



MEMORIAL DAY 2009

DISTRICT WORK PERIOD



House Republican Conference



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: GOP.GOV/MEMORIALDAY

dear colleague,

House Republicans continue to demonstrate the leadership that the American people expect from their elected officials in Washington. Over the last several weeks, we have held the Administration and Democrats in Congress accountable for their reckless policies on energy and national security, and we continue to develop better solutions that put the American people first.

As we enter this Memorial Day Recess we have much to be thankful for and to remember. The men and women in our Armed Forces continue to serve in harm's way and defend our cherished freedom. We owe them, and those who have come before them, a great debt of gratitude.



REMEMBERING JACK KEMP

We also remember the passing of our good friend and former Chairman of the House Republican Conference, Jack Kemp. Jack's character and optimism shaped a generation of leaders, and he was a tireless advocate on behalf of our core beliefs: limited government, free market entrepreneurialism, sanctity of human life, and personal responsibility. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Joanne and his entire family.

I hope you and your family enjoy this holiday. Please do not hesitate to contact me or the House Republican Conference for assistance during this recess break. Thank you for all of your hard work on behalf of the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Pence". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MIKE PENCE

MAY 21, 2009

TALKING POINTS

Democrats continue to pursue policies that do more harm than good

The Democrat-controlled Congress continues to spend too much, tax too much, and borrow too much from our children and grandchildren. Due to the Democrats' reckless economic policies, Debt Day hit the nation earlier than it has in past years, and right now the federal government borrows a dollar for every dollar it spends.

The American people deserve better

More spending and more debt, a government takeover of health care and a national energy tax, are the wrong policies to move this country forward. Republicans are committed to real solutions that serve the best interests of the American people and not bureaucrats in Washington.

Republicans are building a strong record of better solutions

- An economic recovery plan that would help create more than 6 million jobs
- A budget that delivers fiscal discipline and tax relief for working families and small businesses
- Legislation that helps rebuild and protect America's savings
- A plan to keep families in their homes and lower costs for future homeowners
- A legislative solution that will keep terrorist-detainees out of America
- The right health care reform that puts patients first
- An energy plan that promotes American energy made by American workers

PRESS THEMES

Republican Leader John Boehner pens an op-ed regarding the Republican Savings Recovery Act

“...my House Republican colleagues and I offered our latest in a series of solutions on the economy, following the proposals we have offered this year to create twice as many jobs as the Democrats' stimulus spending bill at half the cost, encourage Americans to begin buying homes again, and return some fiscal sanity to the federal budget. Our plan, known as the Savings Recovery Act, has one simple but essential goal: helping Americans rebuild their retirement, college and personal savings accounts, which have been depleted by this recession in ways that few ever could have imagined.” (*Washington Times*, “SOS: Save Our Savings,” [4/30/2009](#))

Republican Whip Eric Cantor writes about the GOP's plan for economic recovery

“That's why the House GOP has made revitalizing small businesses the cornerstone of our alternative plans for economic recovery. During the stimulus debate, Republican leadership personally handed President Obama our solutions, which would have created twice the jobs at half the cost of the bill the president eventually signed. We proposed an initiative to allow small businesses to exclude 20 percent of their overall income from taxes. It was an unambiguous statement that it is only small business and private industry - motivated to grow, invest and innovate - that are positioned to create the millions of jobs our country needs.” (*Washington Times*, “Don't get in way of job creation,” [4/8/2009](#))

