

group of now over 20 esteemed colleagues have now joined me in my efforts.

Americans should be granted more than the absolute minimum 60 days allowed by law. The special interest groups had several years to craft this new mandate—the people need more than 2 months to respond. The special interest groups exploit the disparity to tread on the will of the people. This bill seeks to rectify that disparity and to protect the best interests of the people.

All the elements for a comment extension are present. Nearly all American families are directly and substantially affected, the inclinations and desires of the people are thwarted, the cost increase of the mandate is high—more than doubling costs in some cases, and a last minute rush for “Midnight Regulation” is being pursued by the administration.

Apart from the higher cost and reduced freedom of choice, the Administration has not been fair to consumers and taxpayers during the development of the standards. DOE is supposed to disclose potential standards and impact analyses in a public process. Instead it bases its regulatory decisions on proposals submitted by special interest groups meeting in backrooms. Persons and groups who normally would speak to—and defend—the interests of consumers and taxpayers, and who have in years past been invited to participate, have been excluded.

Congress must assure that consumers are protected against faulty administration regulations. A public comment period of 120 days is required, given that the public has been largely excluded from the entire rulemaking process. This additional time will allow a thorough review and evaluation and a proper determination that has the consumers best interests in mind. I urge all Members to join me and fight to stop the erosion of the free marketplace and to prevent the elimination of consumer choice.

THE WORK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IS NOT DONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, this is the latest a Congress has met, absent a national emergency like World War II before an election. Now the work is not done. We do not yet have a fiscal year 2001 budget and the fiscal year began on October 1, which means that many essential government functions have yet to receive regular funding.

In an effort to achieve that, furious negotiations took place over the weekend. In fact, at 1:20 in the morning, night, agreement was reached between the Republicans in the House and the Senate, and the Democrats in the House and the Senate, and the White House.

There has been much talk on the other side of the aisle about the fact that the President was not in the room. They are right, the President was not in the room. They had 210 items in disagreement. This was grinding work for legislators and staff, but the President did something that the Republican

leadership did not do. The President empowered and sent his head of office of management and budget and gave him the authority to negotiate and said I will stand behind you. Go get the best deal you can get.

At 1:20 in the morning the people in the room decided they had the best deal they could get. Now, the next morning, the President stood behind his negotiator. The Republicans in the Senate stood behind their negotiator. The Democrats on the Senate stood behind their negotiator. The Democrats in the House stood behind their negotiator, but the whole agreement was blown up and Congress is still here because of one group, the Republican leadership.

When their negotiator came in who they had thought, he thought they had, empowered to negotiate for them, they said you did what? You did what? You reached an agreement on workplace health and safety? Do you not know that the people who are paying for our elections, paying for us to keep the House of Representatives and win the Presidency object to that. And the phone has been ringing off the hook. They already heard about it.

The National Association of Manufacturers called. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce called. By God we would not even want to have contingent, contingent workplace health and safety regulations, which is what the agreement was. Everybody says we do not know who the President is going to be, and what the Republicans negotiated was we will have new workplace health and safety regulations, but they will not go into effect until next June.

Apparently, the Republican leadership who is touting they are leading in the polls for the House and for the Presidency does not even trust their candidate for President not to sign these reasonable workplace health and safety regulations come next June, because they blew up the negotiations.

Since then they have pretended, by keeping us here, that we are negotiating. We are not negotiating. In fact, the Republican who last night, the leader who stood up to engage in the discourse with the Democrat side of the aisle, when he was asked where and when will the negotiators next meet, he said, we will get back to you on that. Well, guess what? They have not called. They have not called.

The Senate left town in disgust, Democrats and Republicans alike. We are still here, and they are pretending that they are being reasonable in negotiating, because they are trying through a stealth agenda to hide what they are going to do if they control everything next year, and that is something people need to think about is what if they control everything. Workplace health and safety increases out the window. Deal with global warming, very serious problem, no way. They do not believe in it.

