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a few years after the Fed was created, and we have had more recessions since it came into existence than before. I am a co-sponsor of legislation calling for an audit of the Federal Reserve.

✓ **Information Security**

The Government Management Subcommittee, of which I am a member, recently held a hearing on the state of federal information security. In fiscal 2008, the Department of Homeland Security reported over 18,000 cyber attacks on federal government computers, an increase of 5,000 over the previous year. In that year, the federal government spent over \$67 billion on information technology, \$6.2 billion of which was on information security. Cyber attacks are growing so fast, both public and private, that there really is almost no real privacy in this Country today. I do not understand how anyone could believe that something they put into their computer or in an e-mail or say over a cell phone could be completely private. In spite of the fact that the federal government spends more on and has more up-to-date technology than almost any private business, when a federal agency makes a huge mistake or performs poorly, we are always told it is because their computers are obsolete. We accept many things we should not accept today as long as someone says it is "computer error."

✓ **Indian Tribes**

The House recently voted 240-179 to

grant federal recognition to the Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina and by voice vote six very small tribes in Virginia. The Bureau of Indian Affairs now has 562 tribes listed and more than 300 of these have been officially recognized by an Act of Congress. I believe these requests for federal recognition are driven mainly by the desire for health care and other monetary benefits, most especially gambling. I did offer an amendment which passed to prohibit these newest tribes from going into the gambling business. We have far too many Indian casinos already. However, any later Congress can come in and change or do away with any law or amendment this Congress passes. Actually, what we should be doing is weaning Indians off of welfare altogether and start treating them like all other Americans.

✓ **Tricky Laws**

A new National Saltwater Angler Registry Program goes into effect next January 1. A headline in the *New York Daily News* said "Marine waters laws get tricky for anglers." All over this Nation, wildlife officials will say publicly that they want more people to hunt and fish, yet they keep making it harder to do so. They keep passing more laws, rules, and regulations and making things more bureaucratic. They keep raising the fees on hunters and fishermen. Is it because they know their jobs would be easier if fewer people hunted and fished? One thing for sure: there is a real deer problem in

most of the Country. We need more people hunting instead of fewer. Also, because too many young people are spending their lives staring at screens, we need to do everything we can to get more of them to hunt and fish and get outdoors. These laws should be made simpler and fewer, not more complicated and confusing.

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Second District—Tennessee

CONGRESSMAN

John J. Duncan, Jr.

Washington Report

August 2009

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

✓ **Federal Spending**

The federal government spent or committed to spend so much money over the last several months that our highest-circulation newspaper at the end of May reported: "Taxpayers are on the hook for an extra \$55,000 a household to cover rising federal commitments made just in the past year for retirement benefits, the national debt and other government promises, a *USA Today* analysis shows." The paper called this an "explosion of federal borrowing" and said current and future federal liabilities now total a record \$63.8 trillion, or \$546,668 per household. I used to say that it was terrible what we were doing to our children and grandchildren, piling on all this debt. Now, I say that it is terrible what we are doing to ourselves, because it will not be more than 10 or 15 years, if that long, until the government is not able to pay Social Security, Veterans' pensions, and all the things we have promised our own people with money that will buy very much. Michael Kinsley, a liberal himself, wrote in the *Washington Post* on July 10, primarily about health care: "But people, even liberals, are starting to get unnerved by the cost of all of this. We now talk of trillions the way, even a few months ago, we spoke of billions."