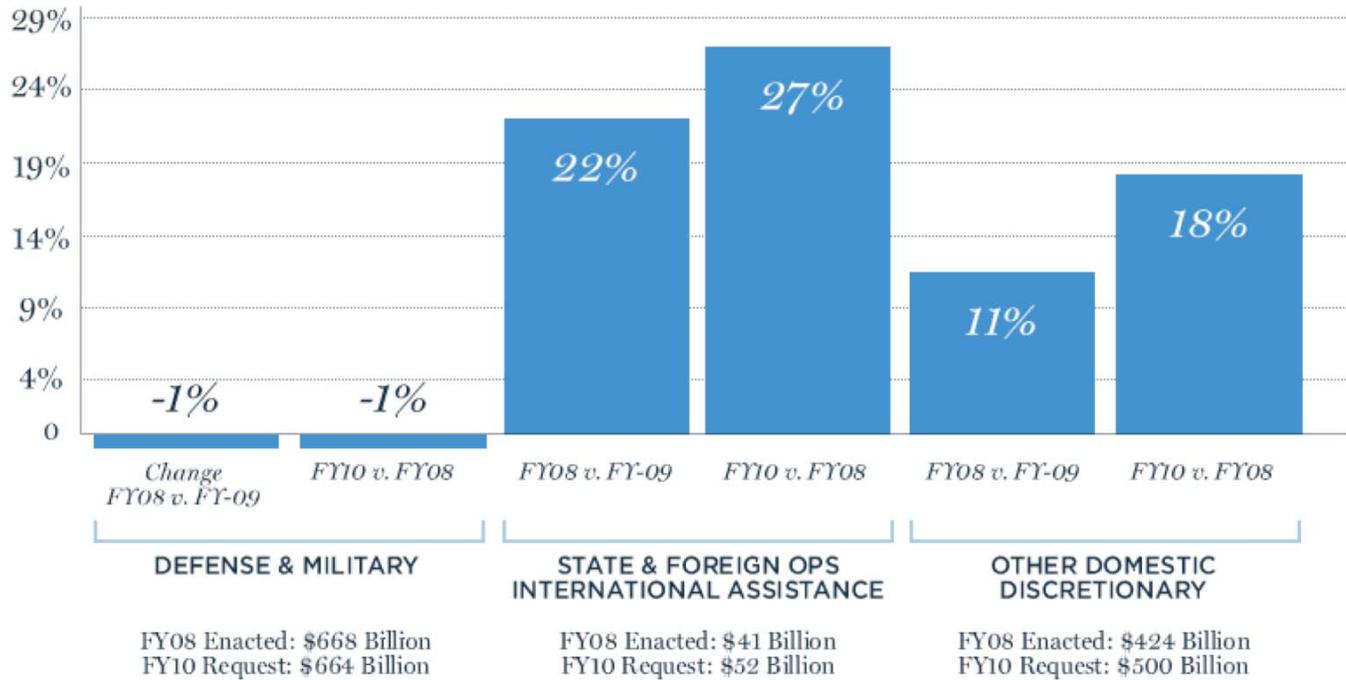
Dr. Tom Price, Chairman of the Republican Study Committee, discusses health care reform

“Conservatives are energized about the coming debate over health care. Our vision for positive reform is consistent with our principles and singularly focused on that which health care should be all about: the patient. Where we diverge with our Democratic colleagues is that we believe empowering patients, not Washington, is the key to responsible reform. Our goal must be to create a system that is accessible, affordable, innovative, responsive and of the highest quality.” (*Politico*, “To reform health care, create a real marketplace,” [5/3/2009](#))

DEMOCRAT PROPOSED SPENDING CHANGES FY 2008 - FY 2010

Includes: FY 2008 Enacted and the FY 2010 Proposed Regular and Supplemental Spending Bills

Excludes: \$312 billion Federal Stimulus Bill



PREPARED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, REPUBLICAN STAFF



TALKING POINTS

With the summer months fast approaching the American people are concerned about rising energy prices

It was just a year ago when gas prices began their steady rise to more than \$4 a gallon. The impact was devastating on families and small businesses across our nation. During this economic recession, similar hikes in energy prices would slow our recovery and inflict greater pain on already struggling Americans.

Instead of more affordable energy, Democrats propose a national energy tax that will kill jobs, raise taxes, and lead to more government intrusion

Under the Democrats' national energy tax plan, American households could see energy prices rise by more than \$3,100 a year, according to a recent study. The President himself admitted that his energy plan will cause energy costs to "skyrocket." In addition, various estimates suggest anywhere between 1.8 and 7 million jobs would be lost. The American people deserve an energy bill that does not cap innovation and kill jobs.

Republicans are committed to delivering American energy made by American workers

Under the leadership of the American Energy Solutions Group, House Republicans are holding energy summits across the country to discuss and develop with the public a real American energy solutions plan that includes renewable and alternative sources of energy, conservation, and more domestic production.

STATUS OF EVENTS

Before leaving for the Memorial Recess, the House Energy and Commerce Committee began consideration of the Democrats' cap and tax energy plan. The Democrat Leadership stated their desire to have the bill passed by the House this summer.

PRESS THEMES

Dean of the House, and Chairman Emeritus of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, John Dingell calls the Democrats' energy plan like he sees it
 “Nobody in this country realizes that cap and trade is a tax, and it's a great big one.” (Politico, “Dems delay climate change bill,” [4/27/2009](#))

Chairman of the House tax committee, Charlie Rangel, also speaks honestly about the Democrats' cap and tax plan
 “Whether you call it a tax, everyone agrees that it's going to increase the cost to the consumer,” said Rangel. ‘At the end of the day ... if there's nothing there to repay [consumers] for their financial expenditures, it might be difficult to fight Republicans who call this a tax.’ (Congress Daily, “Waxman, Boucher Signal Deal on Cap and Trade Measure,” [5/14/2009](#))

Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Colin Peterson, says he is “off the train” when it comes to a cap and trade bill
 “I will not support any kind of climate change bill -- even if you fix this -- because I don't trust anybody anymore. I've had it.” (Feedstuff.com, “Peterson cries foul on EPA ethanol proposal, vows not to support climate change bill,” [5/6/2009](#))



House Democrats look forward to passing the 964 page cap-and-tax bill by the summer recess

What Does \$3,100 Mean to the Average Family?

