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## Massive Spending Bill Passes the House

The economic stimulus bill, H.R. 1, has now passed the House. All of us are very concerned about the state of our economy. It is appropriate, in my view, for Congress and the Administration to take action that will encourage job creation and economic growth, but that is something government policy makers should be thinking about every day, not just when times are tough.

I did not support H.R. 1 because I believe that it borrows too much and spends too much on the wrong things. I have always approached being your Congressman on the basis that every dollar the government spends must come out of the purse or wallet of a taxpayer who earned it. Thus, any money "injected" into the economy in the hope of stimulating growth must first be withdrawn from the economy or actually, from the pocket of a family or business, through taxes or borrowing.

H.R. 1 as it stands now spends over \$800 billion – enough to write a check for \$2,700 to every man, woman, and child in America -- on more than 150 federal programs, ranging from the National Endowment for the Arts to the Department of Agriculture "Headquarters Modernization." While some of these programs may be beneficial, their effectiveness at helping grow the economy is questionable, at best. Even if they were effective in creating or saving the number of jobs intended, the cost is more than \$220,000 for each job. I do not believe this kind of spending will help our economy; in fact, it will make some of our problems worse. To view the full text of H.R. 1, please [click here](#).

Many others agree. For example, some 200 eminent economists from universities all over the country signed an ad in The Washington Post, this week saying much the same thing. [Click here to see the ad](#).

Even some leading Democrats have expressed reservations about the bill and suggested that the secrecy with which Speaker Pelosi put the bill together resulted in legislation that was not going to produce the intended results. Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-Pa.), who chairs the Financial Services subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government Sponsored Enterprises, said on C-SPAN that, "I guarantee we're going to come back and we are going to have another stimulus, we're going to have another bailout for Wall Street because we are not doing these things properly."

I voted for an alternative that took an entirely different approach. First, it recognized that most jobs in the U.S. (and especially our part of Texas) are created by small businesses. The most recent data available shows that small businesses created 60 to 80% of the net new jobs created in each of the last ten years. Any attempt to save or create jobs must focus on that vital part of our economy.

Perhaps of equal importance is the concern for the vast amount of debt our country has already undertaken. Even before Congress enacts one penny of spending from this “stimulus bill,” this year’s deficit is projected to be, by far, the highest peacetime deficit in the history of the country - 8.3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). And federal spending is projected to be 24.9% of GDP (also the highest figure in American history, excepting World War II), even before any of the new spending in H.R. 1 is included.

For a full summary of the alternative, titled the Economic Recovery and Middle-Class Tax Relief Act, [click here](#).

Before I close let me share a little about the meeting with President Obama I attended. The President came up to the Capitol to meet with House and then Senate Republicans. While the symbolism of the President coming to Capitol Hill was powerful, and the President was genial, the cordial air could not bridge the profound gap between our two approaches to economic policy.

The President and his party believe that, despite the lessons of history, taxing or borrowing from one part of the economy and redistributing it to others will grow the economy. I believe that we should let all taxpayers keep more of the money they earn and assist small businesses to invest in themselves. Instead of spending on government-directed programs, our economy will do better when American workers and businesses can decide how to spend or invest more of their own money. I will continue to work toward that goal in the days and weeks ahead.

**Inauguration:**  
**A Celebration of the Peaceful Transition of Power**



The weather was cold and clear. As I looked out into the crowd, searching for a familiar Texas face, I worried whether those who had traveled from our area to Washington were prepared for the cold and the crowds. Tight security and long lines were everywhere amid a sea of people that was the largest crowd ever gathered on our national mall.

But there is something about inaugurations and new beginnings that causes us to forget our discomforts and frustrations and to remember how fortunate we are to be Americans. The long campaign seemed far in the past. This week differences over what to do about the economy took center stage. At least for that day, though, we could marvel at the greatness of our democracy and the smooth transition from one administration to another. And we can all hope that the new President will navigate the nation successfully through the challenges ahead.

To read more, please [click here](#).

## Photos with Constituents

About 200 visitors from the north Texas area traveled to Washington to witness the inauguration. I had the opportunity to visit with many of them as we distributed tickets in our Washington, D.C. office. The excitement and optimism was infectious and I enjoyed hearing their stories about their journeys to Washington. [Click here](#) to view photos taken during the inauguration festivities.

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