

known as SNAP—provides modest food assistance benefits to families in need. The program helps to alleviate hunger, reduce poverty, and improve nutrition across our country on an ongoing basis.

SNAP is also designed to help families put food on the table when disaster strikes. In response to recent hurricanes, fires, floods, and storms, officials at the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) have worked with other federal and state emergency response agencies to ensure those impacted by disasters have access to food.

Flexibilities in SNAP, for example, allow states to issue SNAP benefits early to ensure recipients can stock up on food before a disaster hits.

In many cases, SNAP recipients impacted by disaster and power outages are able to request additional benefits to replace food they lost, and in certain circumstances, are able to use their SNAP benefits to purchase hot foods if they lost power and are unable to cook.

Disaster SNAP, known as D-SNAP, is a key feature of the program that provides nutrition assistance benefits to families in major disaster areas who aren't currently receiving benefits. Importantly, D-SNAP also provides families currently enrolled in SNAP with supplemental benefits to help them get by in the wake of disaster.

In addition to SNAP, other federal anti-hunger safety net programs like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), child nutrition programs, and Disaster Household Distribution (DHD) come to the aid of those recovering from disaster.

For example, schools in areas affected by disaster can provide meals to all kids at no charge and can be more flexible in where and when they serve meals.

DHD is another program to allow food banks and other organizations to distribute emergency food boxes filled with nutritious food to people that don't have access to feeding sites or grocery stores in the aftermath of disaster.

Madam Speaker, when disasters hit the United States—and its territories—it is imperative that our government effectively and efficiently helps those impacted by these terrible tragedies.

SNAP and our other nutrition programs are a key component of disaster response efforts, providing food to families in need. In the aftermath of recent tragedies that devastated Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Texas, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, California, and Oregon, USDA was able to respond.

I'd like to thank my friend and colleague on the Agriculture Committee, the Chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, Mr. GT THOMPSON, for raising awareness about nutrition assistance in times of disaster.

I encourage all of my colleagues to join us in recognizing how powerful and effective SNAP and other nutrition programs are in responding to natural disasters. We must work to protect these programs from cuts or structural changes that threaten the ability of these programs to help families in need.

VETERANS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, I recently toured the newly renovated United States Capitol dome right nearby and, of course, was well aware it contains a striking fresco at the top. The title of that fresco is The Apotheosis of Washington, a bit of a peculiar image for our time, because it shows a stern, purple-clad George Washington exalted in the heavens.

Now, on his right is the Goddess of Liberty symbolizing emancipation; and on his left, the Goddess Victoria, symbolizing victory. He is surrounded by 13 maidens representing the Thirteen Original Colonies; however, there is a twist. The backs of several of the maidens are turned to Washington, and those represent the colonies of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia as they had seceded from the Union prior to the work beginning the fresco in 1863.

Now, Madam Speaker, the imagery continues, and around the rest of the dome are six allegorical scenes that do really project the defining ideas of America at that time. They are: war, science, marine life, commerce, mechanics, and agriculture. Now, these are perhaps old-fashioned categories to the modern mind, but then they did convey an optimism about the frontier, economic progress, and the potential of what our new Nation might be able to achieve.

Although, Madam Speaker, I had seen these frescos before, something struck me differently this time. These scenes really do grasp an incomplete ideal. The Apotheosis of Washington shows a reflective and confident America, but what is missing is a fuller understanding of the nature of community, individual dignity, and freedom.

The idea of progress is narrowly defined, and that narrow definition is actually still with us today, many times as it informs our debate here. We only tend to value things that we can actually measure—things like production, technology, and military victory—and they still rally us, and they are important.

But, as important as these things are, there is more to life; the more we have grown economically, the more we have grown technologically, the more our Nation groans. We have to be honest, and we have to ask ourselves: Why?

America is a far more complicated country than it was in Washington's time. It is not only due to our size and wealth and amazingly diverse population, but it is also due to rapidly advancing technology, a 24/7 news media cycle, and a highly competitive global marketplace that has made life more frenetic, more difficult, and, in some cases, much more alienating.

Today, there is widespread anxiety in our Nation over economic inequality, declining opportunity, and the concentration of both wealth and power,

as well as a new force that is expressing a loss of unity and community, and then combine that with this deep search for a sense of solidarity.

Madam Speaker, while Congress spends much of its time debating numbers, financing, and budgets, a vision for America in its fullest sense goes beyond just material dimensions. Our economic vitality must not only be measured in terms of efficiency and growth, but also in how well we advance the cause of human flourishing.

In spite of all of these reflective comments, this Friday, our Nation will actually pause, and we will pause for a very important reason: it is Veterans Day, and we will celebrate that tradition. So if you are starting to feel overwhelmed by our Nation's struggles, just talk to a veteran.

