

Last Thursday, as Americans were rushing to complete their federal income tax returns before the filing deadline, thousands of tea party members gathered in Washington, DC to demand the government live within its means. They held signs calling on the president and Democrat Congress to stop the out-of-control spending and to reject the president's costly tax increases.

Elsewhere throughout the country, including rallies in places like Orange Beach, Brewton, Monroeville, Fairhope and Mobile, thousands more came out to offer the same dismal assessment of the Obama Administration – and liberal Congress's – handling of our economy.

While I was unable to make it to the rallies in my district because I was voting in Washington, I did take time to voice my strong disapproval over what the majority is doing to our country with a speech on the House floor.

Sadly, the very evening thousands of Americans were up in arms over the direction our government is taking, President Obama, in a moment of political hubris, made light of these rallies, actually suggesting that the tax protestors should be thanking him for lowering their taxes.

Over the last two weeks, news reports have filtered out of Washington that aides close to the president are considering the possibility of the federal government imposing a European-style "Value Added Tax" – after the November general election – in order to pay for the administration's record deficit spending.

The passage of a VAT would have a direct impact on every single American. The VAT has been described as a kind of national sales tax. It would target consumption, taxing both the production and the sale of goods and services. With sales tax rates in many Alabama cities approaching 10 percent, it's not hard to imagine how unpopular an additional federal tax would be. But it gets worse.

According to news reports, the Obama administration is not looking to replace the current federal income tax with the VAT. Rather, they want to combine the VAT with the current income tax system. And that's not all.

President Obama has already declared that he intends to let beneficial tax relief passed in 2001 and 2003 expire. So just as income tax rates start to rise and deductions would be lowered for middle class taxpayers, the administration would also impose a national VAT on the shoulders of many struggling Americans.

The Obama White House – with no discouragement from Speaker Pelosi and her allies – is making the case for these massive tax increases as the only way to save our nation from long-term economic collapse due to unsustainable budget deficits. It's hard to swallow such rhetoric when this same administration has spent the last year doubling the budget deficit while ignoring calls for responsible spending.

The \$787 billion stimulus advanced by the White House was largely a failure and did not create the millions of new jobs it promised. Rather than addressing job creation in a meaningful way,

the administration largely ignored rising national unemployment in favor of its goal of a government remake of health care that a majority of Americans did not – and do not – support.

Since taking office, President Obama and the Democrat Congress have enacted into law tax increases totaling more than \$670 billion, including at least 14 separate tax hikes on middle class Americans, in direct contradiction to the president's previous pledge not to burden them with tax increases.

I have voted against the president's wasteful stimulus and his second stimulus, and I opposed his health care reform bill with \$570 billion in tax increases. Furthermore, I am adamantly against his plans to phase out the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts which were instrumental in job creation and helped to provide real tax relief to the middle class.

I also will vote against any effort to pass a VAT. We don't need more taxes. We need to stop this expansion of government and reign in deficit spending.

Census Questions:

Last week, I also had an opportunity to sit down with several South Alabama newspaper editors to discuss issues on their minds. One of the topics was the federal government's lackluster performance so far in properly conducting the Census count.

In communities throughout South Alabama, residents have had difficulty receiving their forms on time. I've also received calls from a number of constituents complaining about not getting their forms at all.

The deadline to turn in your Census form was April 16, 2010. Those who did not submit a form, or did not properly fill it out, will be visited by Census workers during the coming weeks.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.