✓ **Big Increases**

At a time when most families are having to tighten their belts and be more careful in their spending, the Congress keeps giving big increases to every de-

partment. In fact, this Congress is the biggest-spending one I have ever been in. There are 12 regular appropriations bills each year, not counting supplemental, emergency, and omnibus, end-of-the-year appropriations. Every appropriations bill this year has contained huge multi-billion-dollar increases. Some examples: Commerce, State, Justice, 11.7%; Agriculture, 11.9%; Interior-Environment, 17%; State Department-Foreign Operations, 33.4%; and Transportation-HUD, 25.1%. These increases are all coming in a time of very low inflation. In fact, federal spending has gone up at double or triple the rate of inflation every year for each of the almost 21 years I have been in Congress. Every year I get calls and letters from veterans who think the Veterans Administration has been cut. This has never happened, and in fact, we usually give the biggest percentage increases to the VA. In fact, the Veterans Benefits Administration will receive \$56 billion, a 19% increase, and total VA spending will go way up, to \$109 billion.

✓ **California IOUs**

It has long been said that what happens in California will sooner or later happen in the rest of the U.S., because that state is so big and populous. In late June, the California state government started sending out IOUs instead of checks, because its state debts had become so huge. Liberal officials there had been unable to say no to anyone and had kept voting for huge salaries

and pensions for public employees. This was happening at the same time that businesses were moving out due to higher taxes and regulations. Now California is in a mess, despite getting approximately \$80 billion in stimulus money. California has 53 members of the House, including the Speaker, so almost every major bill will contain extra billions for that state. But I do not think it is right or fair to keep bailing out California so it can continue its fiscally-irresponsible spending. Unfortunately, many state pension funds are also in serious financial trouble.

✓ **Supplemental Bill**

In addition to the excessive increases in the regular appropriation bills, the House in mid-June passed a \$106 billion supplemental, or extra, appropriations bill. This legislation started out at \$85 billion in the House, went to \$91 billion in the Senate, and then ballooned up to \$106 billion in the Conference Committee. This money was mostly additional money for Iraq and Afghanistan over and above the regular funding for those wars. However, the bill also included \$10.4 billion in extra "international affairs funding" (foreign aid), \$721 million more for the U.N., and one billion dollars to provide \$3,500 to \$4,500 vouchers for people who trade in old cars. One of the most wasteful things in the bill was \$7.7 billion because of the greatly exaggerated swine flu scare. This probably was promoted by bureaucrats and companies that will benefit from that spending.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Washington Report

✓ **IMF Funding**

The portion of the supplemental bill that conservatives objected to the strongest was the additional five billion in immediate money for the International Monetary Fund. This was separate money from the foreign aid money mentioned above. Then, in addition, the bill granted a line of credit for \$108 billion in future money (not counted in the \$106 billion price tag) for loans primarily to governments but also some businesses in other countries. This Fund has been used in the past almost entirely to prop up socialist governments around the world so they could continue their irresponsible spending. Much of it goes to impoverished countries which in later years are not able to repay these loans. Then some generous, “compassionate” Congress votes to forgive these debts. However, we should show more compassion for the American taxpayer and not make these loans in the first place.

✓ **Stimulus**

The \$787 billion stimulus bill the Congress passed a few months ago has been such a flop that its supporters are now saying it just was not enough and that we need to do a second stimulus bill. The number one objection to the first bill should have been that we were spending money we did not have, thus making our overall financial condition much worse. We certainly should not compound that problem. About the only ones not disappointed were federal and state bureaucrats. The *Washington Post*, which was for the bill (because it would mean so much money to the already-wealthy DC area), said it would be a “massive financial windfall” for federal agencies. A couple of days later, the *Post* reported that the stimulus would mean the hiring of “tens of thousands” of new federal employees. State governments got the next most. So, while foreclosures continued at record levels, and millions of families were having to reduce spending, federal agencies hit boom times. The Department of Homeland Security, for one example, spent \$248 million on new furniture.