If you see these policy battles here as impossible to resolve, talk to a vet.

If you really do want to reconnect with the ties that bind us, speak to a veteran.

Madam Speaker, as we are painfully aware, it is not easy to make progress in Congress. Nevertheless, there are times when both parties and the administration come together for great good, and actions for veterans represent a unique and proper American opportunity to support the men and women who have served our country. So as we approach Veterans Day and consider how to celebrate this gift of being an American, if we need a reminder, just ask a vet.

□ 1930

Now, back to history for a moment, Madam Speaker.

We rightly mark our independence from the British as the beginning of a new nation, a new experiment in government based in the ideals of freedom. However, freedom most properly expressed is the freedom to do what we ought.

Unlinked to responsibility, to one another, and to higher ideals, freedom can become a meaningless wandering and a search for purpose; and progress, no matter how grand it is, is never an end in itself. Persons who are disconnected from one another, an economy that is uncaring, technology ever accelerating, these are dynamics that can actually be both beneficial, but also leave people behind. Independence from tyranny also means interdependence within community.

Now, Madam Speaker, the Capitol dome is over 150 years old. Until recently, chunks of iron—in fact, I saw one; it was nearly this big—were just falling off, and water was seeping through cracks. But now it is made whole again. The seams are repaired, and there is new, original-like glass and a fresh layer of protective coating. Why? Because we chose to do it. We didn't let it fall into ruin. We didn't lament its potential collapse. We chose to act.

So, Madam Speaker, if we cling to her ideals, this gift of America allows

us the freedom to preserve unity and to make genuine progress, which is the freedom to be whole.

As I approached my office here recently, there was a large crowd of men who had gathered outside my door. I assumed they were waiting to see me, and they were wearing camouflage shirts. There was some language on the front of the shirt. As I got closer, I could read it, and it said "United Mine Workers." I thought, well, this is a bit peculiar to see United Mine Workers from Nebraska. Nonetheless, I engaged them in a conversation outside the door thinking I would escort them inside.

But they weren't there to see me. They were there to see my neighbor, who represents the State of Kentucky, and that made a little more sense. Nevertheless, I greeted these men, and we had a very meaningful conversation about work, about security, and about fairness.

These men had spent their lives in very hard jobs. I am sure they proudly toiled to create reasonable livings for their families. They all now showed real signs of physical fatigue. They were in Washington to make a plea, a plea for their pensions, which are facing dramatic reductions.

A similar situation does exist in Nebraska for another group of workers. These men worked for a guarantee that they would be provided for when they could work no more. But given a confluence of factors, their pensions face a dramatic shortfall, and it is not fair.

I lived, Madam Speaker, for 2 years in the area where these men come from, in a town that had lost half its population in 20 years, in the old industrial Rust Belt where the post-World War II economic boom built a thriving, stable community, but now where globalized supply-side theory has had its most dramatic degenerating economic effect.

I said to these men: "You know that I know where you come from." One of them hugged me.

Madam Speaker, our country is in pain. Epic hurricanes and floods, escalating urban violence and an opioid epidemic among those who are self-medicating their own mental or physical or financial anguish, a broken healthcare construct, the aftereffects of bitterly fought elections, and now another mass shooting have torn America's heart apart.

In a vibrantly healthy society, there is space in a good, functional marketplace for fluidity, creativity, and innovation, and a person with an idea and the drive should be able to pursue it. The benefits accrue to the innovator as well as the buyer of the product, to the community as well, and those who give the effort. The point is this: a healthy economy is both individualistic and community-oriented at the same time.

Innovation and competition can be disruptive, but they must be set within a fair set of rules. When the system stacks to the wealthiest or is

outsourced by faceless corporations in the name of advancing quarterly profits, exploiting the poor elsewhere and damaging the environment, it sets in motion a series of things: lost jobs, lost community cohesion, and a breakdown of life's stability.

Tie this to a loss of the formative institutions in our society of family life, faith life, and civic life, and we drift. We drift without a national narrative that can hold, and it makes it much more difficult to respond holistically, especially when we have tragedies such as the senseless horror in Las Vegas and now with the unthinkable at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

But, again, Madam Speaker, I just have to pause and remind myself that, in spite of these difficulties, in spite of sometimes the darkness which can seem overwhelming due to a lack of unity, we will pause on Friday as a nation, and we will remember our veterans. If it is just too much and too overwhelming, if the debates in Congress are so bothersome and annoying, go talk to a vet about that deeper sense of who we are and what we still can be.

