

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence, Chairman of the House Republican Conference, delivered the following remarks today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in opposition to the Democrats' fiscal year 2010 omnibus spending bill:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report before us today and the rule that we debate at this moment. It really is astonishing at a time when American families are hurting-10 percent unemployment-now comes before Congress this massive piece of legislation. And the numbers tell the tale: 2,500 pages, nearly half a trillion dollars in spending, 5,000 earmarks on hundreds of pages.

"Now, I know that my distinguished colleague on the other side says that the number of pages is a 'so what,' and I defer to him. I don't think it's about the number of pages, I think it's about the size of this bill that will be offensive to millions of Americans.

"When you get down into the details here, Military Construction and Veterans funding gets a 7 percent increase. Commerce, Justice and Science gets an 11.6 percent. Foreign Operations, a 33 percent increase this year. Transportation, Housing and Urban Development gets a 23.5 percent increase. I feel like I ought to call for a drum roll here, Mr. Speaker. A 12.2 percent increase in spending in a single year.

"As I told the President of the United States yesterday in the Cabinet Room there's not a business in Muncie, Indiana, that's going to see a 12 percent increase in its budget this year. But here in Washington, D.C., proving just how out of touch this nation's Capitol is, with the struggles that American families and small businesses and family farmers are facing, here it is: the 12 percent increase in federal spending.

"It is not just what is in this bill; it is what is not in this bill. Gone is the ban on federal funding of abortions in the District of Columbia. Gone is the ban on legalizing marijuana in our nation's Capitol. Gone is the ban on federal funding of domestic partnership benefits. And eventually, gone is the support for the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, doing away with opportunities for a largely minority population to go to the school of their choice. And also, I might add, gone is any restriction on the use of federal funds to enforce or implement the Fairness Doctrine.

"You know, the president said to us yesterday in the Cabinet Room,that we need to get back to fiscal discipline as a means of encouraging economic growth. I told him he could do one thing this week: veto this bill. Let's have level funding. Let's tell the American people that we get it here in Washington, D.C."