✓ **Sugar High**

The best description I have heard of the recent stimulus spending is that it will provide a “sugar high”—in other words, that its effect will be temporary. The problem is that spending money like there is no tomorrow will cause us very serious problems in the very near future. If as recently as two or three years ago, I had told people that we would have a federal budget of \$3,600,000,000,000, and half of that would be deficit spending—in one year—they would not have believed it. If I had added that we will increase our national debt by four trillion dollars in just three years time (this year and the next two), some would have thought I was off my rocker. Government spending, no matter what it is for, will not get us out of recession. A private business that continually wastes money will soon go out of business. A government agency that wastes money just uses that as a way to get increased funding. It has been proven all over the world that the best way to create jobs and keep prices down is to leave more money in private hands. This nation could boom beyond belief if we could greatly decrease the size and cost of the federal government, but that is almost impossible.

✓ **Energy Bill**

This is my 21st year in Congress, yet never have I seen so much pressure and deal-making as was done on the Cap and Trade Bill. Many people who voted for it really did not want to do so. The Administration has a 79-seat majority in the House, yet the bill passed by only seven votes, 219–212. An amendment to say the bill would not be fully implemented unless China and India took similar steps was defeated in committee on a straight party-line vote. This was to try to protect American companies. An amendment with more than 300 pages was filed shortly after 3:00 a.m. on the morning of the final vote. The bill ended up being 1,428 pages, and no one who voted for it could have known more than a fraction of what was in it. Robert E. Murray, President

of Murray Energy Corporation, called this bill “the most destructive legislation in our country’s history” and said it “will raise the cost of energy with little or no environmental impact.” He said it would mean a major transfer of wealth from the South and Midwest to the West Coast and New England. I received a letter written on behalf of a company in Etowah which said “this bill will have a devastating impact on our company, our workers, the metal casting industry, and our nation’s economy while doing little to reduce global GHG emissions.”

✓ **Floor Speech**

These were remarks I made in the House on the Cap and Trade Bill: “Madam Speaker: I have noticed that most environmental radicals come from very wealthy or very upper income families. Perhaps they do not realize how much they have hurt the poor and lower income people by destroying jobs and driving up prices. Now, those who seem to be the loudest in saying they are for the little guy are about to pass a bill that is going to hurt the little guy most of all. This cap and trade bill is going to drive up prices for gas, for utilities, and especially costs for small businesses and farms. Businesses in China and India will probably jump for joy because this is going to give them even greater advantages. And college graduates all over this Country will wonder why they cannot find good jobs and have to keep working as waiters and waitresses because this bill will drive even more jobs to other countries. I hope everyone who is undecided on this bill will vote for the little guy instead of the big money environmental groups and the big businesses which will benefit from this very costly bill.

✓ **Senate Action**

Many people are predicting that the Senate will never pass as “bad” a bill as the one passed by the House. My guess, however, is that the Senate will make a few cosmetic changes so Senators can say they did not vote for the “bad” House bill and then in reality

enforcement to fight street crime. In fact, more air marshals have been arrested themselves than the number arrested by air marshals. I offered an amendment to freeze their appropriation, which would have saved \$41 million. But you win some and you lose some. It is almost impossible to get people to vote against something for “security,” and I knew I would lose this vote even before offering it. But I still thought it was important to begin the discussion and hopefully point out that we should not just automatically vote for something supposedly for “security” when in fact it is doing no good at all.

✓ **AIG Bonuses**

American International Group has received by far the most bailout money of any company—\$180 billion. I voted against all these bailouts, and I think it is wrong to have government play favorites in this way and follow “too big to fail” policies. Now, AIG is paying more bonuses and excessive salaries to its top employees. It is seeking government approval to pay \$235 million to about 400 employees who have already received \$165 million in bonuses last year. I have voted to limit bonuses and salaries to all employees of companies that received bailout money. Unfortunately, all that ultimately passed was that these payouts have to be approved by the Administration’s pay “Czar.” Appointment of all these Czars is not a good thing either. I would never vote for the federal government to get involved or interfere in such a direct way in setting compensation for private companies. But I believe (and even *National Review Magazine* commented favorably) that an exception was justified in regard to companies that had received multi-billion-dollar taxpayer bailouts.

