Big Spending Bill: The final vote on HR 1, the non-stimulating stimulus bill, was 244-188. Amongst Democrats, the vote was 244-11. Not one single Republican voted for the bill. In my 3 years here, I cannot remember a single major vote where all Republicans voted the same way. President Obama wanted a bipartisan vote. But you can't have a bipartisan vote without a bipartisan bill. And this bill is not even close. It will now go to the Senate where it will pass with some amendments which will likely improve the bill, but increase the cost. Then it will return to the House for a final vote before the President signs it.

I listened to many of the speeches given by supporters of the bill today. I also had the opportunity to question the Director of the Congressional Budget Office on the subject. The tepid arguments and weak rebuttals of the proponents here leads me to believe that perhaps even they know this is not really about stimulus. I can say that maybe 25% of the items in this bill have some multiplier effect, and that's being generous. But the rest is just spending. Just 2 months ago, President Obama's Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, said "Never let a serious crisis go to waste. What I mean by that is it's an opportunity to do things you couldn't do before."

Couple that statement with the President's comments yesterday that this is just "the first" in a series of economic recovery actions, and it becomes clearer to me that this bill is really about getting about a 20% annual increase in non-entitlement federal spending right now, and paying for it with tax increases to be named later. The public would not stand for that in the normal course of politics.

If you don't believe that, I hereby submit for your consideration a document that was sent to me by a Democrat Congresswoman from California in order to entice me to vote for the package because of the money that California would receive. It actually pushed me the other way. I think it will have the same affect on you so it is attached. Virtually all the spending in here is merely the federal government paying for programs that the state is already doing. In another case, there is billions for more school construction when we have just borrowed and spent $30 billion on school construction in California where we have some of our schools that are failing housed in beautiful new buildings. The State of California will get a $32 billion spending increase in this bill, paid for by federal taxpayers. I hope that the idea of raising taxes in California will be dead now. Isn't $32 billion in more spending enough for now?

The next pieces of Obama's recovery plan apparently will be something to deal with the housing market and the credit markets. We will not recover without at least a flattening in housing and a restoration of some normalcy to the credit markets. I hope we can find more common ground on

action for those solutions than we have on this supposed “stimulus.”

On a Lighter Note: In Congress, we often have “resolutions” commending or congratulating someone for doing or achieving something. We had one of these last week. H.Res. 58 commended the University of Florida’s Gators for winning the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) football game against Oklahoma. Now, you may remember that I am a graduate of USC, as is the ‘Captivating Mrs. Campbell’ (my wife), and our oldest son. Our youngest son is at USC now. Needless to say we are big Trojan football fans.

So, when this resolution came up, I pushed the red “no” button because I KNOW that USC was the real national champion team because the BCS system stinks. In fact, about 20 others either voted “no” or “present” along with me. By the way, dislike for the BCS is one of the areas in which President Obama and I are in complete agreement! Every one of those votes were from members from Texas, Utah, or Southern California. I changed my vote to “yes” because I really meant it as a joke (kind of) and the resolution said that they won the national championship game, not that they were the national champions. However, my colleagues who are Utes or Longhorns all stayed with their “no” or “present” votes.

Mrs. Campbell was rather displeased with me that night (as she occasionally is with some vote or another I have made) and suggested that a true Trojan fan would have stayed no.

Do you agree with my vote or the Mrs. Campbell’s position? Bruin and Stanford Tree (Hey, your mascot is a dancing tree!) fans are allowed to respond too. OK and even you Fighting Irish people.

I will now predict that I will get more response on this than anything else I have written about in a year. And isn’t it more fun than talking about non stimulative stimuli?

Fight on!

Until next time, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell