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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION."



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D-Florida

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER
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TRANSCRIPT

HARRY SMITH: Today on FACE THE NATION, power shift. The new Congress, more Republicans, fewer Democrats and the President says he's ready.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: I'm willing to work with anyone of either party who's got a good idea and the commitment to see it through.

HARRY SMITH: So who will hold sway? What influence will the Tea Party have on the Republicans? And for Democrats will they be united against Republican rule, or can the two sides work together. We'll talk with House Democrats Debbie Wasserman Shultz of Florida and Anthony Weiner of New York, along with Republican Tea Party caucus leader Michele Bachman of Minnesota plus Tea Party-backed Representative-elect Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania.

Then we'll hear from Congressman Darrell Issa, the new chairman of the House committee, in charge of government investigation, about his plans.

But first, what's ahead for the new Congress on FACE THE NATION.

ANNOUNCER: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now from Washington, substituting for Bob Schieffer, Harry Smith.

HARRY SMITH: Happy New Year, everybody. Thank you all, panel, here in New-- in Washington for joining us and Michele Bachmann joins us this morning from Minneapolis. Well, the 112th Congress set to convene on Wednesday, but I want to go back a little bit and talk about the last workings of the 111th with you, Michele, and in particular that the year ended with this deal on taxes and an extension of unemployment benefits. Would that deal have been made with a Congress that's about to take convene on Wednesday?

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (R-Minnesota): Well, that's a good question. There was a diversity of opinion on this bill. I voted against it because I was concerned about it not being paid for. It also blows a one-hundred-eleven-billion-dollar hole in the Social Security trust fund. There is no money in that trust fund, so they have to go to the General Treasury where there's also no money. That means an additional borrowing for that one hundred eleven billion, in addition to the fifty-seven billion for unemployment. So we're-- we're continuing to go down the road that we've gone down before which is spending money that we don't have. And that's really, I think, one of the strongest messages that we took away from the election in November. Stop spending money that you don't have.

HARRY SMITH: Is the Republican Party in this new Congress, is it a House divided?

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: No. I really don't think it is. I think, we're very-- I think we're-- we're fairly unified, but of course, you know, we-- we won't all necessarily be agreeing on everything. But I think you see a fairly-- fairly cohesive group that we-- we have a sing-- singularity of purpose and that we want to be able to get the budget in order. I think that's really job number one, because we want to see the-- the economy shift so that we have a focus on private job creation.

HARRY SMITH: I want to go to Congressman Weiner, a couple of weeks ago we had a conversation and you told me that if the President extended a finger of bipartisanship that it

would cost him a pound of flesh. How do you see this new Congress working with-- with the President? And are Democrats all but irrelevant from now on?

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (D-New York): Well, look we-- we-- we'll see, I mean, we've already seen on this show there's disagreement among Republicans about the tax cut bill. And I think that there are going to be disagreements to come. I mean, many of them campaigned on the idea of privatizing Social Security. They campaigned on the idea of-- of making Medicare a voucher program, so seniors don't have guaranteed health care. I want to see what it is they're in favor of. And we've heard a lot about what they're against in this campaign. I don't know what they're in favor of. You know, we Democrats are-- are prepared to work with them where we can, but we're going to challenge them and fight against them where we must. It-- it is not a subject of compromise for many Democrats, privatizing Social Security. We just don't believe that's a good idea. Eliminating Medicare as a guaranteed benefit for seniors, we don't agree with. So those fights are going to happen. As far as the President's interaction, I think, he's going to find out that bipartisanship has to be a means. It's not an end. And that if just having a bipartisan deal means success that's not right, it has to reflect the values of this country and the constituents that I represent.

HARRY SMITH: Mike Kelly, you're the new guy, you're going to you're your oath on-- on Wednesday. You've been around this town for a couple of weeks now. There was a piece in Washington Post. You said you're not impressed so far. What-- what do you hope to accomplish when you take office for--

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY (R-Pennsylvania; overlapping): Well--

HARRY SMITH: --for real--

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY (overlapping): Yes.