✓ **Veterans Clinic**

In mid-July, the House passed by a vote of 417–0 a bill I introduced to name the Knoxville Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic after William C. Tallent. Bill Tallent in

World War II made a daring escape from a German prisoner of war camp. He and a fellow prisoner hid for months, sleeping in cemeteries, foraging for food, wearing tattered clothing, until they made it to the American front. He was wounded twice and earned the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. He served as Knox County’s elected Commissioner of Finance from 1953 to 1980 and was a leader in veterans groups and the Civil Air Patrol. In 1963, he ran against my father for Mayor of Knoxville, but in a campaign that would be very unusual today, neither one attacked the other, and they remained friends throughout and afterwards. Bill Tallent is a patriotic American who served this Country well both in wartime and throughout his life. In what is good news for our veterans, this clinic will move to a renovated 28,000 square foot building at 8033 Ray Mears Boulevard in Knoxville hopefully by the end of September.

✓ **College Costs**

It amazes students of today when I tell them it cost \$270 to go to U.T. my freshman year and \$435 my senior year (1969), not counting books. Back then no one got out of college with a debt, and people could work part-time and pay their expenses. The federal student loan program allowed colleges and universities to raise their tuition three or four or five times the rate of inflation almost every year, so that now their fees are 300% to 500% higher than they would have been if we never had this loan program. Things like this are called the tyranny of good intentions. The *Washington Times* reported recently that the cost of a four-year degree at a public college or university had gone up almost 300% over the last 30 years. Total federal spending on higher education has gone from \$81 billion in the 1997-98 school year to \$162.5 billion 10 years later, a 101% increase. Students are often fooled into believing government spending on education at both federal and state levels has been cut, when the truth is these “cuts” are just

reductions in requested increases. Overall, higher education budgets are much higher than five or ten years ago, usually about three times the rate of inflation. The only way to get college costs down is to reduce federal loans at colleges and universities that do not hold their increases to the rate of inflation or less. But the college-university lobby has been too strong to pass this type of penalty. It would be bad for students and our economy, however, if this program was turned into a totally government-run one, eliminating private companies from this market.

✓ **Federal Reserve**

The main job of the Federal Reserve is supposed to be to provide us with a stable currency. The most recent estimate I have found is that it now takes \$21.60 to equal the purchasing power of \$1.00 in 1913, the year the Fed was created. There was almost no change in the purchasing power of the dollar in the first approximately 125 years of our existence as a Nation. The inflation of the Civil War was offset by some years of deflation afterwards. According to Richard Rahn, Chairman of the Institute for Global Economic Growth, the Fed is now printing money at a faster rate than ever, an increase of 20% in the past year alone, or about twice the rate during the great inflation of the late 70s. He says the only reason inflation has not yet gone way up is that people are hoarding cash rather than buying new homes or autos or other goods. Once excess inventories are worked off and commodity prices rise again, very rapid inflation could set in. The other possibility would be an economy that becomes so weak that tremendous deflation sets in. Most experts seem to be predicting inflation, but both scenarios should have been avoided and could have been if we had not allowed so many trillions of deficit spending. Some have actually been foolish enough to believe the Federal Reserve was created in order to prevent a great depression. However, we had our worst depression just

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it has been proved all over the world that every dollar that can be kept in private hands will do more to keep prices low and create jobs. The people who benefit the most from low prices and job creation are the poor and lower income.

✓ **TVA Spill**

The TVA coal ash spill was a terrible event—the worst thing that has ever happened to TVA and horrible for those whose homes and health have been severely damaged. Certainly everything, within reason, should be done for the people who were hurt, and I think it is being done. TVA has estimated it will spend about one billion dollars on this mess, not counting lawsuits and regulatory fines. This spill was not in my district, but I went there a few days after it happened and took a helicopter tour of the scene and got a detailed briefing. At that time, there was a “war room” of many people from several federal, state, and local agencies, and hundreds of government officials and private contractors have been and still are working to clean up the area. Great progress has been made so far. I participated in one meeting in Senator Alexander’s office and two hearings held by the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, on which I serve. Unfortunately, some environmentalists have been almost gleeful that this has happened in order to promote their radical agenda. And some out-of-state law firms have swooped in with dollar signs in their eyes, wanting to make big money off this tragedy. I hope that TVA, the EPA, and other government officials will not give in to every unreasonable demand because this could lead to additional rate increases on many thousands of people who are already struggling to pay their utility bills.