How much will the Democrats' national energy tax cost?

The Democrats' national energy tax will confiscate approximately \$3,100 per year from hard working families, kill jobs, and lead to more government intrusion.

What could the average family do with \$3,100 a year?

- A driver could fill their car's fuel tank more than 100 times.
- A family could pay for 15 months worth of disposable diapers.
- A young professional could pay for roughly 7 years of cell phone service.
- A Midwest wheat farmer or a Northeast dairy farmer could fill up their tractor's fuel tank 33 times.
- A family of four could pay the grocery bill for 5 months.
- The average Illinois family could pay for more than 3 years of electricity bills.
- An energy-conscious consumer could buy 822 GE 13-watt energy efficient light bulbs.



TALKING POINTS

America is in the midst of a health care crisis

Families already struggling to make ends meet are striving to afford basic health care for their families. Any time a child or a parent goes without the health care they need, that is a crisis for that family. The American people deserve the peace of mind to know they have the health care they need, when they need it.

Instead of reform, Democrats are pushing for a complete government takeover of health care

A government takeover of health care will raise taxes, ration care, and allow government bureaucrats to stand between patients and their doctors. One independent analysis estimated as many as 120 million people would lose their current health care coverage. The Democrats' attempt at denying access to medical care and life-saving treatments is a prescription for reform the American people cannot afford to take.

House Republicans are committed to the right health care reform that puts patients first

Republicans want to empower doctors and patients by making health care more affordable, accessible, and accountable. We cannot allow politicians and special interests in Washington to ration care. If an individual likes their current health care, they should be allowed to keep it. Health care reform should protect individuals' freedom to choose the health care that is best for them and their family.

STATUS OF EVENTS

No legislative activity has occurred in the House of Representatives. On May 13, senior House Democrat leadership met at the White House with President Obama, and set a timetable to pass health care reform in the House of Representatives before the August break.

PRESS THEMES

Washington Times Editorial Board writes about President Obama's plan to ration health care

"It doesn't matter what your doctor says; the Obama administration plans to decide if you will have cancer treatment or heart surgery...The hypocrisy is enough to make a heart stop. A White House that doesn't think government should intervene between a doctor and a woman deciding whether to have an abortion has no problem telling doctors whether they can perform tonsillectomies or hysterectomies." ("Rationing health care," [4/21/2009](#))

A Wall Street Journal Editorial describes how a government-run health care will ration care

"Try to follow this logic: Last week the Medicare trustees reported that the program has an 'unfunded liability' of nearly \$38 trillion -- which is the amount of benefits promised but not covered by taxes over the next 75 years. So Democrats have decided that the way to close this gap is to create a new 'universal' health insurance entitlement for the middle class... Desperate to prevent medical costs from engulfing the federal budget, the program's central planners decided last week to deny payment for a new version of one of life's most unpleasant routine procedures, the colonoscopy. This is a preview of how health care will be rationed when Democrats get their way." ("How Washington Rations," [5/19/2009](#))

The Editors at the National Review discuss what is really at stake with health care reform

"All of this might be dismissed as just typical Washingtonian opera if the subject matter were less important. The unavoidable fact is that health-care costs do threaten the financial stability of the government, given the current structure of our entitlement programs... The Obama administration and Congress are racing to pass a health-care bill with permanent and certain long-term spending commitments, with only the most speculative notions of cost-cutting. Refusal to deal realistically with health-care costs is why we have a long-term fiscal problem in the first place, and it is a roadmap to ruin." ("The Epistle of Obama to the Physicians," [5/13/2009](#))

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES:

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN BUREAUCRATS MAKE HEALTH DECISIONS

“The chronically ill and those toward the end of their lives are accounting for potentially 80 percent of the total health care bill out here....There is going to have to be a very difficult democratic conversation that takes place.”

— President Obama
interview with *The New York Times*

Patients Cannot Obtain Life-Saving Treatments

BRUCE HARDY, a patient living outside London, suffers from kidney and lung cancer, for which his physician prescribed the new drug Sutent. But as a profile in the *New York Times* pointed out, “If the Hardys lived in the United States or just about any European country other than Britain, Mr. Hardy would most likely get the drug.” However, in Britain, Sutent’s \$54,000 price means “Mr. Hardy’s life is not worth prolonging.” As his wife stated, “It’s hard to know that there is something out there that could help but they’re saying you can’t have it because of cost. What price is life?”

SARAH ANDERSON, an ophthalmologist who works for Britain’s National Health Service (NHS), published an article last spring titled “How the NHS Is Letting My Father Die.” Her father’s kidney tumor could be treated by a new drug—but while the pharmaceutical has been approved for use in Europe for two years, Britain’s National Institute for Clinical Effectiveness (NICE) delayed its assessment of the drug’s usefulness.

