pride for over 3 decades. I have seen some pretty political things happen on this floor on both sides of the aisle, but this has to be one of the most mean things that I have seen since I have been here.

The reason for that is that we are holding hostage millions of Americans that we promised early on that we were going to help. How many of my colleagues remember when we voted to give $15 billion to bail out the airline industry? How dramatically the minority leader and the Speaker got on the floor and promised that we would provide health benefits and unemployment compensation to those people who, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs and lost their health benefits. All of a sudden, this was folded into a stimulus package. We did not say that we had to pass obscene tax cuts to help these people. We said that standing alone, these were hard-working Americans that deserved help from their country during time of war and time of recession.

So each time we address this question, we have to find out how many billions of dollars of tax cuts we are prepared to absorb. What are we willing to do in order to bring these people along?

The chairman of the committee says he is going to keep doing it this way until they finally get it. Well, what is it that the other body has to get? Whether they are right, whether they are wrong, whether they are incompetent, the fact is, they have said that they have thrown up their hands in complete surrender as it relates to a stimulus package and sent over here with a unanimous vote the mere benefit of extending unemployment compensation for 13 weeks. Should they be proud of that? I think not. Should we be proud to accept that? I think not.

But worse than just going home and saying, that is all we could do is extend this, there are two things that are worse than that. One would be to do nothing. To say, because it was not enough, we in the Congress felt that we should do nothing. Because we did not provide for health benefits, we should do nothing. That would be worse.

But the second worse thing, the second painful thing is to be hypocritical enough to allow these wretched souls to believe that we are doing something to help them, knowing that this bill has been stacked to leave the House to face defeat because the Senate cannot and will not even take it up. Who knows this? Mr. Speaker, 435 Members of this House of Representatives know today that the Senate will not, and they would claim politically and parliamentarily, cannot take it up.

To give false hopes to these people is one of the meanest things that I have ever seen happen. And who are these people? Are they illegal aliens? Are they people who are not citizens? Are they threats to our national security? Are they terrorists? Are they people that get our vital patriotic juices up so that we are against them? Oh, no. These are people that work every day, that have families, rent to pay, electricity to pay, mortgage payments, tuition. These are families that are breaking up all over America because of the burden of not being able to have the dignity of having a job.

Are we doing enough for them to give them unemployment benefits? Of course not. These people do not want handouts. They want a hand up. They want a job. But just because genius minds on the Republican side decide that the best way to give them a job is to give them refunds of tax benefits that they have paid; the best way to give them jobs is to make permanent the tax system sometime in 2011; the best way to give them jobs is to come up with a new health delivery system that destroys the employer-employee relationship.

Wonderful ideas, but what about the guy and the lady that has a family, that has lost their home, that has lost their hope, that has lost their reason for being and they are waiting for us just to help out a little bit. Are we going to give them sophisticated and complex reasons why we cannot help? What a rough day to be a Member of this House.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I always enjoy my colleague's description of legislation. It is difficult to recognize it when he finishes. I find interesting the fact that we are now reduced to simply saying that 13 weeks of unemployment insurance is the proper response to a Nation in need, not just those who are currently finding themselves, through no fault of their own, unemployed, but a business sector that does create jobs looking for help.

What the gentleman from New York did not tell us was that there are provisions in this bill to provide $13.7 billion to people who do not pay income taxes and perhaps not even payroll taxes. This was a help as a stimulus to individuals who will clearly consume every dollar that they have been provided. The President supported this; we support it. It seems now our friends on the other side of the aisle have decided that is not necessarily a good idea. Oh, it may be a good idea, but it is not worth fighting for. The Senate has defined what it is that we can do. Unemployment insurance is all that we can do.

Well, I will tell my colleagues, on this side of the aisle we find that unacceptable. We provide unemployment insurance in this package in a way in which where, when States have more than 4 percent of unemployment, they do not just get the 13 weeks that the gentleman from New York is pleading for; they get 13 weeks after 13 weeks after 13 weeks, that is, a continued renewed 13 weeks if the State continues to have high unemployment. In other words, it takes unemployment insurance out of the political football category. We sent unemployment payments to the Senate in October of last year. We are now receiving their response in February. Who is at fault? We are. We can devise a system that takes unemployment insurance out of the political football business. If this is to become law, then a State in need for the rest of calendar year 2002 will automatically trigger the ability to receive 100 percent-funded Federal unemployment benefits.

But it seems to me also that the gentleman from New York failed to mention that we have what is called the ''liberty zone package'' here. The people from New York took a hit for all Americans. In this is a provision to help rebuild Lower Manhattan. I guess because the Senate said they did not want to do it, we should set that aside.

What we are really hearing from the other side is that what we ought to do is the lowest common denominator. That is not acceptable. Business needs some help, low-income individuals need some help. Those who are unemployed need some help. This package does it. Why do we not, instead of talking about how little we can do, look at this package as the appropriate response and tell the Senate what the Senate did was not good enough.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I have listened very patiently to my colleague and friend from California. What my colleague from California is urging is the old-fashioned game of chicken. Let us all play chicken with the Senate while people who are out of work do not get the 13 weeks of extended benefits. It is time for those kinds of games to stop.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN).

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

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Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, this bill has two problems. The first problem is that the majority has written a brand-new stimulus bill costing at least $150 billion over 10 years and brought it to the floor on the day that we are recessing for the President's Day holiday or work week. The Senate is, if they have not left already will be leaving soon, and so what happens is even if the House is to adopt this, the Senate is not going to take it up for at least another week and a half or longer. People who have been unemployed since last spring of 2001 are going to get nothing.

Now, we can argue over what should be in a stimulus package and what should not be in there; but the fact is we could very easily extend unemployment compensation for 13 weeks today, and it would be done for the time being until we get back. But the other side