✓ **Transportation Bill**

I continue to serve as the ranking member of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee. I am very pleased that we have been able to get more highway and other transportation money for our district than almost any other in the Nation, because East Tennessee

was shortchanged on highway money for many years. The recently completed work in downtown Knoxville was the biggest highway project in the history of Tennessee. I have no desire to try to pave over our area, and I want to see as much remain green as possible. But because our part of East Tennessee has had so many people move there in the last 25 or 30 years, much work had to be done. If the interstate in West Knoxville, for instance, was still just two lanes, life would be miserable for everyone who uses that road. I am certain that many lives have been saved by the work done over recent years to expand and improve Highway 411. We need to complete work on a major transportation bill in this Congress so our Nation can remain competitive, our economy can recover, and young people can find jobs.

✓ **Tennessee Employment**

Unemployment reached 10.8% in Tennessee in June, the highest level in 25 years. The *Nashville Tennessean* quoted Jack Brumit, a 60-year-old from Pegram, as saying “They’re bailing everyone out but the little guy.” Mr. Brumit lost a \$68,000 hotel maintenance job a year ago. In Tennessee, most of the stimulus money that has not gone to federal agencies has been spent for TennCare and unemployment benefits. Rep. John Boehner (R-OH), the Minority Leader, said his constituents “don’t want extended unemployment benefits—they want jobs.” More jobs are created by leaving more money in the private sector, where there is less waste and inefficiency than in government. While unemployment is far too high, under-employment is probably even higher. Environmental rules and regulations have forced millions of American jobs to other countries, and now many college graduates are having to work in very low-paying jobs.

✓ **New Deal**

Some people in power today apparently look back with nostalgia at the New Deal and believe it should be a model for what we need to do to come

out of the current recession. They should consider the words of President Roosevelt’s longtime Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, who told a small group of Democratic leaders in May of 1939: “We are spending more money than we have ever spent before and it does not work. I want to see this country prosperous. I want to see people get a job. We have never made good on our promises. I say after eight years of this administration we have as much unemployment as when we started and an enormous debt to boot.”

✓ **Foreign Workers**

Every year the federal government gives H-1B visas to many thousands of specialty workers, mainly in computer programming, science, and engineering. There is supposedly a cap of 65,000 on these visas, but exemptions are given out so routinely that in 2008, the number of workers allowed in under just this program was 409,619. These are usually high-paying jobs, although many companies use these visas as a way to get foreign high-tech workers who will accept lower pay. While the number is usually not as high as last year, this program has allowed close to 4,000,000 foreign workers in over the last 10 years and many more over the life of the program. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of long-term unemployed American workers increased by 433,000 to 4.4 million in June. I have voted against expanding the number of these visas, and especially now, in a time of rising unemployment, this is one program that should be reduced, or better yet, eliminated until times get better.

✓ **State Taxes**

With very few exceptions, the states with the lowest taxes are growing the fastest, while the states losing population the fastest are those with the highest taxes. States with no state income tax are among the most popular places to retire. The Tennessee delegation to Congress has worked very hard to maintain the sales tax deduction on

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Congressman Duncan and his grandson, Beau Richardson, are pictured at the July 4th activities in Greenback with Grand Marshal, Pastor Doug Sager and Mrs. Sager. Congressman Duncan attends all types of events throughout the District to meet with constituents and listen to their opinions and concerns.

federal income taxes. The high tax states are killing themselves economically but cannot seem to stop. First, businesses move out, taking many people with them. Even more move out as soon as they retire. Then high tax states are left with a higher percentage of public employees and people on welfare, and these people put pressure on elected officials to raise taxes even more. However, it is a constant battle to keep taxes low in any state, because you can never satisfy governments’ appetite for money and land. They always want more.

