



**Opening Remarks Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI)
Meeting of the H.R. 3630 Conference Committee
Tuesday, January 24, 2012**

This may be our first public meeting, but the work of this conference committee has been ongoing since the end of last year. I know members have spoken often and studied the issues.

I would also note and thank the staff for their due diligence leading up to this public meeting. As a result of their efforts, every member has before them a side-by-side comparison of the House bill and the Senate bill. From those two documents, one prepared by the Joint Tax Committee and one prepared by the Congressional Research Service, we can clearly see the positions of each Chamber and the differences we must work together to resolve.

As I review these tables, the biggest issue I see is that the House, and only the House, has put forward a plan to extend for one year the payroll tax holiday, unemployment insurance benefits and payments to doctors treating our nation's seniors and those enrolled in Medicare.

The Senate's position gets us through February. This has left every working American wondering not only what their taxes will be next year – after the current marginal income tax rates expire – but also what their payroll taxes will be in less than 40 days.

Doctors treating Medicare patients are wondering what their reimbursements will be. Even more importantly, the seniors who rely on these doctors for critical medical care are left wondering who, if anyone, will treat them in March.

And, the unemployed are wondering if there will be benefits for them, while hardworking taxpayers are wondering if Washington will ever get serious about helping people get the training and education they need to get back to work instead of just handing out more unemployment checks.

In the last few years, extensions of the unemployment program have already added nearly \$200 billion to our debt. Continuing unemployment benefits through the end of January 2013, as the House bill did, costs about another \$30 billion.

All told, the policies before us will cost roughly \$160 billion.

And, that is the second biggest issue we have before us – paying for these programs. I would be remiss if I did not point out that unless we find a way to pay for these programs, we will be forced to borrow even more money from places like China – creating an even larger debt dragging our economy down.

Non-partisan experts have testified that because our debt is already so large, it is weakening our economy and hurting job creation. The result is roughly 1 million fewer jobs for American families.

The third and final issue I want to point out today relates back to the first. The House legislation includes a number of critical reforms, job-creating provisions and bipartisan measures to offset all of the spending. The Senate bill contains none of the reforms and only one additional job provision – Keystone, which the President has already rejected.

- The House bill reformed the unemployment program to focus it more on getting people the training and education they need to get back to work, not just handing out checks.
- The House bill included a pay freeze for Members of Congress and civilian federal workers.
- The House bill put an end to welfare benefits being accessed at ATMs located in casinos, liquor stores and strip clubs. The Senate bill did not.
- The House bill protected Social Security by reducing overpayments.
- The House bill included a provision that saves taxpayers \$9 billion by cracking down on fraud and abuse that is known to exist in a refundable tax credit program.
- The House bill provided for economic growth and job creation in the high-tech industry through spectrum auctions.
- The House bill cut taxes to promote business investment and hiring.

So, these are the three big issues I see before this conference committee:

- 1) The Senate bill extended programs for only 2 months, when the American people need, expect and deserve at least one-year;
- 2) The Senate bill, unlike the House bill, provides no indication of how the Senators would pay for a longer-term extension; and
- 3) The Senate bill contains straight extensions of these programs without any needed reforms and has no additional measures to help get Americans back to work.

The differences in the positions between the House and the Senate are further complicated by the fact that the Senate version is now currently law as a result of the passage of H.R. 3765. Thus, under House procedures the scope of conference is effectively the House bill.

As you can see, we have our work cut out for us. I am confident that if every member of this conference committee is committed to finding a solution, we can and will do it.

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