

Now, how is that a level playing field? The simple answer is it is not a level playing field, and the unfortunate result of provisions like this would be the loss of even more United States jobs.

Mr. Speaker, poorly negotiated trade deals with Panama are one of the main reasons our country finds its production base shriveling, our unemployment rolls rising, and our economy in shambles.

Passing this agreement is bad for America, especially at this perilous economic time, and I would encourage this administration to rethink its position before it asks Congress to approve this Panamanian trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, with that, before I close, I do want to ask God to continue to bless our men and women in uniform in Afghanistan and Iraq. I want to ask God to please bless the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I close by asking God to give wisdom and strength to the President of the United States. And I ask God to continue to bless America.

□ 1515

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CURRENT CONDITIONS OR JUST A BAD DREAM

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

Mr. PAUL. Could it all be a bad dream, or a nightmare? Is it my imagination, or have we lost our minds? It's surreal; it's just not believable. A grand absurdity; a great deception, a delusion of momentous proportions; based on preposterous notions; and on ideas whose time should never have come; simplicity grossly distorted and complicated; insanity passed off as logic; grandiose schemes built on falsehoods with the morality of Ponzi and Madoff; evil described as virtue; ignorance pawned off as wisdom; destruction and impoverishment in the name of humanitarianism; violence, the tool of change; preventive wars used as the road to peace; tolerance delivered by government guns; reactionary views in the guise of progress; an empire replacing the Republic; slavery sold as liberty; excellence and virtue traded for

mediocracy; socialism to save capitalism; a government out of control, unrestrained by the Constitution, the rule of law, or morality; bickering over petty politics as we collapse into chaos; the philosophy that destroys us is not even defined.

We have broken from reality—a psychotic Nation. Ignorance with a pretense of knowledge replacing wisdom. Money does not grow on trees, nor does prosperity come from a government printing press or escalating deficits.

We're now in the midst of unlimited spending of the people's money, exorbitant taxation, deficits of trillions of dollars—spent on a failed welfare/warfare state; an epidemic of cronyism; unlimited supplies of paper money equated with wealth.

A central bank that deliberately destroys the value of the currency in secrecy, without restraint, without nary a whimper. Yet, cheered on by the pseudo-capitalists of Wall Street, the military industrial complex, and Detroit.

We police our world empire with troops on 700 bases and in 130 countries around the world. A dangerous war now spreads throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. Thousands of innocent people being killed, as we become known as the torturers of the 21st century.

We assume that by keeping the already-known torture pictures from the public's eye, we will be remembered only as a generous and good people. If our enemies want to attack us only because we are free and rich, proof of torture would be irrelevant.

The sad part of all this is that we have forgotten what made America great, good, and prosperous. We need to quickly refresh our memories and once again reinvigorate our love, understanding, and confidence in liberty. The status quo cannot be maintained, considering the current conditions. Violence and lost liberty will result without some revolutionary thinking.

We must escape from the madness of crowds now gathering. The good news is the reversal is achievable through peaceful and intellectual means and, fortunately, the number of those who care are growing exponentially.

Of course, it could all be a bad dream, a nightmare, and that I'm seriously mistaken, overreacting, and that my worries are unfounded. I hope so. But just in case, we ought to prepare ourselves for revolutionary changes in the not-too-distant future.

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

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SECRET BALLOT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. The secret ballot is fundamental to free and fair elections—and they're the hallmark of the democratic process. Most every time Americans go to the polls to vote, they do so by the means of a secret ballot. Secret ballots protect the voter's privacy and allow the individual to vote his or her conscience without fear of reprisal from those who disagree with the voter's decision.

As a Nation, we celebrate when the citizens of other countries who were previously denied to vote in free and fair elections are finally able to do so. We watched with pride several years ago as Iraqis braved terrorist threats to cast their vote by secret ballot.

Mr. Speaker, if the secret ballot is used by Americans in local, State, and Federal elections, if the secret ballot is used by citizens of other nations for which American soldiers have sacrificed, don't American workers also deserve this fundamental right?

If you can ask Kansans, they will say, Yes, workers do deserve the right to a secret ballot election. A recent poll found that 65 percent of Kansans surveyed believe that the secret ballot should remain in use for union organizing.

Yet, despite the centrality of the secret ballot to our conception of fairness and public support for its use, many in Congress are pushing for the passage of legislation that would do away with this longstanding principle. In its place, the Employee Free Choice Act would allow unions to form if a majority of workers signed authorization cards—a process known as “card check.”

Without giving workers the protection of a secret ballot, each person's choice would be known to others. It is not unreasonable to believe that those who choose not to sign authorization cards would be subject to intimidation and coercion.

While this should be reason enough to defeat the Employee Free Choice Act, the legislation is further flawed. Provisions within the legislation require a mandatory arbitration process that would allow the Federal Government to dictate contract terms on businesses if a first contract is not agreed to within 120 days. The contract would be binding for 2 years and would cover decisions that are best left to company leaders that understand the specifics of that business and are most familiar with the competitive forces that the business faces.

In these difficult economic times, the government-imposed and -written contracts would have an especially devastating impact on businesses that would further delay our economic recovery. Allowing the government to impose contracts on private firms and their workers would effectively allow the government to pick winners and losers in the marketplace.

The Employee Free Choice Act is bad for workers and bad for the economy.