HARRY SMITH: --on Wednesday.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Well, I-- I-- I think really when-- when you talk about, are you impressed, or are you not impressed? I-- I-- I don't think for an average guy, a common guy, who comes from a private-- private sector, running something four-- fourteen trillion dollars in the red is not impressive. If you run fourteen trillion in the black, then I'm impressed. What I'm looking for and in bipartisan and I-- and I agree with Anthony what he talks about, sure, it is good to be bipartisan but on good legislation not on-- not on things just to say we did something in a bipartisan manner, just to show that we can-- we can agree is not good, unless it was on something that was good for the whole country. So I'm looking to really go to work and work very hard. I've worked hard all my life. And I've done it with my own money. I've had my own skin in the game. So I'm kind of interested to seeing when you get in a situation where really it's not your money. You can spend anything you want, just fill the charge card out, in fact, keep raising the debt ceiling as much as you want because you don't have to worry about paying it back.

HARRY SMITH: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: It-- it's hard for me to sit and-- and think that that's all right to do to the American people.

HARRY SMITH: We'll ask about the debt ceiling in just a couple of seconds.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY (overlapping): Sure.

HARRY SMITH: Because that is going to be a-- a huge and important vote, but I want to talk to Debbie Wasserman Shultz about this whole idea of bipartisanship. Is this going to be a situation where Congress gets together and does the people's good, or is this a recipe for gridlock?

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (D-Florida): Well, that remains to be seen. I mean what Democrats will do now that we're in the minority in the House but remain in the majority in the Senate and hold the White House, is measure everything that the Republicans propose by whether it creates jobs, turns the economy around and cuts the deficit. And what is going-- what remains to be seen is whether members like Mike Kelly are going to be able to turn their essentially campaign rhetoric into some kind of reality because-- with all due respect to his-- to his response, there-- there isn't any there-there. I mean, we haven't heard any concrete proposals.

HARRY SMITH: Hm.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Now Anthony is absolutely right. We-- we've only heard attacks on what they don't like.

HARRY SMITH: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: We've got to make sure that we continue the progress and the prosperity that we've been moving forward towards. I mean, the S&P finished the year, well, you-- up eighty-- eighty-six percent.

HARRY SMITH: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: The Dow up sixteen percent. We've increased manufacturing exponentially. And we-- we're beginning to, you know, aggressively turn that economy around. Let's hope they don't squander that.

HARRY SMITH: So here's a question for everybody. Government is funded basically till about March or so. There will be a vote eventually on raising the debt ceiling. Will you vote to raise the debt ceiling?

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Well-- I-- I'm going to wait and see where-- the direction that the Republicans want to take-- take ours-- our policies.

HARRY SMITH: Mm-Hm. Congressman Weiner.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: I-- I voted against this tax cut bill because I thought it blew a hole in-- in the budget. And I think the Republicans have come in saying that they're going to not raise the debt ceiling and they are going to allow the full faith and credit of the American people, go down the tubes. It's their ship to run now. That's the responsibility. This is-- this is their-- the-- you know, this is an adult game now.

HARRY SMITH (overlapping): Yeah. All right.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: And-- and-- and the risk--

HARRY SMITH (overlapping): All right.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --of--

HARRY SMITH (overlapping): Let me go to Mike Kelly. Mike Kelly, this is one-- it's going to be one of the big votes--

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Sure.

HARRY SMITH: --and you-- you risk having the government come to a standstill.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Well, you know, speaking as an adult who has always paid his own way I do understand what happens and raising the debt ceiling to me is absolutely irresponsible. We've been spending money for so long that we don't have and keep saying, "Well, it's okay, we'll just raise taxes and we will find it somewhere."

HARRY SMITH: All right.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Tax revenue comes from people who are working, people who are profitable does not come from raising--

HARRY SMITH: All right.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: --tax rates.

HARRY SMITH: Michele Bachman.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: I-- I-- at this point, I am not in favor of raising the debt ceiling. As a matter of fact, I have a petition that I'm urging people to sign at michelebach.com to urge their member of Congress not to raise the debt ceiling, because the Congress has had a big party the last two years. They couldn't spend enough money. And now they're standing back folding their arms saying, "Oh," taunting us to, "if you're how are you going to go ahead and solve this big spending crisis?" Well--

HARRY SMITH (overlapping): So-- so, you're willing to risk seeing the government shut down?

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): --it was fine when they had the credit card and they were spending the money.

HARRY SMITH (overlapping): So, you're willing that-- it's worth the risk?

