

-Rep. Steve King

During his 1996 State of the Union address, President Bill Clinton commented on the future role of the federal government in America.

“We know big government does not have all the answers. We know there's not a program for every problem. We have worked to give the American people a smaller, less bureaucratic government in Washington. And we have to give the American people one that lives within its means. The era of big government is over.”

Times have certainly changed.

Thirteen years later, the era of big government is back in Washington. From bailouts to stimulus packages to massive spending bills, fiscal restraint has been tossed aside like an old shoe.

On the heels of a \$700 billion bailout for Wall Street and a \$1.1 trillion “stimulus” plan, Speaker Pelosi rammed a \$410 billion “omnibus” spending bill through the House on February 25. This bill is just the latest in out of control Washington spending, and it will increase the debt our grandchildren will be paying.

It expands the federal deficit and funds the federal government for a mere seven months. That’s over \$58.5 billion in taxpayer dollars per month.

The 1,222 page legislation is a Washington lobbyist’s dream. It is full of 8,570 earmarks, wasteful pork-barrel spending and new government regulations. A few highlights:

- \$155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, in addition to the \$50 million for the NEA received in the "stimulus" bill

- \$181 million for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation for housing counseling. ACORN has been a past recipient of such funding.

- \$3.13 billion for the 2010 Census, which recently received \$1 billion in additional "stimulus" money.

- A \$950,000 earmark for the National Council of La Raza, a pro-amnesty

organization.

The \$32 billion increase in the omnibus bill represents the largest one-year hike in annual appropriated spending percentage since the Carter administration. This bill is big government in its most bloated form.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi pushed the bill through Congress with the heaviest hand I have seen, bypassing valuable committee hearings, where the contents of the bill could have been debated and amended. She refused to allow even one vote on a single amendment.

I voted against the \$410 billion because taxpayers are tired of big-spending bills being written in the back rooms of Speaker Pelosi's office. Hard-working Iowans are tired of seeing Washington run up the deficit and spend money we do not have.

As if this liberal spending-spree is not enough, President Obama recently unveiled a budget proposal for the next 10 years, starting with fiscal year 2010, that raises taxes by \$989 billion. With the budget deficit approaching \$2 trillion, now is the time to hold the line and reduce government spending. Instead, President Obama's radical budget will usher in a new era of wealth redistribution and European-style socialism in America.

Fiscal responsibility means making tough choices today, not leaving them to future generations. Bigger government, more wasteful Washington spending, new bailouts for bad decisions and tax increases will not create good-paying jobs or stimulate the economy.

Big government may be en vogue, but right now America needs fiscal responsibility and private sector solutions. I believe positive days are ahead, but we must make the right decisions and trust the free-market system to keep America a strong and prosperous country.