Congress should reject this legislation and refocus its effort on initiatives that would protect the rights and privacy of American workers and strengthen the economy by creating conditions in which businesses can grow, prosper, and create jobs.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERLIN AIRLIFT

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

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago, the United States embarked on a crucial operation to sustain and defend a vulnerable entrapped people. The Berlin Airlift was a colossal strategic mission that encouraged strength and fortitude in those held captive in Berlin. Today, we honor those who designed and participated in this feat.

These brave veterans struck the first major blow in the new Cold War, forcing Stalin to lift the blockade that impoverished Germany's capitol, and thwarting the Iron Curtain's fall over the Western strongholds. The efforts of these airmen embody the highest virtues of American air defense, as they fused tactical brilliance, along with innovation and with goodness in heart, in what is seen as one of the greatest American humanitarian efforts of all time.

Our veterans provided food, coal, and medical supplies to the besieged citizens of West Berlin each day, living up to the spirit of the Greatest Generation. They led a seminal goodwill offensive that succeeded in alleviating the suffering inflicted by Stalin's regime that threatened the peace and prosperity of all those in Berlin, East Germany, as well as throughout the world.

Some creative and generous pilots even found a heartwarming way to connect with the children of Berlin during those airlifts. As they carpeted the streets of Berlin with chocolates and candy, they drew the hearts and minds of many children to goodness and liberty rather than the pervasive Communist propaganda that sought to turn them against the West.

The goodwill of this so-called "Operation Little Vittles" has carried forward to the streets of Baghdad today, where many of our soldiers relish opportunities to brighten the lives of Iraqi children as well.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift, let us remember the veterans who exemplified our highest ideals of brilliance and innovation in air defense, and whose integrity and dedication to liberty have inspired so many vulnerable people throughout the world. Their example renews our faith in the power of freedom and goodness to prevail over tyranny.

Mr. Speaker, as the memories of World War II and the Berlin blockade fade with the passing years, I believe it

is even more important to commemorate the spirit of kindness that led our veterans to bring hope and to bring joy to the weary and beleaguered city of Berlin.

Mr. Speaker, a congressional resolution has been introduced to honor their legacy. I'm grateful for this opportunity to celebrate this noble endeavor, and I ask my colleagues to please join me in remembering and thanking those who served 60 years ago in the Berlin Airlift.

NATIONAL ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. As the summer months quickly approach and families start to plan vacations, our country continues to struggle with high energy costs. That is why the Democrats' cap-and-trade, or better known as cap-and-tax, energy plan is an irresponsible proposal that will do more harm than good. The simple truth behind the Democrats' energy plan is that it raises taxes, kills jobs, and will lead to more government intrusion in our lives.

The Democrats' energy plan is really a \$624 billion national energy tax that will hit nearly every American family. This new national energy tax will be paid by anyone who turns on a light switch or plugs in an appliance.

With Democrats still hiding many of the important details of their energy plan, a study that looked at a similar proposal estimated that the impact will be roughly \$3,100 every American household will have to pay to the Federal Government.

Also disappointing is the fact that the Democrats' national energy tax will hit the poor the hardest. Experts agree that lower-income individuals spend a greater share of their income on energy consumption. So while every American will be paying more for energy, low-income households already living on the edge of desperation will be hurt even more.

The truth is President Obama is aware of the impact his energy plan will have on American families. While still a candidate for President, then-Senator Obama said that under his cap-and-tax plan, utility rates would necessarily skyrocket and said that those costs would be passed along to consumers.

The impact of this national energy tax will not only be seen in home utility bills or at the pump, but various estimates suggest that anywhere from 1.8 million to 7 million Americans could lose their jobs as well.

Though the President is promoting green jobs that may be created by his cap-and-tax plan, any new jobs created will not come close to compensating for those lost to this reckless energy policy.

We have no greater example of the devastation the cap-and-tax system

can have on an economy than Spain. After years of promoting green jobs, Spain has the highest unemployment rate in Europe, standing at a whopping 17.5 percent.

□ 1530

Cap-and-tax has sought to be an environmentally friendly plan. The truth is that it will relocate manufacturing plants overseas to countries with far less stringent environmental regulations, in turn trading pollution to another part of the world.

Republicans are for clean air, clean water and are committed to solving our energy crisis. Republicans believe there is a better way to achieve energy independence without destroying our economy and killing jobs.

THE IMPACT OF CAP-AND-TRADE ON MANUFACTURERS USING COAL-GENERATED ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to have this hour with my colleagues to talk about a very, very important issue facing this country.

The issue that's facing this Congress is cap-and-tax. Why is it important? Well, as you can see from this chart right here, Cap-and-Tax Vulnerability by State. I'm from Ohio. I represent the largest manufacturing district in the State of Ohio as well as representing the largest agricultural district in the State of Ohio.

If you see from this map where it says, the vulnerability key from high, medium and low, you will see that Ohio, along with a good part of the Midwest, is all facing a very, very tough time under this proposal.

At the same time I know when I am back home, I talk to the folks; and they say, Well, who's proposing this? I say, If you look from California to Washington. You go from Washington, D.C., up the coast to Maine, that's where it is. You look at that—very low vulnerability. That concerns me. It concerns me because, as I said, manufacturing is the lifeblood in my district. I would like to talk about it for just a few minutes.

First, every week I go out in my district. I go out in that district, and I go into plants. We manufacture everything from car parts, to batteries, to windshields, to washing machines. You name it, we make it.

My district, when people say, What's your largest city? It's my hometown of about 30,000 people. So over 140 miles east to west we have a lot of small manufacturers out there. We have large manufacturers. We have a large General Motors power train plant. When you keep going across, you have a Chrysler plant. We have a furniture