

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the last week perhaps of our session, and I think we can look back at some accomplishments. I think we can take some comfort in the fact that when this Congress sat in January, 11 months ago, Americans were losing their jobs at 20,000 every single day.

Because of the stimulus bill, that has slowed and almost stopped. The stimulus bill is rebuilding bridges in my district, rebuilding highways, and rebuilding community health clinics. But slowing the rate at which Americans lose their job is nobody's idea of a Christmas present. We have hard work to do.

I had occasion in church this week-end to hear the words of Handel's "Messiah," "and the government shall be upon his shoulders." That is prophetic, meaning in the future. Right now, the government is on our shoulders. And I hope that when we reconvene in January, we set aside the partisanship, the misinformation, and the anger to get back to the serious business of creating jobs for the American people.

THE DEBT CEILING AND DEFENSE SPENDING

(Mr. OLSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, in what has become a familiar move, House Democrats have decided to increase spending yet again. But sadly, they have opted to shut out debate on this matter by attaching a \$300 billion increase in our Nation's debt ceiling to the Defense appropriations bill. They know they will have serious trouble getting support to increase our Nation's debt limit, so they are using our troops to carry them.

This is one of the reasons the American people are fed up with Congress. And as a Navy veteran, I can assure you that exploiting funding for our troops is both deplorable and demoralizing, and I will continue to oppose such actions.

We owe the American people, our children, our grandchildren, and the men and women risking their lives in defense of our freedom better than this. At Christmas, we should be hanging ornaments on a tree, not massive spending bills on the back of our troops.

THE WALL STREET REFORM BILL

(Mr. ARCURI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, last week, I was proud to stand up with many of my colleagues and hold Wall Street accountable for their reckless actions that led us into the biggest financial collapse in the last 50 years. For too long, Wall Street banks were allowed to put short-term profits ahead of long-

term stability under the Bush administration and reaped record profits as a result of their risky and out-of-control behavior.

When the markets collapsed out from under them, this country's hard-working citizens were forced to suffer the consequences. The Wall Street reform bill we passed increases enforcement and makes necessary reforms to hold Wall Street accountable so that it can never again recklessly gamble with our financial health and safety.

The bill also creates a new Consumer Financial Protection Agency to prevent borrowers from taking loans that they can't afford and holding risky lenders liable for their practices. The CFPB will also protect families and small businesses from irresponsible lending practices by ensuring that bank loans, mortgages, and credit cards are fair and easy to understand.

Finally, this bill makes it clear that Wall Street will no longer be receiving any sort of taxpayer-funded bailouts. The American people have pulled together and selflessly acted to help this great country. It is time for Wall Street to step up and do the same.

GET THE GOVERNMENT OFF OUR BACKS

(Mr. GINGREY of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Member from Connecticut just said it's prophetic that the government should be on our shoulders. Unfortunately, the government is on our backs, and it shouldn't be. And no better example of that is this massive health care reform bill, a complete government takeover of health care, bureaucrats coming between doctors and patients.

People in this country have spoken loudly, but the Democratic majority is not listening.

In my 11th Congressional District of Georgia, Mr. Speaker, there are 95,000 people on Medicare, and 13,000 of them, 14 percent of the total, get their coverage under Medicare Advantage. That will be taken away from them as we strip \$120 billion out of the Medicare Advantage program.

What that means, Mr. Speaker, is that those 13,000 people in my district will have to pay an additional \$180 a month for the Medicare fee-for-service coverage if they can find a doctor that will take them. They will have to buy a prescription drug plan at \$30 a month and buy a supplemental Medigap plan to cover many of the things that are covered under Medicare Advantage without additional cost. That policy will cost them \$150 a month. That's why the American people are outraged over this plan.

Listen up, Members. Vote "no."

REGULATORY REFORM

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, it was not long ago that our economy bottomed out and we were on the brink of an economic catastrophe. We avoided a complete collapse, but that is little consolation to the Americans who lost trillions of dollars in retirement savings due to the years of reckless behavior on Wall Street.

As we continue to show positive signs in our economy, this House last week passed legislation to make sure that we never again find ourselves in such a dire situation. The regulatory reform bill we passed creates an orderly process through which large, failing financial institutions can effectively be dismantled. No more "too big to fail." We end taxpayer bailouts by ensuring that in the future, Wall Street, not the taxpayers, will pay to dismantle endangered firms. And we end the predatory lending practices that helped cause the crisis by requiring banks to ensure that they only lend to borrowers who can actually repay the loans.

These changes are long overdue but come just in time for the American taxpayer.

RECOVERY ACT DIAGNOSIS

(Mr. BROUN of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I'm a family doctor. I have examined the Pelosi and Reid health care bills, and I have made a diagnosis, and the American people need to listen up to this diagnosis.

If you like your health insurance today, the price is going to skyrocket, and you're not going to be able to keep it eventually. If you're on Medicare, you're going to have a hard time finding a doctor that will accept Medicare because of the massive cuts. If you're a veteran and dependent upon TRICARE, forget it.

Mr. Speaker, my prescription is that we need to trash the Reid and Pelosi health care bills, work in a bipartisan manner, do this in an incremental way to lower the cost to everybody, and work to make something that makes sense for the American public and keeps the good quality health care we have in America.

RECOVERY ACT REPORT

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, last week, I released a report outlining how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has benefited greater Arizona and identifying where improvements can be made. I surveyed