Until NICE renders its judgment, local NHS branches can refuse to provide the drug, leaving Anderson’s family to pay for their father’s treatment on their own, or face the inevitable consequences that will follow if he cannot obtain it. Anderson’s ultimate verdict on her family’s dilemma is a sobering one: “If Dad should lose his life to cancer, it would be devastating—but to lose his life to bureaucracy would be far, far worse.”

IAN DOBBIN, a patient in Yorkshire, faced a difficult dilemma—because the NHS wouldn’t pay for his life-saving cancer treatment, he needed to pay £25,000 to obtain the treatment and survive. He said the NHS’ decision “is a death sentence for me. I feel absolutely gutted because there is no way I can find that sort of money. My life is dependent on getting this drug and without it I will die. I am totally devastated. I’ve been paying my national insurance all my life and when it comes to the point that I need it to keep me alive, they are not prepared to help. I don’t really know what to do. My consultant is appealing the decision and I’m just praying that they change their minds.”

In 2006, ANN MARIE ROGERS filed a groundbreaking lawsuit in Britain, seeking to force her local NHS bureaucracy to pay for the breast cancer drug Herceptin—“which has been shown to halt the spread of the cancer.” In a public interview, she expressed her outrage at the bureaucracy that forced her to file a lawsuit in order to access a life-saving treatment: “It makes me so angry that these trusts are playing God, saying ‘you can’t have this, you can’t have that.’ They’ve got no right to decide who can have this life-saving drug. This is not a poor country, after all. I have worked all my life and paid my taxes. It makes me sick to think a lot of women are in my position.”

PAMELA SMITH, a patient with advanced bowel cancer, had her appeal for treatment denied by her local NHS trust in 2007—the drug (Erbix) is widely available in the United States, but in Britain, the government refused to pay for the treatment. As a result, Ms. Smith had to spend her life-savings to obtain the drug privately. Her son expressed anger at the NHS’ decision to deny care: “My mum now has no money left so she will have to rely on the family. What makes the appeal result a disgrace is that she is responding to the treatment.”

In Alberta, BILL MURRAY was denied hip resurfacing surgery that generates better results than a traditional hip replacement—because the Canadian government said the 57-year-old was “too old” to benefit from the state-of-the-art procedure.

Physicians Cannot Treat Their Patients.

A study released last August found that one quarter of cancer specialists are deliberately keeping their patients “in the dark” about available treatment options—in order to avoid upsetting those patients when they find out the NHS will not pay for their treatments.

Warpreet Husan, a colon cancer specialist, stated that bureaucracy compels his colleagues’ silence: “A lot of my colleagues also face pressure from managers not to tell patients about new drugs. There is nothing in writing, but telling patients opens up a Pandora's box for a health service trying to contain costs.”

Another physician, Dr. Sarah Jarvis, wrote an anguished op-ed condemning government-run health bureaucracy entitled “Sentenced to Death by NICE.” “Recently I was left feeling furious and frustrated after a visit from a patient called Peter. He'd just had a

serious heart attack and my job as a GP [general practitioner] was to reduce his very high risk of having another. I knew what the latest research told me was the best way, but I had just basically been forbidden to use it by an official email from the Department of Health.”

Patients Cannot Use Their Own Money to Pay for Care

Until last November, patients in Britain who paid for unapproved drugs out-of-pocket had to renounce all future NHS care—an effective prohibition on patients using their own money to pay for care. The Government reversed its position on “top-up payments” within the NHS, but not before stakeholders called the policy “despicable,” “appalling,” “uncivilised,” “spiteful,” “cruel,” “abhorrent,” “perverse,” “inhuman,” and “unjust”—even though most stakeholders agreed that some form of rationing within the NHS was inevitable.

In Canada, Lindsay McCreith filed suit against Ontario’s government-run health care system, claiming that the Canadian government’s ban on patients paying for private care violates his fundamental freedoms. Mr. McCreith was forced to travel to the United States for an MRI to diagnose a malignant growth in his brain. When the Canadian government offered him a months-long wait to treat his brain tumor, he was forced to travel back to Buffalo for life-saving surgery, as patients cannot pay for treatments with their own money in much of Canada.



TALKING POINTS

Memorial Day reminds us that we are still a nation at war

With men and women continuing to serve in harm's way, we must remain vigilant against Islamic extremists who wish to strike against our country. Republicans voted in support of a war supplemental funding bill that provides our troops with the resources they need to achieve their mission and come home safely, even though it included several questionable projects.

Speaker Pelosi needs to come clean with the American people

Republicans demand the facts on the use of enhanced interrogation techniques. For years the Speaker said that she did not know terror suspects were subject to enhanced interrogation techniques. But now the Speaker says that in 2003 she learned these techniques were in fact used and accused the CIA of "misleading" Congress. The American people want answers: what did the Speaker know and when did she know it? Republicans demanded an investigation by the House Intelligence Committee to get the facts and help ensure the CIA and the Speaker serve this nation with integrity and honesty.

