

head coach Caryl Schawe, while making its fifth State appearance in the last 7 years. And the second from the Hilltop Press are the girls on that particular team, and the caption reads: "The 2005 State Division II Volleyball Champions From Roger Bacon. Front row from left, Courtney Hausfeld, Vicki Auer, Carrie Prickel, assistant coach Andrea Schwartz, middle row manager Annie Kathman, Julie Brunzman, Kelsey Rose, Katie Veatch, Jamie Frey; top row assistant coach Jodi Kirch, Ali Wilson, Katie Westerfeld, Heather Hausfeld, Lauren Newron, and head coach Caryl Schawe."

Now, the women were not the only ones representing the city of Cincinnati with State championship trophies in the month of November. The boys' cross-country team at my alma mater, La Salle High School, literally went the distance to capture Ohio Division I cross-country team title at the State meet in Columbus. Having been voted the unanimous number one ranking in the final Associated Press coaches' poll, the Big Red Express did not disappoint. The team bested its second place performance from last year by posting the lowest overall score in the State boys' Division I meet since 2001, this time defeating runner-up North Canton by an incredible 66-point margin.

The victory was a first for La Salle's cross-country team, which had four second place State finishes since 2000, and is a testament to the continued hard work and dedication of head coach Frank Russo who garnered his first State title in 23 years of coaching. That is the third one from the Hilltop Press over here. The caption in that one read: "The La Salle Boys Cross-Country Team Placed First in the State Meet on Saturday. Front row from left are Dominic Lanzillotta, Tim Mink, Kyle Hoffman, and Jeff Ehler. Back from left are assistant coach Dean Fulmer, David Mette, Mitchell Neusmann, Corey Spriggs, Jake Nusekabel, Kyle Lang, Greg Bader, Ricky Lutt, Andrew St. George, head coach Frank Russo, and assistant coach Joe Muenchen."

Continuing the longstanding tradition of excellence, each of these three schools has come to symbolize these student athletes have learned invaluable lessons of commitment, teamwork, and perseverance that will serve each of them well as they prepare for their future.

Cincinnati has much to be proud of, thanks to these outstanding young men and women; and it is an honor for me to congratulate them on the floor of the House of Representatives. Congratulations Seton; congratulations Roger Bacon; and congratulations to my alma mater, La Salle.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the leadership for allowing me to spend some time this evening talking about an issue that is of utmost importance to the American people. I am constantly amazed at news reports at home, when I go home and I watch television news and I read the newspaper and see what is being portrayed as usual for the American public.

If you just followed those stories, you would not believe that there was anything that was good or positive going on in our Nation. You would not believe that the economy, for example, was doing very, very well. So one of the things that I try to do, and I know others try to do as well, is to try to assist and bring about some truth in reporting. So tonight what we would like to do is spend a little time talking about the economy, for the American people know better than what they see on the nightly news and what they read in the newspapers.

In fact, so many of the folks that I talk to at home are really tired of the gloom and doom that gets reported on the news and frankly gets stated over and over and over here in Congress by some Members. They are tired of Congressmen and -women who put politics and partisanship over good policy, and I hear so often back home that folks say, Why can't you just get something done on behalf of the American people?

Well, a lot of good things are getting done, and we are going to spend a little time tonight talking about our economy and some things that Congress is doing and has done to assist the American people, to help American families, to help American children, to help American communities. It is important that we do that, because there is good news to tell. So what we would like to do is spend a little time tonight and review so many of the positive things that have been done to create really an economy that is on the move. I would like to begin by just sharing a number of different charts that demonstrate clearly that the economy is growing.

This is a chart here that I think really crystallizes so many of the good sto-

ries that we have to tell. This chart begins in the first quarter of 2001; and along this axis here is the annual change in GDP, or gross domestic product, that is, how well is the economy doing. As you see for the first number of quarters of 2001 and 2002, it is kind of going along, kind of bumping up and down, and then there is a remarkable change that occurs in early 2003. From then on, from the second quarter of 2003 on, what we see is a gross domestic product growth in every quarter, 10 quarters in a row of a growth of greater than 3 percent and oftentimes greater than 4 percent. In fact, the most recent quarter grew at a rate of 4.3 percent.

The individual who wants to know how to continue that kind of growth and who is excited about policies that encourage growth would say, Well, what happened? What happened at that point to bring that kind of growth about? As most people know, what happened was that the tax cuts, the tax relief that Congress enacted on behalf of the hard-working American taxpayers went into effect, and that has resulted in this incredible, incredible growth in the economy that continues, that continues unabated. And what Congress has an opportunity to do this week is to continue and extend that tax relief, hopefully, to be able to continue the lines that we have seen grow in the economy.

This is another chart that demonstrates the kind of response that the American economy has to that kind of activity. This talks about the creation of new jobs in our country. In fact, since the spring of 2003, there have been 4.46 million new jobs that have come about, and this chart shows the percent increase each month from early 2002 through the current time. You see, again, there is that remarkable change that occurs in the early part and mid-part of 2003, where the growth in the number of jobs is remarkable. Again, the inquiring individual would want to know, Well, what changed there? What made it so that we did not have negative growth in jobs, we had positive growth in jobs? As everybody well knows now, that change was the tax relief, the tax relief that Congress enacted that took place in early 2003.

Just to put those numbers all together, this chart, which is a little busy, shows two very clearly distinct lines. One is the green line down here that is the number of jobs that increase in our Nation each month; the red line is the level of unemployment. And as you see, at the beginning of 2003, the unemployment rate was taken up here somewhere around 6 percent and the number of jobs began to increase at this point when the tax relief package went into effect. We see that continued increase; and in fact right now the unemployment rate is down at 5 percent, which is lower than the average for the decades of the 1970s and the 1980s and the 1990s.

