

By Rep. Mike Pence

As Hoosiers enjoy this holiday season, we remember the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform and the brave soldiers who will spend this holiday away from home. We owe our Armed Forces a debt of gratitude we can never repay.

While many families face the holidays without their loved ones, countless Americans face their own personal struggles. The U.S. Department of Labor recently announced that the national unemployment rate remains at a heartbreaking 10 percent and 11,000 jobs were lost last month. More than 15 million Americans now stand in unemployment lines across the country.

Indiana's unemployment also has risen as more than 300,000 Hoosiers are now unemployed. Under the leadership of Gov. Mitch Daniels, our state is weathering the storm better than other states in the Midwest. Even with the greatest efforts, a state cannot reverse the trend if the federal government refuses to cooperate with wise economic policies.

In Indiana and around the country, families are asking, "When will things get better?" and "Where are the jobs?" These are important questions that deserve honest answers.

Earlier this year, President Barack Obama promised that his \$787 billion stimulus package would keep the national unemployment rate below 8 percent and the rewards of massive deficit spending would be seen "immediately." Since that time, the administration has insisted that its stimulus plan is working.

However, roughly 2.6 million American workers have lost their jobs since the president signed the stimulus bill into law. In the city and on the farm, millions of families struggle to balance their checkbooks this holiday season. The proposals being advanced in Washington to address these challenges are inadequate. Last week, the president hosted a "jobs summit" -- another meeting with the same experts who crafted the first stimulus plan. And in Congress, there are more plans to grow government and place an even greater pile of debt on the shoulders of our children.

All this talk is a tacit admission that the policies of President Obama and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi are not working. Record debt and runaway federal spending have taken our economy from bad to worse. If all this weren't bad enough, there are still plans to pass a national energy tax and a government takeover of health care.

The American people know we can't borrow and spend our way back to a growing economy. We need leadership in Washington that will help lift the burden on struggling families and unleash the innovative spirit of the American people. The way to bring America back is by helping working families keep more of their hard-earned money. House Republicans introduced an economic plan built on the pro-growth principle of tax relief for small businesses, hardworking Americans and family farmers. We also introduced comprehensive proposals to achieve energy independence and to lower health-care costs.

With many families hurting this holiday season, we must focus on what makes America great. To get this economy moving, let us work together on the time-honored principles of hard work and fiscal responsibility. With faith in God and in the American spirit, we can bring this country back and ensure that our best days are still to come.