

pay the same. And it lets our free enterprise system work, Mr. Speaker.

We talk about creating jobs in this country, Mr. Speaker. We have to do that. But our Tax Code is destroying jobs. We have to create new jobs; but, Mr. Speaker, that's hard. Preserving the jobs we already have has to be a part of that. And yet we run jobs overseas each and every day in large part because of our Tax Code.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, the FairTax is revenue neutral. So many folks think about a conservative Republican like me liking every tax cut he can get his hands on. I do. I'm a big proponent of leaving more money in individuals' pockets. I will always believe the American family will spend their own money better than we will spend it on their behalf in Washington. Always. But, Mr. Speaker, there are bills to pay in Washington. We do need to support our troops, we do need to defend our homeland, and we do need to protect our border. And so the FairTax brings in every penny of revenue that we bring in today. It's revenue neutral.

In fact, given the bill that's in front of the Senate right now on payroll taxes, we're actually going to bring in more revenue with the FairTax than we bring in with the current system, but it's designed to be revenue neutral because I know that we must pay taxes. But we mustn't make it hard to do. That's a choice we've made in this body, and it's the wrong one.

Mr. Speaker, take a look at H.R. 25, the FairTax. You can find out all about it at www.fairtax.org, all the information, all the studies. We started with a blank sheet of paper, we came up with a plan that starts everyone on a level playing field. And so far, Mr. Speaker, we've attracted enough cosponsors on both sides of the Hill to make it the single most popular fundamental tax reform bill in Congress.

I thank you for giving me this time this afternoon to talk about it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2009. An act to improve the administration of programs in the insular areas, and for other purposes.

CONGRESS REPRESENTS ALL OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Happy holiday to America. Let me reinforce that we live in a great coun-

try, and that is evidenced by the opportunity of Members to come to this democratic body and the other body to speak about the values of this Nation and the importance of our democracy and our responsibility to address the concerns of all Americans. It is good for us to have an opportunity for a dialogue and to be able to listen to each other.

I know that I'll be joined shortly by the whip of this Congress, Mr. HOYER. So let me just quickly say that I remember serving in this Congress when President Bush was the President, and I always made the point that once we are elected, even as we come from constituency, even as we come out of tough political battles, it really is the oath that we take that ensures that we represent all of America, whether we have the glory of coming from a State that is claiming progressiveness or one that is conservative. When we get on that train or airplane or drive that car and come to Washington, D.C., we represent all of America.

So let me quickly just say that you're looking at a stack of papers that represent the approach that my Republican friends took to fund the needs of the American people. Under the Democratic Caucus and the Democratic Congress of last Congress, we had the appropriations bills, almost 12 of them, come to the floor, and Members openly debated all of the issues around the different bills dealing with transportation, housing, homeland security and defense. They had an opportunity to be on the floor. The constituents could email or call or say what is that in this particular bill. But under this Republican leadership, this is what they brought us and gave us 1 hour to read these pages because of the emergency of funding the American people.

That's not a way to run a country. It's not Democratic or Republican. It's not conservative or liberal. It's just not the way.

And I would offer to say that we're committed and should have done this weeks ago, extending the payroll tax relief, providing for 160 million working Americans and extending the unemployment, helping 6 million Americans. You see, I don't believe that those Americans care whether we are conservative Republican, whether we twitter, whether we email or whether we speak on the floor of the House. They want us to abide by the oath that we take when we stand and affirm our relationship with the United States and our obligation and duty to the American people.

When our soldiers who are coming home now, yesterday being the last day of war in Iraq, the casing of the colors, not one soldier that I visited in Iraq or Afghanistan ever put up and said, I'm a Republican or I'm a Democratic. Every one of them was proud to be an American. And that's what we are obligated to do on this floor.

□ 1510

You know, it saddens me to report to you and the American people, my colleagues, that the banks of America have \$64 trillion in their accounts, refusing to spend it, to yield, to loan it to small businesses or those who want to buy homes. Our businesses have over \$1.12 trillion in cash on hand.

It saddens me to hear that businesses who are protected by our flag and our soldiers and can do business in a democratic setting, just because of wanting more money, they will lift up their business and take it to another country and remove the employees who invest in this country. It saddens me.

I ask the simple question: Where there is a benefit, is there not burden?

And I do want to correct any impression that we tax Americans 90 percent. Yes, we need tax reform, real tax reform. We need to help Americans keep money in their pockets. But I can tell you, out of \$10, we don't take \$9. We want people to be able to work and reap the benefit of their work.