Unfortunately, Democrats blocked Republican efforts for an investigation, leaving these important questions unanswered.

Democrats continue to show a lack of judgment on national security

Without any plan for what he would do with the terrorist detainees, the President ordered the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay closed by next year. Now the American people are left to fear that these dangerous terrorists will be transferred or released into their local communities. Guantanamo Bay holds the same terrorists who helped plan the 9/11 attacks. The American people deserve to know how transferring these terrorists to the U.S. makes us safer.

Republicans have a better solution that will keep terrorists off of U.S. soil

Republicans have introduced the "Keep Terrorists Out of America Act," which will allow every Member of Congress to stand with the American people in opposition to terrorists being transferred to our communities. This sensible legislation will ensure that the terrorists held at Guantanamo Bay will not be released or transferred into the United States.

STATUS OF EVENTS

On May 14, the House of Representatives passed a war supplemental funding bill that did not include money that the President requested to carry out his pledge to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. On May 15, the President announced that he would reinstate the Bush-era military commissions to prosecute the terrorists detained at Guantanamo Bay. On May 19, the Senate passed the war supplemental funding bill without money to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. At the time of printing, the House was expected to pass the Senate bill.

PRESS THEMES

Kim Strassel in the *Wall Street Journal* discusses the political challenges of closing the Guantanamo Bay detention facility

“On day two of his presidency, Barack Obama issued an executive order to shut down, within one year, the Gitmo prison that still houses 241 detainees. Four months later, he may be about to be handed his first defeat of a major campaign promise, and by his own party. Faced with the actual politics of bringing terrorists to U.S. soil, congressional Democrats are running for the exits.” (“Democrats Discover Gitmo’s Virtues,” [5/15/2009](#))

Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham discuss the questions the President left unanswered

“In January, the president announced via executive order that the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay will close within a year. The announcement was easy - - but it left unanswered the hardest questions about detainee policy for the future. How do we prosecute detainees suspected of committing war crimes now that military commissions have been suspended? How should we handle those detainees who cannot be tried, but who are too dangerous to release? Where will we house them? How should we deal with detainees who, if released, would return to the fight against us? (*Wall Street Journal*, “How to Handle Guantanamo Detainees,” [5/6/2009](#))

The *San Francisco Examiner* Editorial Board states the obvious - nobody wants a terrorist for a neighbor

“President Barack Obama made a serious mistake when he decided to close the U.S. prison facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, without first figuring out where to put the 240 detainees held there. Most of these people are hard-core jihadists whose main goal in life is to kill Americans...Obama seems determined to shut down Gitmo — even if that means transferring the detainees to less secure facilities in the U.S.” (“Nobody wants a terrorist for a neighbor,” [5/12/2009](#))

DEMOCRATS DISCOVER GITMO'S VIRTUES

MOVE THE DETAINEES? NOT IN MY BACKYARD

By *KIMBERLEY A. STRASSEL* of *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*

'We're not going to bring al Qaeda to Big Sky Country. No way, not on my watch,' declared Montana Sen. Max Baucus. "I wouldn't want them and I wouldn't take them," insisted Nebraska's Ben Nelson. Not Quantico, piped up Virginia's Mark Warner. After all, it "is in a very populated area in the greater capital region." Look, "Alcatraz is a national park and a tourist attraction, not a functioning prison" for terrorists, said the office of California's Dianne Feinstein.

All Democrats in favor of standing with your president to shout out the evils of Guantanamo, shout aye! "Aye!" All Democrats in favor of doing what would be necessary to close Guantanamo, shout aye! . . . What, nobody?

On day two of his presidency, Barack Obama issued an executive order to shut down, within one year, the Gitmo prison that still houses 241 detainees. Four months later, he may be about to be handed his first defeat of a major campaign promise, and by his own party. Faced with the actual politics of bringing terrorists to U.S. soil, congressional Democrats are running for the exits.

President Bush never closed Gitmo because, put simply, the options were to transfer detainees to foreign countries or to transfer detainees here. Attorney General Eric Holder in April embarked on a "please take back your bad guys" road show through the very European countries that had sermonized about America's offshore prison. The Brits and Germans sent the president their regards and promised to think about it.

That leaves the U.S. as the destination for Gitmo inmates, and Republicans have slowly but consistently turned Gitmo into a debate over Democrats' ability to handle national security. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has been hitting on Guantanamo since February, warning that the administration's decision to put "symbolism" over "safety" might result in Khalid Sheik Mohammed, Abu Zubaydah and Ramzi bin al Shibh coming soon to a neighborhood near you. House Republicans last week released a chilling video showing footage of 9/11, mug shots of the aforementioned murderers, and the question "How does closing Guantanamo Bay make us safer?"

