

Right Now

House Stimulus Plan Long on Spending, Short on Stimulus

I'm concerned that House Democrats have put forth an economic plan that is long on spending and short on real stimulus that would boost our economy. It will add nearly a trillion dollars to the already extraordinarily high national debt. Instead of more wasteful government spending of money borrowed on the backs of our children, we need to pursue [fast-acting tax relief](#) that will help spur economic growth and create jobs quickly by creating incentives to work and invest.

We cannot borrow and spend our way out of our economic problems. I will continue to stand with you, the American taxpayer, and urge House Democrats to take up a stimulus bill that centers on pro-growth tax relief for middle-class Americans and small businesses.

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Recent Past

Ranking Member of Subcommittee on Health

I was recently appointed to be the Ranking Member of the Ways & Means Subcommittee on Health. Ranking Members are the leaders of committees and subcommittees for the minority party in Congress. The Health Subcommittee oversees the Medicare program and provisions of the tax code pertaining to health care, as well as regulations affecting health insurance plans offered by large employers. Health care is one of the most important issues facing our district and our nation today, and I'm honored to accept the privilege of leading the subcommittee. As the lead Republican, I will continue my strong support for a system that keeps bureaucrats away from medical decisions and instead places the power in the hands of patients and their doctors. I will work to protect senior citizens' access to health care and to place the Medicare program on a sound financial footing for the future. I look forward to [hearing your thoughts](#) or concerns about the health care system this year.

President Obama to Close Guantanamo Bay Facility

I am deeply concerned by President Obama's announcement that he will close the Guantanamo Bay prison facility in Cuba within the next year. This facility holds suspected terrorists captured on the battlefield abroad, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the operational mastermind of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Most Americans understandably would not want these terrorist suspects to be transported to their backyards, as may very well occur when Guantanamo Bay is shut down. Additionally, moving these suspected terrorists to the United States could present another politically attractive target for a terrorist attack within our borders. I will urge President Obama to fully explain what he plans to do with the remaining enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay. He should not bow to political pressure and allow these dangerous individuals to relocate to the United States or potentially return to the battlefield. If a reasonable and safe alternative is not presented, I firmly believe Guantanamo Bay should remain open. [Share your thoughts](#)

Border Patrol Agents to Regain Freedom

In one of his last acts before leaving office, former President George W. Bush commuted the sentences of Border Patrol agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean, who were convicted and sentenced to ten years in prison for wounding a suspected drug smuggler who was in the United States illegally and was attempting to flee back across the border. Like many Americans, I was extremely concerned that the Justice Department's aggressive prosecutions of Agents Ramos and Compean sent the wrong message to our Border Patrol agents -- a message that the rights of drug smugglers and human traffickers take precedence over the safety of law enforcement officers. This past summer, I joined many of my colleagues in [urging President Bush](#)

to use his exclusive authority under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution to commute the sentences of Ramos and Compean. Doing so was the right decision and I am very pleased that these two Border Patrol agents will soon be freed and reunited with their families.

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Coming Up Soon

Reducing the Tax Burden on Firearms Manufacturers

Current federal law requires firearms manufacturers to pay an excise tax that is used to fund wildlife restoration efforts. This tax is due every two weeks, unlike other federal excise taxes such as those on alcohol and tobacco, which are paid on a quarterly basis. The frequency of tax payments presents an administrative burden to manufacturers and can create cash flow problems, particularly for small businesses. I recently agreed to cosponsor [H.R. 510](#), which would allow manufacturers of firearms and ammunition to pay excise taxes quarterly like other businesses. This legislation has support from the National Rifle Association as well as a number of hunting groups. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over the federal tax code, I will be looking out for opportunities to advance this common-sense correction.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Digital TV Transition Delayed Until June

The House of Representatives recently voted to delay the transition to digital television from analogue broadcasting. The new deadline to make the transition is June 12, 2009. The additional time will allow those who are currently not prepared for the digital TV transition to take the steps necessary to view the new signals. There is a government coupon plan to help with the costs of the converter boxes that some will need for their television to continue working. Should you or a family member have any questions about the transition, more information is available at <http://www.dtv.gov/>. By way of brief background, digital broadcasting will enable broadcasters to more effectively capture the enormous power, potential, and capacity of the publicly-owned airwaves. The switch to digital broadcasting will also open up a critical amount of the broadcast capacity to improve communications between our first-responders during emergencies.

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Northern California News and Events

VA to Expand Health Care Services in North State

The Department of Veterans Affairs has recently announced plans to expand health care services for North State veterans in Siskiyou and Yuba Counties. In Siskiyou County, the VA is pursuing a potential contract with a local medical provider in the Yreka area to provide primary care services to local veterans. The VA plans to issue a request for proposal in early February with proposals due in early March of this year. Additionally, the VA plans to open a new outpatient clinic in Yuba City. This clinic will be one of four new VA health facilities to open in California in 2010. I am pleased that the VA is expanding services in Northern California, and will continue to work to ensure that our veterans receive high quality and accessible health care.

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