But may I just share with you that America is an umbrella on a rainy day, that when there are hurricanes and tornados and earthquakes, you expect us to come running and restore your communities. You expect us to take care of the dams and bridges, the highways, to ensure that America's infrastructure is working, that the electric grid can withstand a cyberattack, a potential homeland attack, if you will.

After 9/11, you asked America why, and you wanted us to get busy and get to work and ensure the homeland is protected. And I sit on the Homeland Security Committee. Every day our responsibility is to read the fine lines in the classified information to make sure that we are in front of the terrorists, whether it's a lone wolf or whether it is a massive attack. We have been fortunate, because of our young men and women in the military, because of our intelligence community, that we have not had a major attack on our soil since 9/11. That's what the government is all about. You cannot throw the baby out with the bathwater.

And we have some other responsibilities as well. The responsibilities of ensuring our children are safe and that we don't allow and condone sexual abuse of our children or bullying of our children. Yes, you can make a national statement on that, though we want families to get help and children to get help, but the circus that is going on in Penn State is so unacceptable.

I've introduced legislation to stop the Federal funding of any entity that covers up or tolerates child sexual abuse. I have introduced legislation to make a stand against the bullying and ask communities and school districts to establish best practices to help our children and families.

And then it is important to note that we do need to have the harmony and the collegiate collaboration that really speaks of this grand place, this august institution of which we've had so many

opportunities. One of our Members was interviewed in one of our newspapers here on the Hill, and he spoke eloquently as a protector of this institution, one who had been here even as a page, and he mourned for the lack of collegiate interaction.

Everybody thinks it's a joke to call people names; I do not. For we all come in different shapes, sizes, and colors, and it is unfortunate that groups get condemned because of their race, because of their sex, or because of where they come from, their lifestyle, their background, who they represent, who they come on the floor and attempt to advocate for. I do not in any way disallow anyone who comes with a different perspective from one that I may be suggesting today, and that should not generate name-calling.

And the press loves it. They love to see us name-call against each other. They make that the story of the day. They don't talk about the yellow ribbons that Members wore, both Republican and Democrat, commemorating the return of our soldiers. And I personally thank them because I came to them and asked them to do so. I thank them—the Speaker, the leader, the Majority Leader, and of course the whip, leadership coming together to say thank you to our troops.

Members, why don't we, as we go through our holiday season, turn ourselves around. Let's not give fodder to the media, who simply likes to ridicule and make us look as if we're doing nothing. And whether or not I agree or disagree, I know Members are in their offices or in their districts and they are responding to the needs of our constituents.

And as I speak to our constituents back home, as we send this bill to the President and appropriations come that will help you in housing, help you in transportation and the environment, it is important for our local officials—and I look forward to working with my own City of Houston, let's be responsible in these dollars and make sure that the monies get to those who are in need. So that when constituents sit back home and they see the debating going on here and the ire going on here and maybe some of the disagreements, and then they wonder, Where is my help coming? We've sent it to the States, we've sent it to the cities, and it's important for you to hold them accountable as to the resources that are needed to improve your quality of life.

So I'm here today to announce that we're not going home, we're just pausing, because we have to come back and make sure that the payroll tax cuts are extended for working Americans, so that we can ensure that we don't lose 400,000 jobs and help 160 million Americans, many of them the families of soldiers that are returning home.

And then, of course, it is important for us to ensure that the unemployed—6 million of them—and some even beyond that, the 99ers who've come up against the wall of no unemployment insurance, are taken care of.

And can I just say to you, unemployment insurance is not a handout. I spoke with someone just the other day who had four boys that they had to take care of, was working and now on unemployment, trying to find work. But they worked. This is their insurance. This is the wisdom of America, to not let people be abandoned.

And so I would hope that we would find the collegiate ability to give the media back home and here more positive messages to take back and not utilize, if you will, the media waves in the First Amendment to ridicule an institution that so many of us and all of us hold dear, not for us being here present, not for any personal status, but we hold it dear and near because of the history of this place. So many decisions have been made.

The early Founding Fathers had a smaller setting just outside of these Chambers, but this is how we have come to be the longest lasting democracy, because we view this place as a place to work out our differences and not a place to raise our differences.

