearby Redstone Arsenal. In 1969, America's hard work paid off.

I will never forget watching the grainy, black-and-white footage on TV as American astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped on to the lunar dust. The thrill of that moment, our pride in America, our awe of what Americans could do have belonged to all Americans ever since. Armstrong's walk on the Moon helped define America and changed world history as we left Earth behind and ventured into the mysteries of space.

Neil Armstrong was an accomplished aerospace engineer, Navy pilot, astronaut, and the first man to walk on the Moon. Neil Armstrong will be forever immortalized as a brave and great explorer.

Toward the end of his life, Neil Armstrong spoke frequently and passionately about the future of manned space flight. Neil Armstrong understood that American exceptionalism is in jeopardy and may be lost to future generations.

As a member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, I recently had the privilege to meet Neil Armstrong during a public hearing on NASA's Space Launch System, the Orion Multipurpose Crew Vehicle, and America's role in space. During that hearing, Neil Armstrong expressed concerns about the direction of America's space program.

Neil Armstrong testified, and I quote:

The past year has been frustrating to NASA observers as they tried to understand NASA's plans and progress. NASA leadership enthusiastically assured the American people that the agency was embarking on an exciting new age of discovery in the cosmos. But the realities of the termination of the shuttle program, the cancellation of existing rocket launcher and spacecraft programs, the layoffs of thousands of aerospace workers, and the outlook for American space activity throughout the next decade were difficult to reconcile with the agency assertions.

Neil Armstrong continued, and again I quote:

So, much has been accomplished. But NASA, hobbled by cumbersome limitations, has been unable to articulate a master plan that excites the imagination and provides a semblance of predictability to the aerospace industry.

Neil Armstrong concluded by testifying, and again I quote:

Predicting the future is inherently risky, but the proposed Space Launch System includes many proven and reliable components which suggest that its development could be relatively trouble free. If that proves to be so, it would bode well for exploration.

In the midst of America's current economic malaise and deficit-ridden Federal spending on programs that do nothing or little to advance technology or humanity's condition, I share Neil Armstrong's concern for the future of NASA and whether Washington has the inspirational leadership exhibited by President Kennedy in the 1960s, or "the right stuff" that is essential for space exploration.

Today, American astronauts hitch a ride from Russia. Oh, how far we have fallen. Quite frankly, America and the human condition beg for the White House leadership once shown by President Kennedy, but which now is sorely lacking.

Mr. Speaker, there is a whole universe out there waiting for us to explore. Just as America did in the 1960s, today's Americans can accomplish what is seemingly impossible. All America lacks is the vision needed to help us understand where we should go and the leadership needed to get us there.

Mr. Speaker, America will best honor the memory of Neil Armstrong and his achievements by striving for the American exceptionalism exemplified by Neil Armstrong in continuing his dream of manned space flight and exploration.

TAKE POLITICS OUT OF THE POST OFFICE

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues in this do-nothing Congress to take politics out of the post office.

The post office was explicitly authorized in article I, section 8, clause 7 of the United States Constitution. It