✓ **Afghanistan**

We seem to be making the same mistakes in our policies toward Afghanistan as we did concerning Iraq. Even General Petraeus, who is regarded by many as our top military man today, said recently that we should not forget that Afghanistan has been known as the “graveyard of empires.” The President recently sent 17,000 more troops there, upping the total to 55,000. The way the Pentagon is operating these wars, we seem to have about as many contractors as troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. George C. Wilson, military columnist for the *Congress Daily*, wrote on June 1: “The American military’s mission to pacify the 40,000 tiny villages in Afghanistan will look like mission impossible, especially if our bombings keep killing Afghan civilians and infuriating the ones who survive.”

According to the Center for Defense Information, we have now spent \$439.8 billion on war and war-related costs for Afghanistan and \$1,631.6 trillion so far on war and war-related costs for Iraq. These are figures that should astound fiscal conservatives.

✓ **Unbelievable Number**

In addition to the 130,000 troops still in Iraq, and now 55,000 in Afghanistan, we now have an almost unbelievable number of private contract workers—240,000—in the two countries. Eighty percent of those are foreign nationals working for the U.S. Government. In its first report to Congress, the new Wartime Contracting Commission said “billions of dollars in wasteful spending has occurred and may still be occurring...” As one of many examples, the Commission criticized the construction of a new \$30 million dining facility being built next to another dining facility on which \$3.6 million had just been spent to upgrade and expand. The new facility is to be completed in December of 2009, just one year before U.S. troops are supposed to be out of that area. The Associated Press said in its story that the new mess hall “is too far along to stop,” making it “a future monument to the waste and inefficiency plaguing the war effort.” Both these wars have always been far more about money for the Defense Department and its contractors than about any real threat to

the U.S. Unfortunately, according to Thomas Ricks, an expert recently interviewed on National Public Radio, it is “optimistic” to think we are even halfway through the war in Iraq. We should get out of both Iraq and Afghanistan immediately, but we will probably be there for many more years, spending hundreds of billions that we really cannot afford.

✓ **Foreign Aid**

The President promised this past March “a dramatic increase in our civilian effort” in Afghanistan, including “agricultural specialists and educators, engineers and lawyers.” Why? Why, when we are almost twelve trillion dollars in debt, are we spending mega-billions in Iraq and Afghanistan doing practically everything for them? Our Constitution does not give us the right to run other countries. Our founding fathers would be shocked. On July 6, the American Forces Press Service published a glowing article about a Tennessee National Guard agribusiness development team working in Afghanistan. I have the greatest respect for our military and even served for many years in both the Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. I know that a gigantic bureaucracy can justify or rationalize almost anything, but I do not believe our military should have an agribusiness development team in the first place, and especially one helping another country to develop its agriculture business. I believe in national defense, but I do not believe our Defense Department should simply be the Department of Foreign Aid.

✓ **American Generosity**

No country in the entire history of the world has ever done as much for other countries as has the United States. Unlike earlier wars where there were real threats to our security, we have been spending astounding sums of money fighting very unnecessary wars, putting our own financial future in great jeopardy. In addition, we have gotten involved in far too many religious, ethnic, and political disputes around the world, creating resentment and

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making enemies of people who otherwise would be our friends. I think much of this has been done so some of our top leaders, from both parties, at the State and Defense Departments and in the White House, could feel more important and think of themselves as great world leaders. The war in Kosovo in the 1990s was a good example. In the July issue of the *National Geographic Magazine*, there is an article in which a Croatian refugee woman asks why “does America kick poor people out of their homes in Kosovo?” Two young men in Belgrade asked the writer “to guess how many tons of depleted uranium munitions the U.S. dropped on their country in 1999 and how many cancer cases could result. Did I know about the Serbian civilians killed by U.S. bombing in the Kosovo war?” Well, the American people did not do these things. It was misguided leaders who wanted more money and prestige and power, and led us into wars even when there was no threat by these countries to our true national security.

