

hours, so the American people are kept better informed of what their Members are doing and how they are voting in committee.

Madam Speaker, the rejection by the American people of the Democrats' reckless spending emphasizes the importance of fiscal responsibility, doesn't it? This is the reason I incorporated the Congressional Budget Accountability Act into my plan.

Each year, my colleagues and I receive a fixed budget for all office expenses. We call that the MRA, or the Members' Representational Allowance. This bill would codify that our unused MRA funds must be returned to the Treasury for debt and deficit reduction.

Along these lines, I have also included what is called the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which will preclude any Member of Congress from being eligible for a pay adjustment, a so-called COLA, if we have incurred a budget deficit in the previous fiscal year.

We may not have a balanced budget amendment, Madam Speaker, but that doesn't mean we can't balance the budget, and I want to hold our feet to the fire. This is yet another way that we can do that.

Also in the package, Madam Speaker, is a bill to prevent Federal employees from engaging in union activity on official time. It is amazing that this goes on, but we have estimated that in a 5-year period of time we could save the taxpayer over \$600 million and \$1.2 billion in a 10-year period of time.

Put simply, it is unacceptable that government employees paid with, yes, your tax dollars, are currently permitted to spend time during their workday performing union activities. I have already given you the savings.

Equally unacceptable is that legislators in Washington commonly attach legislation that cannot pass on its own merits to unrelated must-pass bills. Let me give you an example, Military Construction-VA.

A couple of years ago, we passed that out of committee with an almost 100 percent bipartisan vote. The Democratic majority held that bill up for 100 days because they wanted to attach an unpopular bill, something like the Dream Act or Don't Ask, Don't Tell, some controversial bill, and put our veterans at jeopardy. They literally held them hostage. This bill, Madam Speaker, would say from now on, no attaching unpopular bills to good stand-alone bills, especially if they are for our veterans and the military.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, while these bills may seem like a small start compared to the big challenges we have ahead of us in this Congress, the 112th, it is a pathway to start changing business as usual in Washington and fulfill the promises we made on November 2 to the American people.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PROSPERITY CONGRESS

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my hope that historians will look back on the 112th Congress as the session that restored American prosperity and to express my strong agreement with the new leaders of this House who have declared that every action of this body must be measured against this goal.

We speak of jobs, jobs, jobs, but jobs are merely a byproduct of prosperity. And prosperity is the product of freedom. Government does not create jobs or wealth. It merely redistributes them. Jobs and wealth can only be created through the free exchange of goods and services in a free market. Government's role is to create and protect the conditions which promote prosperity.

If I give you a dollar for a cup of coffee, what's going on in that transaction? I'm telling you that your cup of coffee is worth more to me than my dollar. And at the same time, you're telling me that my dollar is worth more to you than your cup of coffee. We make that exchange and both of us go away with something of greater value than we took in. Each of us goes away richer. That's the freedom that creates prosperity. That simple exchange, whether it's for a cup of coffee or a multibillion-dollar acquisition, is what creates wealth.

But now suppose some third party butts its nose into this transaction: Oh, no, the coffee has got to be between 110 and 130 degrees and it has to include a swizzle stick; it has to be consumed more than 25 feet from the point of sale. And on and on and on. Every one of these restrictions reduces the value of that exchange for the one or the both of us.

That's the fundamental problem that we face today. Our government has not only failed to protect the freedom that creates prosperity, but it has become destructive of that freedom. To create jobs, we must restore prosperity; and to restore prosperity, we must restore freedom. We must restore the freedom of choice that gives consumers the ultimate say over the output of our economy. In a free and prosperous society, consumers vote every day with their own dollars on what kind of light bulbs they prefer or on how they want to get to work or what foods they like or how much water they want to put in their toilets or what kind of cars they want or what kind of housing they desire. These consumer choices signal every day what things are actually worth and what our economy will actually produce.

Government is destroying the elegant simplicity of this process, and Congress must reverse this destruction. We must restore the freedom of individuals to enjoy the fruits of their own labor so that they can make these decisions for themselves once again. That's why excessive government spending is so destructive to prosperity. It destroys the freedom of individuals to make their own decisions over what to spend and where to invest their own money. It robs them of both the ability and the incentives to create prosperity.

Presidents like Coolidge, Truman, Reagan, and Clinton, who have reduced government spending relative to GDP, all produced dramatic increases in productivity and prosperity and the general welfare of our Nation. And Presidents like Hoover, Roosevelt, Bush, and Obama, who have increased government spending relative to GDP, all produced or prolonged or deepened periods of economic recession and hardship and malaise. Our government is now embarked upon the latter course, and this Congress must reverse this direction.

Government has an important role to play in the marketplace. It's there to ensure that representations are accurate and that contracts are enforced. You have to tell the truth. You have to keep your promises. And government has an important role to play in ensuring that. Government exists to ensure that the currency is stable and reliable and that property rights are secure. When it fulfills this fundamental role, it maximizes the freedom that a buyer and seller have to assess their own needs and resources and to make those exchanges that allow both to go away better off than they were.

Madam Speaker, let us together revive and restore the freedom and prosperity of this Nation and fulfill that sacred command inscribed on our Liberty Bell: "To proclaim liberty throughout all the land, and unto all the inhabitants thereof."