Madam Speaker, in the entryway of the municipal building in a little town of France called Sainte-Mere-Eglise, there hangs an American flag. It is the first thing you see when you walk into the mayor's municipal building.

Sainte-Mere-Eglise was the site where our paratroopers landed prior to the D-day invasion. They landed in the midst of German troop formations and had to fight as they were coming down. One paratrooper got hung up on the church steeple and survived the battle. A replica of him still hangs there today.

The American flag in the mayor's building, in the municipal building, is said to be the first American flag planted on the European continent during the war. It is displayed there in France in a government building proudly as a memorial in thanksgiving to America for what we did to save France and to save Europe from tyranny.

Now, Madam Speaker, most of us today think of war in the traditional construct. We fought with tanks, aircraft, ships, and infantry. But, again, we are in a rapidly advancing technological new age. Even in this age of drones and asymmetrical terror threats such as improvised explosive devices, most of us still see our defense through a conventional lens.

But warfare is changing fast and will continue to change. With the miniaturization of nuclear weapons, drones, and other technologies, we could see the potential for widespread destruction accelerate. We are entering an era that is unprecedented and unpredictable, born from the very technologies that heretofore ensured our own survival. What has emerged, Madam Speaker, is a tripolar world, simultaneously increasing both danger and, interestingly, opportunity.

On one pole stands China. As this country ascends to economic dominance, China is trying to pair its military clout with military projection in key lanes of commerce. The Communist Party leader, President Xi, projects himself as both a man of virtue and a man of dominance. In fact, *The Economist* magazine recently called him the world's most powerful man.

At another pole stands Russia. Though they face demographic problems, Russia has, in many ways, raced ahead of us in weapons technology superiority. It could be argued that the Soviet era was an aberration, an actual aberration, of Russia's long tradition of czarist rule. Seen in that light, Putin is a new czar type who has moved past Marxist ideology—Marxist theology, perhaps we should say—to recover Russian nationalistic poetry, purpose, and expansionistic power.

The third pole is less of a geographic or ideological proposition. It is an expression of higher ideals. Now, in traditional terms, Madam Speaker, we call this the Transatlantic Alliance, but, in broader terms, it is people from around the world who are guided by a reasoned intuitive sense that all persons have dignity and rights and that the systems of governance and economics ought to be ordered around that very proposition. When a person can exercise excellence for themselves in partnership with others in community, a community of possibility exists.

Because, in America, we believe these values are universal, we also believe that they are more potent than any ideology or accident of geography. That is the long arc of history—born in former ages and translated over time to our present day.

Now, given our vulnerabilities, we understandably and purposefully commit to technological superiority in weaponry. But, as a singular proposition, this is illogical because it cannot hold. The technological gap is closing. There must be more, and it is found in two pathways:

First, back to this idea of our own internal reflection as a country. Recently, we saw a Hollywood elite named Harvey Weinstein brought to shame for his manipulative perversions. Interestingly, this country had a flash of collective conscience. The curtain was raised on Hollywood's dark hypocrisy. Almost all Americans were aghast, which, importantly, showed our capacity to value human dignity.

Second, Madam Speaker, a healthy national conscience gives us the credibility to reinvigorate and rebuild authentic relationships worldwide. By incentivizing good economic models and promoting government models that are fair, we can create the conditions for our own safety, the world's stability, and the world's security.

Madam Speaker, a couple weeks ago, I was on my way home from Washington to Nebraska. Driving from the airport, I saw a big, red pickup truck.

Now, that is not a very uncommon site in our State, except that on each side of the truck was a pole, and attached to each pole was an American flag blowing fiercely in the wind. Now, these flags were a bit tattered on the edges, but, nevertheless, they were proudly displayed just like at that little French town, Sainte-Mere-Eglise. It is my hope that this is the third pole that can truly hold for our good and the good of others across the world.

Now, Madam Speaker, we have talked a lot about the struggles, but closer to home and made in realtime policy, the House of Representatives has undertaken a sincere deliberation at the moment to assist in a structural change to our current economic construct—a new tax deal.

Now, this is what Andy from Nebraska wrote me recently. He said that he is very encouraged because “if it makes it into law, my back-of-the-napkin calculations show it could benefit my family by around \$5,500. For a family of four making about \$85,000 a year, that’s a big deal.”

□ 1945

Madam Speaker, Americans do need a break, especially working men and women trying to get a bit ahead, trying to provide for their families. For many, it is harder and harder. Around 50 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. That is not fully a Tax Code problem. It is also the harsh reality of social fragmentation, downward mobility, and the rising cost of living.

Many forces of globalization have not benefited America, leaving millions behind and all too often forgotten. But tax reform can help, as long as it is fair and as simple as possible for the benefit of all.