✓ **True Fiction**

In the novel *Boomsday*, a fictional Congressman, on an inspection trip to Bosnia, types these words on his laptop: “It is the general rule among policy makers to insist that America must never leave a mission unaccomplished, no matter how wrongheaded or ill-thought through. Indeed the more wrongheaded and ill-thought through, the more imperative it is to remain and see it through to its dismal and inevitable end.” We will stay in both Iraq and Afghanistan for years to come, not because we need to, but simply because every government bureaucracy, including the military, always wants to expand its mission so it can keep getting more and more money. This is why our founding fathers thought it was so important to have civilian control of the military. They just did not see that when government got as big as it is today that only those who believe in expanding a department or agency could ever get to be the head of it.

✓ **Great Prosperity**

We are facing the most serious economic problems this Nation has faced in many years. The main reason was summed up in a headline on a major story in the *Washington Times* on July 9: “Bloated Deficits Endanger Dollar’s Global Status.” Spending so many billions that we do not have for so many years has greatly weakened our economy and put our future in great jeopardy. The saddest thing is that it did not have to be this way. If we had had fiscally-conservative Congresses for the last 50 years, we would not have these problems. This Country could and should be having great prosperity. The reason we are not having boom times is because of too much government spending and the high taxes and burdensome regulations that go with it. Also, businesses that continually waste money soon go out of business. This is not true with government agencies. Thus, every dollar that can be kept in the private sector will do much more to create jobs and keep prices low than will money turned over to government. Small government results in very few at the top, very few at the bottom, and a huge and prosperous middle class. Big government is best at one thing: wiping out the middle class, resulting in a few elitists at the top and a huge starvation class at the bottom (such as the Soviet Union and Cuba.)

✓ **Big Government**

Robert Samuelson, a very middle-of-the-road columnist for the *Washington Post*, wrote in mid-July that “our national government is on the verge of a permanent expansion that would endure long after the present economic crisis has (presumably) passed and that would exceed anything ever experienced in peace time.” He added that the Congressional Budget Office had said our huge deficits would “penalize saving, investment, and income, while unprecedented tax burdens could slow the growth of the economy, making the government’s spending burden harder to bear.” Another consequence of big government is that, with very

few exceptions, the companies that have paid the most ridiculously excessive salaries to their top people have been able to do so because of federal government growth. These big companies have grown so huge because federal rules, regulations, red tape, and taxation have driven so many small and medium sized businesses out of existence or made it impossible to enter many markets in the first place. Also, most big giants in the business world have received big government contracts, tax breaks, and favorable regulatory rulings.

✓ **Recession Sign**

One of the clearest and most unusual signs of recession is that demand for seeds has gone way up. The *Washington Post* carried a front-page story which said: “After years in the doldrums, the consumer demand for vegetable seeds has abruptly climbed at a rate even industry veterans have never seen.” Fox News carried a lengthy report showing ways that more and more people are preparing in case our food delivery and public utility systems break down or experience interruptions in service. People seem to be more worried or concerned about the future than anytime probably since World War II.