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

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

REPEAL OF HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. ENGEL. This coming Wednesday, in really the first order of real business of the House, we are voting on health care reform repeal. The new Republican majority has decided that this is the most important issue, even though they know that it's political theater, a charade. It may pass the House, but it won't pass the Senate, and certainly the President would veto it. So this is not becoming law.

At a time when we have so many pressing issues, I am really saddened that the majority wants to conduct this political charade. If there are problems with the health care law, we don't have to repeal it. We could change parts of it. We could tweak it. We could put out of the bill what we don't like and keep in the bill what we do like. But, unfortunately, the attitude and the decision has been made to try to repeal the whole bill.

My constituents understand that as we speak now the Rules Committee is discussing what kind of amendments to allow. And we know no real meaningful amendments, if anything, are going to be allowed. The Republican majority coming in says they're going to have open rules. And we're not going to have really an open rule on the first bill that they're going to attempt to pass, which is a repeal of health care reform. I think that's wrong. I think there are many of us who feel strongly that there ought to be some amendments that we can put in to ensure that the good coverage that we have achieved in the health care bill is kept.

Surely, it's not everything that's wrong with the health care bill which my colleagues oppose. I want to ask them, since they want to repeal the bill, are they against the part of the bill which says that you can keep your child on your health care coverage until age 26? I think my constituents like that, and I think theirs do as well. Do they want to repeal the part that says that an insurance company can no longer deny you coverage because of a so-called preexisting condition? I think that's something that all constituents like and appreciate. Do the people that want to repeal the health care reform bill want to say to insurance companies that it's okay to put caps on people, so when they pay their premium year in and year out and then they finally get sick and ask for coverage, the insurance companies can tell them, Well, sorry. Not only do you have a preexisting condition, but there's also a cap on benefits, either an annual cap or a lifetime cap. So, therefore, we're not going to cover you at all. I don't think anybody's constituents want that part to be repealed.

And what about the doughnut hole for seniors in Medicare part D? Seniors have found it very, very difficult. They get part of their prescription drugs paid for and then there's a doughnut hole which is for a long time. They have to pay for everything themselves while at the same time still paying their monthly premiums to the government. And then, at the end, they get the government to come in and help them. That has put a tremendous burden on seniors. And what the health care bill which was passed by the last Congress does is it eventually removes that doughnut hole for seniors. Seniors can get back money, and it starts right away, where they can get back money to pay for those prescription drugs.

So I think that we hear a lot about the lame-duck session and how we all

work together and how the big question of the new Congress is going to be: Is it going to be a stalemate; is it going to be gridlock; or is it going to be people coming together in a bipartisan fashion to try to work together? If the first bill that the Republican majority is putting on the floor is any indication, it seems to me that they have chosen gridlock. And I'm really sorry about that. Because I will admit there are some things in the new health care law that should be changed, and that we should work across the aisle together to make sure that changes. But to repeal the provisions that benefit my constituents and everyone else's constituents all across America, to me makes no sense whatsoever.

The big insurance companies have had it too big, too long. And my Republican colleagues, unfortunately, are right in bed with them. And I think that is something that the American people ought to see. Who do we care about, the big insurance companies? Or do we care about the average American who is struggling day in and day out to get health care coverage? We have almost 50 million Americans without coverage. And it's not only the people who are not covered now, but it's working people who will find out in the days and months ahead if there is no health care bill, that they will be added to the rolls of people who are uncovered, and that people working hard will find out that the 50 million will swell to 60 million, 70 million, and maybe even more.

□ 1420

So it is going to affect all of us because the health care costs have been rising way, way beyond the rate of inflation, and that is why we needed to have health care reform.

I would say to my friends on the other side of the aisle: Let's not posture politically. Let's try to put our heads together and work in a bipartisan fashion to do something for the American people. If there is something in the bill that needs to be changed, then we should change it, but repeal is not the answer.

Every major bill, from Social Security, to the Civil Rights bills of the 1960s, to Medicare and Medicaid, all had to be tweaked after they were passed. All had to be changed a little bit. It is the same thing with this bill. We should not repeal it. We should fix it.

OMISSION FROM READING OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION—ARTICLE IV, SECTION 4; ARTICLE V

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, earlier today, the historic occasion of the first reading of the United States Constitution here on the floor of the House took place, and it was a very

good bipartisan occasion where nearly one-third of all the Members of the House of Representatives participated in that reading. Unfortunately, during the reading, one of the Members, while he was reading from the notebook at the podium, turned two of the pages, and two pages of the Constitution were not read.

So I ask unanimous consent that I now read those pages and that they be placed into the reading of the Constitution as it occurred earlier today so that we have a complete reading of the Constitution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I will now read at the end of article IV, section 4.

"The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened), against domestic violence.

Article V.

The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States."

That is the portion that was omitted earlier and that, by unanimous consent, is now included in the reading of the Constitution.

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

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

OUR HOMELAND, THE FORGOTTEN THIRD FRONT

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, more border agents are being sent to the border. The border, as we all know, is violent, dangerous, and it is not safe. Drugs and guns and people and money cross back and forth across the border because two nations do not have operational control of that border. The border is desolate. It is hard. It is a war zone—but Madam Speaker, I am not talking about the border of the United States with Mexico. I am talking about the southern border, or the border with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

That's right. Border Patrol agents from the United States are going to Afghanistan to protect the Afghan border