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): Well, it's- it's not good for anyone to shut the government down. It's not good for anyone.

(Harry Smith laughing)

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: That's why I think it's important for the Democrats who are so willing to spend money to now be a part of trying to figure out how we can be responsible.

(Cross talking)

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: So you want-- you want to be in charge until you're actually in charge. Now you're not so much of feeling responsibility.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: One-- one of the first things--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): We-- we weren't for the spending.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --one of the first things-- excuse me, one of the first things that-- that we're going to do is vote to pass the Republican proposed rules package and-- and talking about the debt ceiling, they-- their proposed rules and Mike you talked about in your campaign, the importance of one vote. I-- I want to see whether you're going to vote for that rules package that gives Paul Ryan the authority to set the-- set the budget limits himself. Taking away your vote that you talked about that was so precious. And taking the right of all of us in the House of Representatives of having one member set the budget ceiling--

HARRY SMITH: Mm-Hm.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --for the entire country is absolutely irresponsible and undemocratic.

HARRY SMITH: Go ahead.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Well, you know, this-- this is what America loves. This is what America loves. Both sides pointing the finger at the other saying, no, it's your fault. No, it's your fault.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (overlapping): It's not about fault.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY (overlapping): I got to tell you something.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (overlapping): What are you going do?

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY (overlapping): When we talk about, we talk about having adult conversations and we really have to start acting like adults. We've got a huge problem sitting in front of us right now and it's very amusing to walk-- to walk through this. I got to tell you, for being on the outside all my life, I don't know how in the world you folks go home and look these people in the eye and say we've done a great job. We've done a great job. Your country is fourteen trillion dollars in the red.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (overlapping): Well, you've got the opportunity now.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (overlapping): Hold-- hold on a second, first--

(Cross-talking)

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (overlapping): --let me-- let me say something to Congressman Kelly here. First of all, the "you folks" stuff, now you are one of those folks.

(Harry Smith laughing)

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: And it is your job in the majority party to govern.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Yes. Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: And the first thing the Republicans did when they took back the House the last time is they drove the government to a shutdown. And I guess from-- from what I've heard Michele saying, you say that's what's going to happen again.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (overlapping): It's where we're headed.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: But all that "you stuff--"

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): That's not at all Anthony. You got it all wrong.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --that has to end today.

(Cross-talking)

HARRY SMITH: Okay. Hey, Michele--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN You got it exactly wrong. That is not what we're looking to do and you're stating it falsely. We are not looking to shut the government down. No one benefits.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (overlapping): Well, that's the direction that we seem to--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): But at the same time we're not looking at wanting to continually raise the debt ceiling.

HARRY SMITH (overlapping): Okay. Well, it's--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): That's something that the Democrats have wanted to--

HARRY SMITH (overlapping): --at that point becomes it becomes one or the other.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: I don't know what you call it Michele, but that's shutting down the government.

(Cross-talking)

HARRY SMITH: Michele, let me ask you this because one of the things that Tea Party has talked about is dismantling health care and we're wondering if in the end of the day that ends up being a fool's errand, because no matter how many votes you amass in the House and even if you could get the votes in the Senate, it will face a certain veto. Is it worth the effort to try to do?

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: Of course, it is. Because Obamacare will bankrupt the country and so the-- you've seen that the more the people learn about Obamacare the less they like it. It's very costly, it's unwieldy. So we will put forth a clean repeal bill of Obamacare and you'll continue to see us make that fight because that's what the American people want us to do. They want-- the-- the real problem in health care is the cost drivers. Obamacare is actually raising the cost drivers. We want to adopt a free market approach to health care and you'll see us put those free market solutions forward.

HARRY SMITH: Even Democrats realize that the deficit is almost-- it's-- it's out of control. It's beyond reach. It's this weight that is hanging--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: Even Democrats. We-- we--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: The deficit was-- let's remember the deficit was exploded by Republicans. President Bush inherited a record surplus and turned it--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (overlapping): Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: --into a record deficit. So it-- it-- two wars unpaid for, a prescription drug plan unpaid for, tax cuts unpaid for, so the deficit that we found ourselves in was thanks to the Republicans.

HARRY SMITH: Is it addressable?

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: Well, it-- it is-- it is--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): Har-- Harry, if I could just add there is no--

HARRY SMITH: Hang on one second. Hang on one second.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): --there is no equivalency.