Some economists will tell you that 5 percent unemployment rate is full employment, because you have got a number of folks who are between jobs or are working to find other places of employment that is their design. So 5 percent is basically full employment. The number of new jobs that was created last month, 215,000 new jobs. So there is good news to tell.

I have been joined tonight by many of my colleagues, and many of them will share some of the same kinds of good-news stories with you. First, I would like to yield the time to Congresswoman BLACKBURN from Tennessee. She has been such an incredible leader in this Congress in the area of tax relief and in making certain that we enact the kinds of policies here that result in smaller government, lower taxes, and more opportunity for Americans. With that, let me yield to Congresswoman BLACKBURN.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Georgia, and I thank you for your leadership on this issue. One of the things that we are so fortunate to have in this body is such a wide variety of experience from our Members that bring that experience to bear here as we look at how we grow the economy, how we exercise economic opportunity, how we make certain that free enterprise stays free. Just as the gentleman from Georgia has mentioned, it is no secret, everybody knows that this economy, this wonderful U.S. economy, truly is our Nation's, our world's economic engine. It is the envy of all of the world. It is, I guess, something that is really a little bit uniquely American. There is something about us. We strive to do things a little bit better. Maybe it is that Yankee ingenuity. Maybe it is that we are out here with that good old common-sense know-how, but we are always trying to do things faster, better, more efficiently, more effectively; and one of the things we certainly want to do is to build a strong economy so that our children know that they are going to have hope and opportunity and the ability to dream big dreams and create a really exciting life for themselves and for their families. I guess that is just kind of the American way of doing things. We try to improve it. Give us something, and we are going to build a better mousetrap. Then we are going to figure out how to get that mousetrap into the marketplace.

In today's economy, we look at it and we say, How do we get that into a global marketplace? We know in order to do that it means you have to stay competitive. We know that as you look at policies, creating the right environment so that job growth can take place, so that economic growth can take place, that when we see that right environment created, then free enterprise and the private sector take over and they do what they do well. The gentleman has shown us the charts which tell this story. You go back and you look at 2003 and look at when those

tax reforms were implemented, and what we saw was an economy that took off.

What we are seeing is consistent economic growth every single month. We are reaping the benefits from that. We see that our GDP growth continues to be very consistent. It was 4.1 percent last quarter. There are some really wonderful benefits that come from this. As the gentleman mentioned, 4,460,000 new jobs. Those are new jobs. Many of those jobs are jobs that are basically in new sectors, technology sectors, sectors of the economy that will lead to an economic renaissance and lead to an economic renaissance in this country.

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It works out to be 194,000 jobs a month that we have been creating over the past several months, and I find it so interesting that the unemployment rate is near all-time lows. When we look at the charts on that, we see that as these tax reforms have been put in place, and I applaud the Senate, I applaud the administration, and I certainly applaud the leadership in this House for pushing forward these tax reforms in 2003, and as we see those going into place and we see the GDP growth and we see the jobs creation and we watch the unemployment level fall to near historic lows, there is also another benefit from this.

Our colleagues who are joining us here on the floor this evening certainly are watching this one with us, and it is that we are seeing the deficit reduced through two ways. We have talked so many times on this floor about there being two ways that we work through reducing the deficit and reducing the size of government and right-sizing the Federal Government, and that is, we reduce spending and continue to work to root out waste, fraud and abuse, focusing on that spending column, but at the same time, we put the focus on economic growth. That is where our focus rightfully should be.

This is an aggressive economy, and it is, therefore, a reason, and tomorrow this House is going to move forward and take some excellent steps to pass a bill that is going to continue these tax reforms.

At this time, I am going to yield back to the gentleman from Georgia so that he can yield to another of our colleagues, and we can continue with our discussion this evening on the benefits that lie ahead by extending these tax reforms and continuing to work toward having a Federal income tax system that is flatter, that is fairer, that is simpler and having one that is going to work to energize our economy. I will yield back at this point for further discussion.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee and thank her for her leadership in so many areas, but especially in the area of focusing on right-sizing government, making certain that savings are

appropriate for the American people and tax policies appropriate for the American people.

You have been such a leader, and I know that you were planning on leading this hour this evening but you had another engagement. I look forward to sticking around for the vast majority of this hour, but at this point, I am going to yield back to the Chair so that the Chair may allow you to control the hour that you had planned on earlier and I look forward to working with you.

THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCAUL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the balance of the majority leader's hour is re-allocated to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina for a couple of minutes. She is going to talk with us about her time on the road this week with the President as the President visited in her area in North Carolina, and she had the opportunity to not only talk tax reforms with the President, but to listen to her constituents in North Carolina and to hear what was on their mind as they enjoyed that visit and as they had prepared for that visit. At this time, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for yielding.

I want to reiterate what our colleague from Georgia has said. We are grateful to you for the leadership you have provided in these Special Orders in trying to get the truth out about the issues. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem to think that by saying things that are not true, they can make them true. I am glad that we have an opportunity to correct the record.

Mr. Speaker, this past Monday, I had the great honor and privilege to host President George W. Bush in North Carolina's 5th Congressional District. The President came to discuss our country's impressive economic growth at the John Deere-Hitachi manufacturing plant in Kernersville.

It is an honor to have many flourishing companies like Deere-Hitachi in the 5th District. I am proud of this facility for being a model of how U.S. manufacturing companies can compete successfully in the global economy. Employment at Deere-Hitachi recently doubled in size to over 750 direct employees. These are all good, high-skilled, well-paid jobs.

A portion of Deere-Hitachi's growth has been fueled by the localization of models that were formerly produced in Asia to Kernersville, North Carolina. This has had a tremendously positive impact on our local economy.