How about the oil companies? The oil companies are gouging the heck out of

the American people. I have introduced legislation here to deal with that problem. No, cannot deal with the oil companies. They are big contributors too.

We heard earlier about a Medicare prescription drug benefit. Well, that was pretty inaccurate, because actually what the so-called bipartisan agreement which had about a dozen Democrats on it, Blue Dogs, that passed here was not on Medicare. It was to set up a new, very expensive, privatized system of pharmaceutical coverage for seniors that provided actually nothing. Because the head of the Health Insurance Industry of America said, well, you know, we are really not interested. None of my companies are interested in offering a pharmaceutical benefit only.

Then the Republicans came up with a new plan, we will bribe you to do that. We will give subsidies to you. We will give you the subsidies. You get the subsidies, you take them, no matter what, if you say you will offer a plan, with no conditions on the plans they will offer, no conditions on deductibles, no conditions on who they would redline out and not cover, no conditions on patients' appeals or rights.

They said that is not enough, some of those drugs are pretty expensive. They said well, we do not want to get in the face of the pharmaceutical industry, then they give subsidies to the pharmaceutical industry also. This is a farce.

REFUTING STATEMENTS REGARDING LACK OF PROGRESS OF THE 106TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am here in Washington, D.C. representing the constituents of the 16th district in Florida, and I have heard a lot of conversation tonight about the lack of progress of this Congress. I must refute those statements vehemently and personally.

I came to Congress in 1994 with a freshman class of the 104th Congress. What we inherited at that time was 40 years of Democratic leadership which brought us to record deficits, annual deficits, huge amount of monies owed, the U.S. Treasury or the taxpayers, \$5.7 trillion of accumulated debt, a government that was spending money out of Social Security, Medicare and every other trust fund that they could find, and borrowing money out of Social Security in order to camouflage the real size of the deficit annually.

When we were elected, we were told that we could expect, if we allowed the President and the majority party at that time to continue their spending ways, we would be probably this year spending in excess of \$200 billion or \$300 billion over and above what came in in revenues.

Interestingly, 6 years later, as I am about to celebrate my sixth anniversary of being elected to this important

and fine office, we have a balanced budget. We have welfare reform. We have reduced capital gains, which has led to the largest expansion on Wall Street and more income made by Americans in the equity markets than in our history.

We have increased Medicare funding, and we have created a lockbox hopefully for Social Security. We have passed a marriage penalty elimination, but the President vetoed it. We passed estate tax relief, but the President vetoed it. We passed a repeal of a phone tax, but the President vetoed it.

Mr. Speaker, we have restored military funding that was cut by this administration year after year. The White House sent us budgets that were inadequate for our military, and the Republican majority had to step up and make certain that our men and women in uniform were not only properly funded, trained, but that the personnel support that they need, the transportation support that they needed would, in fact, be there in a time of crisis.

People say we are just sitting around doing nothing. I think when you have a fight over real issues, then it is worth staying. We can go back to the ways of yesterday and spend, spend, spend to our heart's content and not care about the voters, because after all it is all about Members of Congress. I have to get elected, so I have to bribe my constituents in order to make sure they vote for me. So they spend money just willy nilly out of the pockets.

It is not theirs to pay, it just comes in the form of borrowed notes; and we fund the government excessively. We are here today over a few very, very minor issues. Yes, it was stated the President is away. He is in California.

There are other Members of their side of the aisle away campaigning, because, after all, control of Congress is more important than doing the people's work, being in charge somehow around here is more important than accomplishment. I always heard from my parents put people before your politics, make certain you take care of those who cannot take care of themselves.

As a Member of Congress, I voted for Head Start and a number of programs that the minority side has asked for. But at the same time, I recognize we have to have some fiscal restraint.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG), the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, bent over backwards to give the President and the White House and the minority side as much money as we possibly could find in order to make certain that their needs were met. But in the waning hours, it just was not enough, because it was more about shutting this place down, about causing gridlock, about trying to pretend that somehow nothing has been accomplished in this Congress.

Campaign finance reform, we passed in the House. Patients' bill of rights, we passed in this House. I mentioned the tax cuts previously, so there is a

record of accomplishment. People do not raise their voices.

People do not need to belly ache and browbeat. People need to come together and solve the problems that face America. That is why we were elected. We were elected to make certain, yes, in a partisan sense as a Republican, to represent the core elements of what my party is all about. The gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), who will speak in a moment, and I veer off from time to time on our party for a number of issues, because we believe we have to represent our districts, mine in Florida, his in California. We care enough about our constituents to say we will do what is right, not what is political.

The last 48, 72 hours, I have heard nothing but bellyaching from the other side of the aisle that has made me nauseous. It is not about doing something for people. It is about winning an election. It is about trying to gain power for the sheer sake of having power. It is about being called chairman. That is not what this process is about; that will be decided November 7, and God bless America, it will be decided by people who pay taxes, who vote in this country, who make a difference, and who send us the money we spend here.

Let us stop the acrimony. Let us stop the nonsense and let us stop the partisanship from that side of the aisle and recognize there has been a number of good accomplishments by the 106th Congress.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important this evening to be able to set the RECORD straight. I am glad that my colleagues were able to individually really focus us on why we are here. I am here; but, frankly, I will be in my district tomorrow, because the real solution to this problem presented itself on late Monday evening, Sunday night, Monday day of last week, when there was a real agreement that would have brought us to the conclusion of this session.

It is interesting that over the course of debate that we have heard this evening, we have heard someone talk about taxes in upstate New York, not relevant to the American people, dealing with bringing closure to the appropriations process and ensuring that the government can run.

We saw some Members of this House present a map to talk about where the President of the United States, the commander in chief is and other Members of this House, none of that relevant. It has nothing to do with the negotiations process. All of this is dilatory tactics led by the Republican majority to press their points.

One of the leaders of the Republican majority said we are not going to let them go home because they will spend

the weekend demagoguing and talking about trying to take back the House when we know that they will not. Those are not words from Democrats, those are Republican words.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I would like us to resolve this. Let me tell you why. Rushing to the airport today to get back for one vote, of course, I thought the Everglades vote would be on the floor tonight, but unfortunately, it is not. I support it and would have looked forward to voting for it and will vote in the RECORD when I return, if I am so elected, that I would have supported it, but on rushing to the airport, I stopped by a senior citizen center and spoke to senior citizens. I am sorry I did not have more time, but, obviously, I had to get back to Washington for important deliberations of which I hoped that I would have been able to participate in and to secure a vote for the future of our great Nation.

I told those senior citizens that we were still trying to work on answering the question why health maintenance organizations, insurance companies, HMOs were closing up in cities and States across the Nation.

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I did not have much time to talk to those seniors, some of them with a number of ailments, some of them confused about why their HMOs closed. But on that very note, they applauded. They wished me well. They said, we know you have to get back to the airport.

That is what we are fighting for, a distinction between giving \$34 billion to HMOs versus giving monies to hospitals in rural and urban centers to keep their doors open, and giving the \$34 billion to HMOs with no accountability whatsoever.

What that means is that we can give them the money to recoup what they say are their losses; but the minute they receive their paycheck, they can immediately close up in Iowa City; Detroit, Michigan; Houston, Texas; New York, New York; Atlanta, Georgia, and leave seniors in a lurch. This is what this debate is about.

So the Republican majority can get up and talk all day about work, work, work. I will not be here. I will be in my district tomorrow, because there is no work. Frankly, I believe if we had work, we would have had the Labor-HHS bill, just as we have heard our colleagues say, the negotiators, negotiated the resolve of this bill.

They had an agreement on education funding. They had an agreement dealing with school construction. They had an agreement on Medicare. But, yet, the special interests took control. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and others said we cannot deal with those workplace safety rules. Frankly, I also spoke to my constituents about that.

We use these large terms, "workplace safety." Do my colleagues know what we are fighting about? How many of us have had the carpal tunnel syndrome,