✓ **Air Marshals**

Before the tragic events commonly referred to as 9/11, there were 33 air marshals. Now there are approximately 4,000. When a federal agency is created, it just grows and grows, and it is almost impossible to eliminate it, even when it is a needless, useless agency. The appropriation for this program in the coming fiscal year will be \$860 million, which I believe could be much better spent in any of hundreds of other ways. All these people do is ride back and forth, usually in first class, in about as cushy and easy job as I can think of. They have averaged making slightly over four arrests a year, which comes out to about \$200 million per arrest. This money would be much better spent going to local law

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Almost all East Tennesseans are proud of the success achieved by Sevier County native, Dolly Parton, who admirably has never forgotten her roots. Congressman Duncan is shown here with Ms. Parton at a luncheon following her UT graduation speech where she urged support for higher education.

pass what is basically the same bill. A few extremely big companies, foreign and domestic, will benefit from this legislation. Environmental groups get huge contributions from the biggest businesses and the people connected to them. Big money is behind most environmental legislation and certainly was on this bill. Brendan O’Neil, writing in the August *American Conservative Magazine*, said: “We are witnessing the emergence of a Green-Industrial Complex—an alliance between national governments, enormous corporations, and powerful individuals that uses the politics of fear to procure public money.”

✓ **Health Care**

Until the federal government got heavily involved in the mid-60s, health care was cheap and affordable for almost everyone. Doctors even made house calls. We took what was a very minor problem and turned it into a major problem for everyone. Medicare was touted as being the savior of the system. Instead, costs exploded. It was supposed to cost \$12 billion after 25 years. Instead, it cost almost 10 times that much, and now has quadrupled even from that higher figure. Medicaid was going to be the savior of the system. Instead, costs exploded even more. In any big government program, a true free market is eliminated, and a very small number of individuals and companies find ways to manipulate the

system and get rich. It is not a conspiracy—just the inevitable consequences of a government that is too big. Now, because the federal government has made the problem so big, many people want the government to just take it all over. One thing you can be sure of—the cost will be far more in 10 years than the \$1.6 trillion estimated by the Congressional Budget Office. In fact, Douglas Elmendorf, the CBO Director, testified before the Senate Budget Committee that the proposed health bill “significantly expands the federal responsibility for health care costs.”

✓ **Hidden Costs**

More government involvement in health care will lead to even greater costs, but the supporters will attempt to hide the costs by increasing taxes on business. However, this will simply lead to higher prices on everything else because these taxes will have to be passed on to the consumer. Ultimately, a government system, usually called a single-payer plan, will lead to declining quality of care, waiting periods, some form of rationing (although they will not call it that), and costs will continue to go way up. We need less regulation so we can have greater competition between health care providers and especially more health insurance companies, so big giants cannot control the industry. We need to ensure that medical decisions are

made by patients and their doctors, not government bureaucrats. We need to give all Americans freedom to choose among numerous health plans and not be limited to one government plan. We need to give people incentives and the power to shop around for medical care by going more to medical savings accounts or medical vouchers. Also, we should have a system in which health insurance should follow the employee, not the job.

✓ **Medicaid**

Commentator Mark Levin said a few days ago that the health plan before Congress puts massive costs off on state Medicaid plans and that it will eventually force states with no state income tax, like Tennessee, to have one. In February of 1994, the *Washington Post* ran a series of articles on health-care. Senator John D. Rockefeller (D-WV) called Medicaid “a vile program, a horrible program” and said it “should be abolished.” Allen Schick of the liberal Brookings Institution was quoted by the *Post*: “Medicaid is a success story of the American political process. We make something so bad that we have to go to total reform.” The *Post* started that same article by saying that Medicaid “with its maddening bureaucracy, high costs, and variations from state to state... now satisfies almost no one.” That was 1994. Now, some say what we are trying to do is set up Medicaid for almost everyone.

✓ **Tax the Rich**

The main health care proposal includes a surtax on people making above \$280,000 a year. This tax would not affect me. I am not wealthy now and never will be. Like everyone else, I think salaries paid to some CEOs, movie stars and athletes are ridiculous. But it would hurt lower income people the most to raise taxes on anyone. Taxes at all levels are already far too high, and the top one percent already pay 40% of federal income taxes. The top 25% pay 86%. But the reason tax increases hurt lower income people the most is because our federal government is so unbelievably wasteful and inefficient. And