HARRY SMITH: Go ahead.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: Well, I-- I-- I think that it-- it has to be and I think that there is a lot of room for bipartisan work. I mean Time magazine without much sweat came up with a hundred billion dollars of corporate welfare that they-- they identified. I think we can find cuts. I'm-- I've been working with Jason Chafe of-- of Utah. We-- we've found cuts that we think but there's no doubt about it though. Some of the big things are philosophical questions. The Republicans have philosophically said they don't believe in the guaranteed social security benefit. They don't believe in a guaranteed Medicare benefit. We know that because--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): You know, Harry--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (overlapping): --because they--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): --Harry, Harry, Anthony continues to make these statements.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (overlapping): And Michele you voted that for the Republican alternative last year.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): And it's very important.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (overlapping): And I'm sorry.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): It's very important to remember--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER (overlapping): Have you met the young guns, Michele?

HARRY SMITH: All right. Hang-- hang out-- hang one second--

(Cross talking)

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: Harry-- Harry, since President Obama came into office, we've had over three trillion dollars in deficit. We're looking at another one trillion dollars in deficit. Let's try to just get our arms around that reality.

HARRY SMITH: All right. All right.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (overlapping): If we can go back to health care reform.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: This is massive.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --reform for one second, because Saturday the-- the health care reform piece that was implemented was we cut prescription drug bills--

HARRY SMITH: Mm-Hm.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --for senior citizens by fifty percent. We're going to make-- we-- we have already made sure that young adults until they're twenty-six can be on their parents insurance. A-- a constituent in my district came up to me a few weeks ago and thanked me for saving her three thousand dollars a year, because she can put her two adult children back on that-- back-- back on her insurance. That's what the Republicans are going to be-- are going to be proposing to repeal this way it's not going to happen, if it about jobs in the economy and reducing the deficit, wasting time and money and adding to the deficit--

HARRY SMITH: All right.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --by repealing health care reform on the attempt is irresponsible.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): Harry-- Harry, if I can--

HARRY SMITH: Hang on Michele-- hang on we are going to get Mike-- Mike back in here once again. Mike, you've already taken a look at this, you're not going to take the government-sponsored health care program that is available to members of Congress, right?

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: No I'm not. I'm not. I-- I've always paid for my own health care, I mean, you know, I-- I come from a private-- private sector, okay. I've been-- in my whole life I've been responsible for everything that I do. And I think we've these conversations and I think this absolutely goes back to the Middle Ages, we're worrying about how many angels we can fit in the head of a pin. We got to start look at these things. There is a cost with everything involved. My early time here in this-- in this city is so different than where I come from, because I live in a real world where people actually have to use their own money to pay for things. So this idea that you can keep doing this or doing that and I love this fact that we are going to pay for it, we are not paying for anything. Not we in Washington, the people-- the American taxpayer pays for everything and that's bothers me, there's such a disconnect between this town--

HARRY SMITH: Mm-Hm.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: --and the rest of the world.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: This real world stuff is going to get old really fast. This is now your job-- this is a serious business here--

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY (overlapping): Yeah, you know what? I understand that.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --This is a serious business you're trying to figure out how you solve big problems. You-- yes, it's true--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: Oh.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --Social Security--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: Harry--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --does have to be paid for--

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: All right.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --Medicare does have to be paid for.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY (overlapping): You know-- you know let—let me--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: But this idea like the real world--

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Yeah, you're very amusing.

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --these are tough problems.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: --you're very amusing. You-- you have never-- in your life, you have never done anything on your own with your own skin in the game. And I got to tell you something, while I respect the fact that you're an elected Congressman, I do not respect the fact that--

ANTHONY WEINER: What do you mean I am. We're--

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Yeah, well, we're-- I get--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --you're-- you're part of this now.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: --sworn on the fifth. I'll become part of it on the fifth, but I would tell you something. This has got to stop being about who can blame who for what. Look--

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: --you're sounding like you just said that.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: --this has been

(Cross-talking)

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: It sure sounded like you said us versus them.

(Cross-talking)

HARRY SMITH: Hang on. Gentlemen-- gentlemen hang on.

(Cross-talking)

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: I would hope you have more respect for your constituents.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Harry.

HARRY SMITH: Folks, hang on-- hang on.