Public outrage has already inspired officials in Louisiana, California, Mississippi, Missouri and Virginia (for starters) to introduce or pass resolutions to stop terrorists from being sent to their communities. Playing off this, the House GOP introduced legislation that would prohibit the administration from transferring Gitmo detainees to a state without permission from that state's governor and legislature. They then dared Democrats to vote against this "Keep Terrorists Out of America Act."

Democrats don't dare. The House instead last week yanked from an appropriations bill the \$81 million Mr. Obama wants as a down payment to begin the process of shuttering the prison. Worried that even this didn't provide enough cover, they also inserted language barring detainee transfers to the U.S. until at least October.

Appropriations chief David Obey explained that the only reason Congress didn't provide the money is that it first wants to see the administration's "plan." In truth, Democrats don't want to touch this debate -- certainly not now, in the middle of the what-Nancy-knew-and-when discussion. So they're kicking the can back to Mr. Obama.

The Senate is also set to deal with an appropriations bill, and Democrats are growing very wary that Republicans will introduce some awkward amendments that will force them to actually vote to bring terrorists to the U.S. Not surprisingly, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is now saying he, too, would first like to see some "specifics" from the administration.

This was not part of the Obama team's calculation. It figured it would get its bucks and make its calls. Releasing specific plans for where it intends to land these detainees will cause geographic uproars. But six weeks ago, Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions sent the first of two letters to Mr. Holder demanding to know the administration's legal authority for transfers, given that the federal Real ID Act prohibits admission to the U.S. of any alien who has engaged in a terrorist activity. The ranking member of the Judiciary Committee has yet to receive a response.

The administration might have the ability to shuffle some funds and do this unilaterally. But it is already four months into its one-year deadline, and transfers take time. The other option is for the administration to start triangulating, blaming Congress for not funding the program, and pushing back the deadline.

If so, Guantanamo will join the growing list of security tools that President Obama once criticized as out of keeping with American values but has since discovered are very in keeping with protecting the nation. Wiretapping, renditions, military tribunals, Gitmo -- it turns out the Bush people weren't a bunch of yahoos but often thoughtful defenders against terrorism. This is all progress, though America might wonder if it could have been spared the intervening drama.



TALKING POINTS

The Democrats reckless economic policies are slowing our economic recovery

It's clear the Democrats' plans to tax, spend, and borrow our way back to prosperity are doing more harm than good. And the mania of bailouts and nationalizing the American auto industry are all doing more harm than good. Continued record job losses across the country and record deficits bear witness to the Democrats' economic policies. Families who played by the rules and paid their bills should not be responsible for the bad decisions of others.

Republicans will continue to fight for accountability with how the government spends the taxpayers' money

Reports continue to surface that the Democrats' so-called stimulus plan has not reached the communities that need it. According to the *Washington Post* only \$29 billion of the \$787 billion package has been spent, and less than that has gone out in tax cuts; meaning families in need of relief aren't getting it.

Republicans renew our call for an economic recovery package that puts the American people back to work

During the budget debate, Republicans overwhelmingly supported a plan that would have repealed the Democrats' flawed stimulus bill, and provided immediate tax relief to working families and fiscal discipline in Washington. Controlling the size of the federal budget and allowing hard-working families to keep more of their money are two necessary steps on the road to a lasting economic recovery.

STATUS OF EVENTS

Close to five million jobs have been lost since Democrats took control of Congress in January of 2007, almost two million jobs have been lost since the President took office, and more than a million jobs have been lost since President Obama signed the so-called stimulus bill into law. On May 13, Vice President Biden released a report on the progress of administering the stimulus funds. Of the available \$787 billion, only \$28.5 billion has been spent, with another \$88 billion “obligated.” Money that has been spent has funded federal assistance to cover state costs associated with Medicaid and unemployment benefits. The report also claims 3,000 construction projects have been funded, and 150,000 jobs have been “created or saved,” although no real data exist to support either of these claims.

PRESS THEMES

Washington Post Editorial describes the flaws in administering the President’s stimulus plan

“Nonetheless, of the \$20 billion approved for spending so far for the Education Department, for instance, 97.2 percent remains unspent. Of the \$10 billion approved for the Transportation Department, a full 99.7 percent is still left to be spent. The challenge of getting government money out the door fast is one reason that some economists challenge the value of Keynesian stimulus policies. By the time checks are being written, they argue, an economic recovery is often underway. The result can be an inflationary waste of money. (“Stimulus Dollars,” [5/15/2009](#))

The Editors of the *Grand Rapids Press* write about the costly strings attached to the Democrat’s stimulus plan

“Michigan’s short-term federal stimulus reward will exact long-term punishment if state lawmakers buckle to some mandates for accepting it. Legislators and the governor should reject a portion of the stimulus funds because of the costly strings attached...Accepting the funds would require changes to state law that would cost Michigan employers in two short years more than the state would gain in the one-time payment. The permanent changes to state laws would hike costs for businesses -- small businesses in particular -- and act as a further disincentive for companies to locate in Michigan.” (“Stimulus money for unemployment comes with too many costs,” [5/17/2009](#))