We are living in an age where we cannot push the same old policies over and over again and expect them to fit into our 21st century architect of living.

Moving forward, I believe that the source and strength of the American economy will be in the new urbanism of small business, in which entrepreneurs from village to city will add value through small-scale manufacturing, innovative new products, or brokering in repair services. The conditions for entrepreneurial revival may be right on the horizon.

Madam Speaker, though the corporate structure of the 1950s has been made temporarily beguiling by the modest show called “Mad Men,” but no young person I know yearns to work for a company for 25 years and celebrate at the end with a gold watch. That era is over and our Tax Code is based on old constructs of what it means to be in business.

So, hopefully, as we work ourselves through this important debate, this bill will be sensitive to the needs of all Americans as it begins to push for a modernized revenue construct that no longer enables complex, lawyered-up, quarterly profit-driven multinationals

to unjustly benefit, for instance, from lower taxes abroad while taking advantage of tax loopholes here.

At the same time, it uses the carrot of lower rates to bring foreign profits back to America so that we can revive the Made in America label once again.

Madam Speaker, I have spoken tonight about our challenges both at home and abroad, but we know a truly just and good society can only be possible if we are both strong and safe.

One day, I was in the airport and something interesting happened. A number of troops were coming off an aircraft on the jetway. There was no announcement over the PA system. It just happened spontaneously. The terminal began to break out in applause. It just happened. People intuited that something was right here.

Of course, many people at this moment in our country’s history intuit that something is broken, but they also can sense when things are right. We can see it, like when we see our troops or we see a veteran, then our instinct emerges to recognize the nobility of self-sacrifice for one another, our country, and its timeless ideals. Our veterans have done so and our people know so.

When it just gets a little too overwhelming, Madam Speaker, ask a vet. When we lose touch with the source of our strength and greatness, talk to those who have put even possibly their lives on the line for that true source of American strength. Ask a vet.

When it seems as though the problems before us are intractable—how we are going to revive an economy that is good and fair to all; how we are going to create the stability necessary for the proper engagement and healthy engagement with people from abroad; how will we create international stability—when it just seems too hard to get the mind around it, ask a vet who stood in the small village overseas, who may have had to fight their way in, but then offers a hand up to those who have been placed in harm’s way.

This Friday is an important holiday. It is a gift to be able to say thank you to our veterans.

Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to the amount of time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE NO TAXPAYER BEHIND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 30 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, in the last four national elections, Americans made it clear that we won’t accept the economic stagnation that we have suffered during this past decade.

Mr. Obama’s policies of higher taxes and regulatory burdens suppressed eco-

nomics growth to a dismal 1½ percent annual average. That is about half of the post-war growth rate of 3 percent.

President Reagan averaged 3½ percent annual growth by reducing the tax and regulatory burdens crushing the economy. The result was one of the greatest economic expansions in American history.

The Trump administration has made significant progress on regulatory relief, as attested by rising wages, employment opportunities, and growing consumer confidence. But tax relief is vital to finish the job.

The imperative should be clear. The American corporate tax rate of 35 percent is the highest in the industrialized world. I know there are lots of special interest loopholes that go to politically connected companies that bring the effective rate down to 18.6 percent.

But that is precisely the problem. Many companies that haven’t gotten these breaks have simply fled the country, taking trillions of dollars and possibly millions of American jobs overseas. By closing the loopholes and lowering the rate to an internationally competitive 20 percent, economists tell us that we can add \$5 trillion to the American economy over the next decade. That averages about \$40,000 per family.

Those who dismiss this as tax cuts for wealthy corporations don’t understand the dirty little secret of corporate taxation: corporations do not pay corporate taxes. They only collect them.

There are only three possible sources from which they can collect them. The only people who pay corporate taxes are consumers, through higher prices; employees, through lower wages; and investors, through lower earnings. That is your pension and 401(k).

Lowering the corporate tax rate not only means restoring America’s global competitiveness, but it invariably translates into lower prices, higher wages, and greater returns on savings and investments.

The personal income tax side is also important, and this is where I become concerned that we are getting wrapped around the axle.

We have had several unpleasant surprises this past week: the 46 percent bubble bracket and now the Joint Committee on Taxation report that, over time, many in the middle class may end up paying higher income taxes.

Yes, the average taxpayer will pay less, but this raises the mystery of the 6-foot man who drowned in a pond whose average depth was 5 feet. It is now clear that some—perhaps many—families will see tax increases now, and more over time.

As desirable as tax simplification is, I wonder if it is a bridge too far, given the timetable we are on, the hyper-partisan political environment we are in, and the complexities of the Tax Code that are certain to continue to yield unpleasant and unintended consequences.