(Cross-talking)

HARRY SMITH: All right. All right.

(Cross-talking)

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: My testimony on-- it's time to go beyond rhetoric.

HARRY SMITH: All right.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: Harry-- Harry.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Going beyond campaign slogans which is all I've heard today--

HARRY SMITH: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --from-- from Mister Kelly--

HARRY SMITH: All right Miss--

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --and is all Miss-- Miss Bachmann really ever engages in. It-- we have to get into deficit reduction, job creation--

HARRY SMITH: Which she--

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --and turning the economy around--

HARRY SMITH: Which all-- all-- which everybody would agree with.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --that's their measuring stick--

HARRY SMITH: All right.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: --that's their yardstick.

HARRY SMITH: Michele Bachmann--very, very quickly. Do you see--

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN (overlapping): Thank you, Harry.

HARRY SMITH: --anything that you have in common with your folk-- with your friends from the other side of the aisle?

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: I-- I would say if they want to engage in deficit reduction, that's exactly what we want to engage in is deficit reduction but it's so interesting, Harry, for two years these were big wild party down spenders and now they're interested in deficit reduction. That's what we'll do because I'm similar to Mike Kelly.

HARRY SMITH: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: My husband and I also started our own business. We also live in the real world. The real world is where America lives. It's not the bubble in Washington, DC, where they engage in--

(Cross-talking)

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: --what you'll see happen is--

HARRY SMITH: --I will give-- I will give Congresswoman Wasserman Schultz the last word.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: --emphasis on personal responsibility.

HARRY SMITH: Go ahead very quickly.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Thank you. We went from bleeding seven hundred fifty thousand jobs a month before President Obama took office to last year adding over a million more jobs created in-- in last year than the entire Bush presidency alone. We need to continue that progress. We need to hold the Republicans' feet to the fire and we will.

HARRY SMITH: And if the last fifteen minutes were any indication, it will be a very Happy New Year.

(Cross-talking)

REPRESENTATIVE ANTHONY WEINER: Happy New Year.

REPRESENTATIVE-ELECT MIKE KELLY: Happy New Year.

HARRY SMITH: Thank you all very, very much.

(Cross-talking)

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Mike, looking forward to work with you.

HARRY SMITH: Oh, that's-- that's what we want to see.

(Cross-talking)

HARRY SMITH: Thank you all very much.

REPRESENTATIVE MICHELE BACHMANN: Thank you, Harry.

HARRY SMITH: Congressman Darrell Issa when we come back.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

HARRY SMITH: We're back with the new chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Darrell Issa. Congressman, good morning.

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA (R-California/House Oversight and Government Reform Committee): Good morning, Harry.

HARRY SMITH: Some of your supporters can't wait for you to get to work. Your detractors say this guy is a gadfly with subpoena powers. I'm going to go back to something you told Rush Limbaugh not so long ago that you thought President Obama is one of the most corrupt presidents in modern-- in modern history--

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA (overlapping): --but you know, I walked-- I walked--

HARRY SMITH: --a-- a statement that you walked back from.

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: I walked back very quickly and said--

HARRY SMITH: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: --it's about the money the administration has had in a loose fashion. It's more about Congress's mistake in funding.

HARRY SMITH: Okay because-- because my question was do you think the Obama administration is corrupt?

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: Time and time again what we've seen with the Obama administration is they played fast and loose with the walking around money Congress gave them. When we saw the Joe Sestak situation, what we found was yes, that's wrong. Arlen Specter and others said it was illegal. We also found that the Bush administration admitted doing the same thing. This is what usually happens when our committee does its job is we find out that there's business as usual, whether it's in the White House or in the bureaucracy, that won't get changed unless we shed light on it and on a bipartisan basis hopefully and in the past it has been looked for those kinds of change. Ed Towns and I have done a lot of work toward that kind of change.

HARRY SMITH: Wednesday morning, you take over this job. You've had months to think about it. What is the absolute top priority? What's the number one thing on your list?

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: The number one thing for all of us as Republicans is jobs and the economy, but also the confidence in government. If we can, as Speaker-elect Boehner has done, said, look, we're lopping off five percent off of our budgets--

HARRY SMITH: Your own personal budgets?

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: Our-- our own personal budget and my committee budget--

HARRY SMITH: Mm-Hm.

