

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

October 3, 2008

Dear Friends:

Thank you for expressing your views on the economic rescue legislation that passed the House on Friday with a bipartisan vote of 263-171.

Let me assure you, the votes I have had to cast toward the end of the 110th Congress have proven to be the most difficult – and complicated – in all my years of representing you in Congress.

On the heels of the worst month on record for the availability of credit to small businesses, the worst month for car and light-truck sales since April 1992, and a net loss of 159,000 jobs – making September the ninth straight month of job losses, I strongly believe that our economy – if left unattended – is on the verge of collapse. And as your representative, I was simply not willing to cast the politically popular “no” vote while walking away from my responsibility to support the only opportunity available to me to try to minimize an economic crisis.

Many of the calls I received pertained to alternative plans that might better deal with this crisis. Almost every caller, in fact, said “something has to be done to address the troubled economy,” with most callers simply taking issue with the specific bill under consideration. Unfortunately, the Democratic majority controls the House floor and they would not consider *any* of these alternatives despite the fact that our Republican leaders tried repeatedly to make the bill more palatable.

Ultimately, I had two options: to vote “no” and take a chance that doing nothing would help a badly troubled economy, or to vote “yes” in favor of the bill on the floor. As you know, I chose the course that, in my opinion, offered the best-available hope for preventing more bank closures and further business failures that today may seem remote but tomorrow could occur even here in southwest Alabama. Already there are signs of job losses and many south Alabama families are concerned about significant losses in their retirement and college savings accounts. Let me be clear, this was not the bill I wanted, but I sincerely believe it was preferable to no action at all.

Many people also called with concerns that the bill included “pork” projects that were unrelated to the task at hand.

When I came to Congress, I pledged to *oppose* tax increases – tax increases on the middle class, tax increases on businesses, tax increases on families – and I continue to believe that Americans can use their own money more wisely than the federal government can.

We can both agree that Washington has a spending problem, and I believe that allowing current tax deductions and credits to expire is, in effect, a tax increase. Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) - with whom I have a 100% rating - is a conservative organization that believes in “simpler, fairer, flatter, more visible, and lower” taxes. ATR also recognizes that, from a fiscally conservative perspective, tax cuts – such as those included in the rescue plan - are not “earmarks” or “pork.” For example, extending the one-year patch of the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) - to prevent a \$62 billion tax increase on American families - as well as extending deductions for higher education costs and classroom expenses of teachers, are a couple of important tax cuts in the rescue plan that some have called earmarks or “pork” – they are not.

Again, I want you to know how much I appreciate all of the calls, letters, faxes and emails – on both sides of this issue - that have come to me in recent days. While there is no way to make all of the 635,000 people I represent happy on this or any other vote, I assure you I will always do my very best to do what I believe is right for our district, our state and our great country.

If my staff or I can be of assistance, I hope you won’t hesitate to give us a call. With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo Bonner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jo Bonner
Member of Congress