A *Denver Post* Editorial discusses a missing component that is critical to ensure stimulus dollars are spent with accountability

“When it comes to government spending, waste and graft are always a risk. So it was laudable of President Barack Obama to seek full transparency in how the \$787 billion stimulus package was to be spent — with the details center stage for all to see... So it was a shame to read last week that a central component of the program to track the stimulus spending in real time won’t be active until at least October, and not truly online for as long as a year.” (“Transparency takes a big hit,” [5/11/2009](#))

FINANCIAL REGULATORY REFORM

COURTESY OF HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES REPUBLICANS

We Must Modernize Our Outdated Regulatory Structure, Ensure Taxpayer Protections

One of the most important tasks of this Congress will be to modernize our 1930's regulatory structure to meet today's 21st century financial markets. However, there is a need for smarter regulation, not necessarily more regulation. Any new regulatory initiatives must ensure that tax dollars are not used to continue the cycle of bailouts. The most important question regarding the Administration's plan is who pays for the orderly unwinding of the affairs of large complex non-bank financial institutions. We should not be saddling future generations of Americans with perhaps hundreds of billions in losses for the mistakes of a few institutions. This generational theft is unacceptable, and must end.

The Doctrine of 'Too Big to Fail' Should Not Be Accepted Practice

AIG is the ultimate example of why the 'too-big-to-fail' doctrine is a complete and costly failure. It appears the Administration's plan formalizes the practice of privatizing profits and socializing losses. This is squarely rejected by the American people, who want and deserve an exit strategy from the bailout business, not a *permanent bailout agency*.

Government Should Not Be Picking Winners and Losers

Identifying certain firms as "systemically significant" means the government is designating some companies as more important than others. This could confer significant competitive advantages on financial institutions that are perceived by the marketplace as enjoying an implicit guarantee of government support, undermining market discipline and promoting moral hazard in the process. This is fundamentally unfair, and serves only to further institutionalize the discredited 'too big to fail' doctrine.

We Must Do It Right - Not Fast

We must engage in comprehensive due diligence, open debate and discussion of all alternatives and views before overhauling our regulatory structure. We must avoid the kind of rush to judgment and disregard for regular order that has characterized recent congressional efforts to "rescue" the financial system.

Former Federal Reserve Chairman, and current Obama economic adviser, Paul Volcker has emphasized caution

"My personal feeling is 'not too fast'". (Reuters, *Don't rush on US systemic risk regulator—Volcker*, [3/24/09](#))

TALKING POINTS

The recent appointment of Harry Knox to the Advisory Council on faith-based initiatives is deeply offensive to the faith-based community

Harry Knox once referred to the Pope as a “discredited leader” and described the Knights of Columbus as “foot soldiers of a discredited army of oppression.” This appointment continues the divisive politics that the American people have rejected. The President should withdraw this appointment and find someone who can serve the faith-based community with the respect it deserves.

The President’s Administration continues to pursue policies that weaken traditional families

The recent decision by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is a classic example of “Washington knows best” when it comes to family health care. As a result of their decision, 17-year-old minors will now be able to obtain the morning after pill without oversight from parents or doctors. This decision further erodes the rights of parents to supervise the health of their children.

Republicans are committed to defending families and traditional values against an extreme liberal agenda

Parental rights should not be circumvented by bureaucrats in Washington and individuals who have ridiculed people of faith for their support of traditional marriage should not be appointed to serve the faith-based community. It is disappointing that a President who promised to choose unity over discord has pursued numerous policies that disregard family values and divide the American people.



PRESS THEMES

Conference Chairman Mike Pence calls on the President to withdraw the Knox appointment

“This selection furthers the divisive politics the American people have rejected and the President promised to abandon. Appointing a man who has publicly attacked the Pope and other religious leaders for their support of traditional marriage is deeply offensive to millions of Americans and the faith-based community he is appointed to serve. I call on the President to withdraw this appointment and select a person who can serve the faith-based community with the respect and dignity it deserves.” (Press Release, “Pence Calls on President to Withdraw Appointment for Faith-Based Advisory Council,” [4/9/2009](#))

Republican Leader John Boehner urges Members of Congress to raise their concerns over the Knox appointment

“...the appointment of Harry Knox to head the office of Faith-Based Activities, considering his anti-Catholic rhetoric over the years, is inappropriate and that’s why I signed on to the letter. I would hope that more Members of Congress would raise objections as well.” (CNS News, “Boehner Calls on Other Congressmen to Object to Obama’s Catholic-Bashing Adviser,” [5/15/2009](#))

Congressman Jeff Fortenberry responds to the latest FDA decision

“A judge is not a doctor, nor a parent. This ruling jeopardizes the medical health and well-being of minors and recklessly usurps parental authority. This is not sound judicial action. It is a game of politics that harms the integrity of medicine and legal rights of the family. I am deeply concerned with the precedent this ruling sets by disregarding parental rights and the health of the child.” (Press Release, “Plan B Decision Jeopardizes Health and Well-Being of Minors, Usurps Parental Rights,” [4/24/2009](#))

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT REGARDING HARRY KNOX APPOINTMENT

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500-0003

Dear Mr. President,

On April 6, you named Harry Knox to your Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. You claim to have created this Council, among other things, to “bring everyone together – from both the secular and faith-based communities.”

Harry Knox is the hate-filled antithesis of this noble objective. Knox is a virulent anti-Catholic bigot, and has made numerous vile and dishonest attacks against the Church and the Holy Father. He has no business on any Council having to do with faith or religion.

We do not know if you or members of your Administration were aware of Knox’s deplorable, abusive attitude towards the Church and Pope Benedict XVI when you named him to the Council. We assume you were not. But since then, there have been numerous press reports on Knox’s loathsome, and clearly bigoted rhetoric, so there no longer is any excuse for your failure to act. We can remain silent no longer.

As Catholics, we call on you to remove Mr. Knox from his position and to formally disassociate yourself from his militant anti-Catholicism. Failure to do so will result in the tainting of your Faith-Based Council—and indeed, your entire administration—as anti-Catholic. We urge you to give this matter your immediate consideration.

Sincerely,

John Boehner
House Republican Leader
Member of Congress

L. Brent Bozell, III
Founder and President, Media Research Center

Judie Brown, President,
American Life League, Inc.

Tom McClusky
Vice President of Government Affairs, Family Research Council

Thaddeus McCotter
Member of Congress, Michigan’s 11th District

Kate O’Beirne
President, National Review Institute

Larry Cirignano
Catholic Activist

Eileen Cubanski
Executive Director, National Association of
Private Catholic and Independent Schools

Bill Donohue
President, Catholic League

Chuck Donovan
Executive Vice President, Family Research Council

Deacon Keith A. Fournier
Editor in Chief, Catholic Online
Founder, Common Good

Deal W. Hudson
Director, InsideCatholic.com

Philip F. Lawler
Editor, Catholic World News

Leonard Leo
President, National Catholic Prayer Breakfast
(Mr. Leo's affiliation is listed for identification
purposes only)

Thomas Peters
American Papist Blog

Al Regnery
Publisher, The American Spectator

Patrick J. Reilly
President, The Cardinal Newman Society

Charles Rice
Professor, Emeritus, Notre Dame Law School

Austin Ruse
President, Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute

Phyllis Schlafly
Founder and President, Eagle Forum

Fr. Robert Sirico
President, The Acton Institute

Richard Viguerie
Chairman, American Target Advertising

COURTESY OF HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS REPUBLICANS

Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009

H.R. 23, as amended, the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009, passed the House on May 12. The bill would provide an unprecedented \$1,000 monthly payment to qualifying former merchant mariners who served the military effort during World War II. The House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved the bill a week earlier. Ranking Member Steve Buyer opposed the legislation because it would provide a benefit that other groups of veterans do not receive. Although Buyer opposed it, he expressed his belief that if the Committee was intent on passing the bill, it must be equitable for all of the twenty-eight WWII groups that have received veteran status, such as the Flying Tigers, which is credited for destroying an impressive 297 enemy aircraft and had one of the best kill ratios of any air group in the Pacific theater. Another such group is the WASPS, which consisted of female pilots who flew every type of mission that any Army Air Force male pilot flew during World War II, except combat. Buyer's amendment was defeated by a recorded vote of 14 to 15; however, the Committee Chair committed to considering the proposal if it were introduced as legislation. Buyer followed by introducing H.R. 2270, the Benefits for Qualified World War II Veterans Act of 2009, which would cover all WWII groups not included in H.R. 23, amended.

The following bills were also passed by the House by voice vote during the week of May 19-22:

H.RES. 360, Urging all Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the national cemeteries, memorial, and markers on Memorial Day

H.R. 466, as amended, the Wounded Veteran Job Security Act, to prohibit discrimination and acts of reprisal against persons who receive treatment for illnesses, injuries, and disabilities incurred in or aggravated by service in the uniformed services.

H.R. 1088, to provide for a one-year period for the training of new disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives by National Veterans' Employment and Training Services Institute.

H.R. 1089, as amended, the Veterans' Employment Rights Realignment Act of 2009, to provide enforcement, through the Office of Special Counsel, the employment and unemployment rights of veterans and members of the Armed Forces employed by Federal executive agencies.

H.R. 1170, as amended, was introduced by Rep. John Boozman, who serves as Ranking Member of Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, to establish program to make grants of up to \$200,000 to encourage the development of new assistive technologies for specially adapted housing. Mr. Boozman offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute to make the program a pilot program.



House Republican Conference

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