We've had some major crises in this country. I'd like to have been here and imagine what the Members were addressing in the 1929 collapse when, if you read your history books, people were jumping out of windows, primarily in places where they felt the financial impact. Congress had to come together. Decisions might not have been the best, but they made it through the 1930s. I know my grandparents have spoken about what that depression was really like. And then a President by the name of Franklin Delano Roosevelt dealt with World War II, but also dealt with the dismal conditions of this Nation and put America back to work to bring about the prosperity of the 1950s.

I have the greatest hope that we have that potential. And I know that President Obama believes in job creation and has done so—3 million jobs and more to come. And rather than focus on a company that would disregard the patriotic obligation to hire Americans and think that it's so easy to pick up—and it is. We are a democracy. We have no restraints on anyone planting their business anywhere, moving their business anywhere. But to think that we have lost the patriotism that would cause me to say, You know what? I'm going to suck it in, keep these hard-working Americans working—in whatever State it is—and I'm not going to fall victim to greed and leave, but I'm going to stay put and make sure that I am taking care of the American people, that's what I would hope to see in this country, all of us pulling ourselves together and pulling up our bootstraps, and making sure that we have the ability to work hard, and to ensure that as we work hard we can make this country a great place. That is the challenge that we have.

And I might say this one thing about bailouts and investments; you don't know how excited I am—and I'm not

from Michigan—to be able to applaud again the automobile industry, because we were right in there recognizing that it wasn't just making cars in Detroit. It was all the car dealerships and all the guys and ladies that supported the Boy Scouts and boys and girls clubs and little leagues that were going to be impacted.

□ 1520

Oh, look at them now, many of them just rolling along, selling American cars again. That was the right thing to do.

And when we came after 9/11 and airlines came to us saying we just can't make it, and we had to extend a helping hand—I wouldn't even call it a bailout—but they needed us because of the horrific tragedy and attacks and murderous actions of 9/11. And thank goodness we did; and look, there are families being reunited on America's airlines today.

Sometimes the government has to do what is unpopular for the greater good. Yes, there are more things to do with the financial industry; there are questions to be answered about foreclosure that still continues. There is work to be done to help our families restore their wealth. There are questions to be asked about the wealth disparity, the numbers of impoverished, the children that are literally living in poverty, the numbers of families that are on supplemental food assistance, 46 million.

But for one moment, I have never thought that America was not a great country; I never doubted her. In spite of the accusations and the name-calling that comes about in the political process, I never doubt the greatness of America.

Mr. DREIER. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding, and I would like to join with my friend in stating that this great level of patriotism and dedication to the United States of America is something that obviously does transcend party. And while we obviously disagree on lots of issues, I appreciate the fact that she has pointed to this spirit of agreement and comity. I think it's very key on this particular day, as we have dealt in a bipartisan way with the threat of a government shutdown that's looming just hours away from us now, we have been able to successfully avert that.

But the reason that I have asked my friend to yield is that we met in the Rules Committee until early this morning, and I've been going for the last couple of days, and I just heard over the past several hours of the passing of a good friend of mine who was one of the greatest essayists and witticists of our time.

And when I heard the news of Christopher Hitchens' passing, I was struck with what a dedicated and patriotic individual he was. I suspect that he

would have disagreed with my friend on the issue of dealing with radical Islam, but it's one of the things that brought the two of us together. He and I, over the last decade-plus, have spent a great deal of time talking about that and other international policy issues.

But if one looks at the series that he wrote in *Vanity Fair*, as he was diagnosed with cancer, they are very, very powerful. And, again, Christopher Hitchens and I didn't agree on every issue, but I always enjoyed the exchanges and the time that I was able to spend with him and, of course, have been fascinated by his works. I think that the world is a better place for Christopher Hitchens having lived and, obviously, we're saddened by his passing.

I want to say to his wife and daughters that our thoughts—I hesitate to say prayers when it comes to Christopher—go to him, because he was a very committed atheist; but I will say that our thoughts and, since we have them, our prayers are with the members of the Hitchens family, and to say that his works, because he was such a great writer, will continue for years and years to come to fascinate and intrigue and create the kind of intellectual curiosity that is necessary.

I just would like to say that I am saddened by the passing of my friend, Christopher Hitchens, and certainly have had my life improved and bettered by his having lived.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank the gentleman from California. I think his presence on the floor indicates our bipartisanship and thank him for raising those comments about Christopher and our knowledge about him as well.