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: --we can lop off five percent of government through simply saying find a way to live within that budget. We can save hundred and twenty-five billion in simply not giving out money to Medicare recipients that don't exist for procedures that didn't happen. These are real dollars. Ten percent of the deficit goes out in wasted money, money that doesn't get one percent healthcare in Medicare. We also have 1.75 estimated, 1.75 trillion dollars worth of excess regulation cost to our businesses. Imagine if we could take even a third or a half of that, a trillion dollars, off of the cost of doing business in America, how many jobs would come to America? My committee has to work on all those.

HARRY SMITH: Ah, you know, what's interesting what is real regulation for some would be excess regulation for others. And among the things that are being talked about is the Environmental Protection Agency and its powers. Cap and trade is dead as far as a legislative issue is concerned. Do you feel like the EPA has too much power and that it's wielding in it a way that ends up achieving the goals of cap and trade?

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: Harry, government has to give predictability. It's why regulations have to flow from the intent of the legislation and it has to be done over time with public hearings, comments, and buy-in. One of our problems, President Obama recently said that he had learned that there's no such thing as shovel ready. Well, during the FDR administration when the WPA programs and other work programs went into place shovel ready meant you made a decision today and within a week or two you began working on a project. America has to get EPA, OSHA, Fish and Wildlife, all these agencies have to get to where you can decide to do something worthwhile, get through the process to make sure it's done right and do it in a short period of time, a year, not ten years.

HARRY SMITH: Hm. The mandate it seems to me of especially the new Republicans who've been sent-- sent to Congress is to shrink the deficit, shrink government, save money. With oversight, how much money do you think you can save tax payers, say over the next two years?

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: I'm looking at about two hundred billion. As the amount that we can either identify and eliminate the waste or at least begin the process and I'll give you one that's pretty easy. It's been in the papers. In the last days of last congress they funded five hundred million dollars for a rocket program at NASA that's already been shut down. That can't be too hard to undo. But five hundred million here, five hundred million there. That's a billion, a hundred and twenty-five billion in Medicare. Earl Devaney who's headed up the stimulus, he's the chairman over there, has done some innovative work to show us how we can find a lot of that fraud and shut it off. No, don't worry about going after somebody eighteen months later--

HARRY SMITH: Mm-Hm.

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: --make sure the money doesn't go out. That's real savings.

HARRY SMITH: Yeah. It's interesting though because in the conversation that we had earlier with all-- with the other-- other members of Congress and soon to be member of congress, talking about cutting deficits and everything else, entitlements still sit out there and that really is the monkey on the American tax payers' back. And as Everett Dirksen said, "a mill-- billion there, billion there and after a while you're talking about real money." We're talking about trillions of dollars. Will this new Congress really be able to even address any of that?

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: Well, you didn't see it here in the last panel. You didn't see the willingness to take the two big issues on. Anthony Weiner started saying that Republicans don't want to protect Social Security and Medicare. Look, when Medicare Part D was put into place, the first thing we did was means test it. We said look, we're going to do this prescription drug but only for those who can't afford to do it for themselves and if you can afford, we're going to phase out some of the benefits. That's not popular, it's not easy, but it's got to be on the table. Social Security, some people say, is an easy one to solve because it's money in, money out but the money doesn't balance. We've got to decide--

HARRY SMITH: Baby boomers start collecting on January 1st.

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: Right. And-- and look my wife is a baby boomer and she's now going to be collecting. And I'll be collecting at sixty-seven. I'm a couple of years younger. The fact though is that we have to figure out a way either to have more money in or less money out--very simple. Medicare though-- and we saw this with Obama's health care proposals and the ultimate bill that was passed. Medicare's more complicated. It's rising faster than inflation. There are no cost controls on it. We need to make those changes in addition to getting rid of hundred and twenty-five billion of fraud that goes out every year.

HARRY SMITH: Darrell Issa, thanks very much for being here this morning.

REPRESENTATIVE DARRELL ISSA: Thanks, Harry.

HARRY SMITH: I do appreciate it. We'll be back in a moment.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

HARRY SMITH: That's it for us today. Bob Schieffer will be back next week and we're certain he'll have a big smile on his face because of TCU's big win in the Rose Bowl yesterday. Thanks for watching FACE THE NATION.

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