Let me also indicate my concern and sympathy to his family. That speaks to my point of coming together and being able to share and yield to a gentleman from the other party. As I do so, I would indicate that's how we should go forward as we come back to vote positively on the payroll tax extension next week and stay here until it is done and, of course, the unemployment insurance, but going forward in 2012 to answer some of the cries of many of those who have taken to our streets throughout America who have asked us about jobs, the Occupy Movement, that have been just Americans. I just call them Americans, who have taken up the constitutional privilege of petitioning their government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a commitment that our work will be focused on action and make the second part of the 112th Congress equal to what we did in the 111th with pay parity, with the GI Bill, with the affordable health care bill, and so many other items that were so valuable to this country, and when I say that, legislative initiatives.

Let me also say to the American public and our local communities, I know you think someone else is calling or emailing, but this is what democracy is all about. We want to hear from you on these issues of how we come together,

not how we come together, but the importance of doing so and working on issues and whether or not you appreciate the concept of where there is benefit, there is burden, there is sacrifice, whether or not you think it's important that there are not homeless veterans or soldiers who are coming back who can't work, whether or not we want to encourage our corporations that have this massive cash on hand to realize what a wonderful, patriotic Nation that they live in, and to be able to work and ensure that we have the ability to do the job that is necessary to be done.

I know that Mr. HOYER was coming to the floor, so let me just say to Mr. HOYER, who will be coming to you in just awhile to, again, assure the working people of America that this Congress will have the payroll tax extended and the President will sign it as we note that he has said every day that he wants to sign it and will sign it.

Let me say to the unemployed, I know that the unemployment insurance allows you to pay your mortgage and to pay your rent and to pay your necessities, but let me say to you that we are looking to create jobs, more jobs in America. And I expect to be introducing legislation that will help the energy industry reduce the deficit, repair our coastal waters and our ecosystems, make sure that we are responding to the loss of wetlands and the deterioration by hurricanes that have come on that gulf region there to restore the healthy fishing waters but, as well, to develop our natural gas and the ability to utilize the present expiration that generates resources for the American people.

This is a season of giving, and I only want that America be known as a benevolent Nation, but strong and powerful in her values and, of course, respecting her military, but the military, based upon a civilian-led government that focuses on democracy, equality, and justice. And I say to my colleagues, let's come back here next week to finish our job; but 2012, let it be the no name-calling session. Let us focus on what we do for others, what we do for Americans; and let it not be as a progressive or a conservative, but let it be as an American. That's the call for this Nation: to come and stand as an American.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my privilege to share my thoughts with my colleagues, and I hope that as this legislation will be signed by the President, although it has had a very difficult journey, and I would have wanted a more expanded debate, we are glad that we are serving America. Let us be prepared to roll up our sleeves to do so in the coming early days of 2012.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1530

WORDS OF WISDOM AT
CHRISTMASTIME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Texas, my sister in faith. I know we get carried away sometimes in worrying about different bills. There's a lot to be concerned about. But looking at our Nation's history, from whence we've come gives us a better glimpse of where we should be going.

At this time, as Congress has for decades, many, many generations, we are about to have a Christmas recess. And so, though we're used to in here debating back and forth, fussing back and forth, because of the season and also with due deference to the things my friend from Texas said, it is important to take note of who we are and our history, just as our Founders did.

I've got a book here, William Federer, just a wonderful gentleman. He's put together so many great books. This one is called "Prayers and Presidents: Inspiring Faith From Leaders of the Past." It's noteworthy.

I was 4 years in the Army, and I never saw an order like this, but right now we're debating whether or not chaplains should be forced to marry people when they know in their hearts it violates their Christian teaching, their Christian beliefs, and our Constitution was not supposed to do that. It's interesting to note that the order from the Commander in Chief of the Revolutionary military, May 2, 1778, to the troops at Valley Forge was as follows:

The Commander in Chief directs that divine service be performed every Sunday at 11 o'clock in each brigade which has a chaplain. Those brigades which have none will attend the places of worship nearest to them. It is expected that officers of all ranks will, by their attendance, set an example for their men. While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to laud the more distinguished character of Christian.

That was the order of George Washington in 1778 to our troops.

It's also worth noting that when he did what no man has ever done in the history of the world before or since, that was lead a military in revolution, win the revolution, and then tender his resignation and go home, in essence saying, I've done what you ask, you gave me all power. I'm giving it all back.

At the end of that resignation was a prayer, and I'll read part of the prayer from George Washington. This was 1783, June 14. At the end of his resignation were these words: