

to bring the so-called DISCLOSE Act to the floor. It apparently is over how many people get exempted from the disclosure rules that otherwise prevail.

We have had the NRA exemption, which was for organizations which have over 1 million people, which have actually existed more than 10 years, which have people in all 50 States, in D.C. and in Puerto Rico, and which have less than 15 percent of their funds from corporations. Now we understand they have dropped it to 500,000.

Madam Speaker, we did not take the oath to the Constitution to only uphold part of the Constitution. It is time that we stop auctioning off the First Amendment and start understanding that we here are supposed to protect the First Amendment, not parcel it out, not deny it to some and give it to others. The First Amendment is for all Americans, not just for those favored by one party or another.

POLITICAL HYSTERIA

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the administration's knee-jerk banning of deepwater drilling for 6 months is the second disaster in the gulf.

The government is intentionally putting companies out of business in the gulf with this unscientific moratorium. There are 50,000 workers who are losing their jobs due to government overreaction. The administration is not only purposely putting blue collar workers out of work; the government is sending those jobs to Brazil and to Indonesia.

In 2005, there was a BP refinery explosion in Texas City, Texas. Fifteen people were killed; 180 were injured. The government did not close all of the refineries for 6 months in the United States to investigate the sins of BP then. That would have been foolish nonsense. It would have destroyed jobs, the economy, and it would have caused the loss of U.S. energy.

So investigate the rig explosion and hold BP accountable for their conduct, but don't in a moment of political hysteria stop deepwater drilling. Don't wipe out jobs, American companies, and sabotage the U.S. economy.

And that's just the way it is.

PROVIDE TAX RELIEF, NOT TAX CREEP

(Mr. GRAVES of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Madam Speaker, in Georgia's Ninth Congressional District, there is the small town of Ellijay. It is known not only for Colonel Poole's barbecue and as the apple capital of Georgia but also as the home of the McCutchen-Poole Small Business Coalition. The reason is that community leaders like Colonel Oscar

Poole and Joe McCutchen are committed to creating an environment where small business can thrive. However, taxation and regulation are stifling small business expansion.

Throughout my legislative career, I have focused my efforts on removing these unnecessary barriers in order to unleash America's entrepreneurial spirit. As a small business man, I know that cutting spending here in Washington, eliminating the capital gains tax and reducing the corporate income tax, along with empowering the private sector, is the way to create jobs and to get Americans back to work.

Stimulating the economy must come from expanding the private sector, not by expanding government. We have a 16-month track record of failed economic policies, and they continued once more here today. We should be encouraging small businesses, not penalizing them with higher taxes and more regulation.

So I hope you will join me. Let's empower the taxpayer. Let's provide tax relief, not tax creep.

COMPENSATION FOR SURVIVAL FOR VICTIMS OF THE GULF COAST DISASTER

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, everyone knows that we are in the grips of trying to overcome the devastation of the gulf and to help the people of that region. That is why I want to applaud the serious work that was done at the White House to establish the independent framework that I called for 2 weeks ago, which was to ensure that the impacted communities—restaurants, fishermen, shrimpers, oyster persons, and people with small restaurants and large restaurants—in the gulf region, from Florida to Texas, have the ability to secure the kind of compensation needed now to make their bills.

This is not compensation for the injury as much as it is compensation to survive. For anyone to suggest that this was a shakedown is a misinterpretation and a distortion to the American people.

What do they want the government to do? They want the government to be responsive, to make sure that we work on their behalf and to make sure that people whose lights are being turned off can pay their bills.

Good news. We can now get claims and can help the people in the gulf region.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DAHLKEMPER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House,

the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

RECOGNIZING FLORIDA'S SMALL BUSINESSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise to recognize the many small businesses throughout the Nation, and especially in my home State of Florida and in my area of south Florida, that I hope will lead us into the great economic recovery.

As we have in the past, we shall recover again. Small business owners are going to be an essential part of that recovery because small business owners are truly the backbone of our Nation's economy, employing tens of millions of workers and creating most of the new private sector jobs that are so important for true economic growth.

I'd like to take this opportunity to especially recognize two small businesses in my district which definitely represent America's tradition of free enterprise and individual initiative.

Tri-City Electric has reached a well-respected place in both Florida and the electrical contracting industry with well over 300 employees. This family firm has been providing electrical design, installation, and service in south Florida for three generations since 1946. This small business's name also played a role in the fascinating rise of small business after World War II, in that it was selected to represent our area's three major cities at that time: Miami, Coral Gables, and Miami Beach. Like most small businesses, Tri-City Electric is made of folks who didn't start at the top and, in this case, started in the trenches digging to lay pipeline in the hot weather while working whatever hours it takes to get the job done.

Another small business with a long tradition of service in south Florida is Riverside Electric Company. This was established in 1922—I love anything older than I am—which is one of oldest electrical contracting firms in the southeastern United States. Another firm with a proud family tradition, its roots go back to Atlanta, where the company played a key role in converting the city's streetlights from gas to electric. Its founder, Eugene M. Irvin, Sr., later moved his family to Miami and began Riverside Electric Company. His great grandson, James Irvin, is now co-owner of the company, along with Alexander Rodriguez, who started as an apprentice and worked

his way up to become a journeyman and master electrician.

Madam Speaker, these are just two examples of Florida's nearly 2 million small businesses that have provided economic opportunities to diverse groups of people and have delivered innovative products and services to a worldwide marketplace.

Florida's small employers, in 2006, represented 99 percent of the State's employers and 44 percent of its private sector employment. Of even greater significance, however, is that small businesses created nearly 60 percent of my State's new jobs in recent years. Think of that figure. Sixty percent of the new jobs in the State of Florida were created by small businesses.

It is my honor and my privilege to recognize today the many dedicated and hardworking employees of small businesses who have done so much over the years to serve their neighbors in so many ways.

JULY 2011 IS NOT SOON ENOUGH: ACCELERATE TROOP REDEPLOYMENT OUT OF AFGHANISTAN

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, General Petraeus was in Washington this week to testify before the House and Senate Armed Services Committee. And while his intent was to endorse the July 2011 Afghanistan redeployment date set by the Commander in Chief, it was not the kind of clear, unambiguous statement that inspires very much confidence.

According to an editorial in today's Washington Post, the General describes next July as "the point at which a process begins to transition security tasks to Afghan forces at a rate to be determined by conditions at the time." With all due respect, Madam Speaker, could there be any more qualifiers and escape hatches in that sentence?

The American people, who have 1,000 fewer fellow citizens and 278 billion fewer dollars than they did when this war began, aren't looking for the beginning of a process. They're looking for an end to this, an end to this miserable war.

Shouldn't we be at the end or at least in the middle of the process of transitioning security tasks to Afghanistan forces? Shouldn't the beginning of the process have come at some point over the last 8½ years that we've been fighting this war?

My concern, Madam Speaker, is that statements like this one are laying the predicate for an extension of President Obama's deadline, which is exactly the wrong lesson and the wrong approach. The problem is that, if you're locked into a certain mindset, it will never seem like the right moment to remove our troops from Afghanistan, because the mission as currently defined will never be complete and conditions on

the ground will forever remain bad. But the reason for that is the underlying policy of a military invasion and occupation that is fatally flawed in the first place.

So, in a twisted, paradoxical way, Madam Speaker, the more we fail, the more we try to succeed with the same misguided approach, and then we just fail some more. That's how you end up with perpetual war. If we had adopted smart security principles and invested in a humanitarian rather than a military approach, we'd be a lot closer to our goals of a peaceful, stable, and secure Afghanistan.

For my part, Madam Speaker—and I am not alone in this belief—the July 2011 date is not nearly ambitious enough. That's yet one more year in which Americans will be asked to sacrifice blood and treasure for a failed counterterrorism strategy that is doing nothing to advance our national security objectives. I believe General Petraeus is moving in the wrong direction and being cautious where he should be bold. It's time to accelerate the timetable, not push it back. It's time, Madam Speaker, to bring our troops home.

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

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

HELP FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, we have the highest number of long-term unemployed Americans ever on record, so you'd think we'd be overwhelmed by bipartisan cooperation to help us with these 7 million people who have been out of work for more than 6 months. Instead, every single House Republican but one voted against the legislation 3 weeks ago to continue emergency Federal unemployment benefits. And now, in the other body, every Republican has refused to support an extension of unemployment benefits. So a growing number of jobless workers are now losing their benefits.

By the end of this week, more than 900,000 Americans will lose their unemployment benefits unless the other body acts. We hear their rumblings over there, but I'll believe it when I see it. By the end of the month, the number will grow to 1.2 million. My colleagues from Florida should know an estimated 80,000 Floridians will lose their benefits; California, 180,000; Ohio, 66,000; Georgia, 57,000. And the list goes on and on.

The last lifeline for these workers and their families is being severed,

leaving them adrift with no job, no savings, and no support. Even some from my own party seem to be saying now is the time to start cutting back on help for the unemployed. In fact, it will take about 5 years of consistent, month-after-month job growth to make up for all the ground we have lost in this recession. That's how big the jobs hole is that unemployed workers are trying to climb out of.

You only have to hear from a few unemployed workers to know how hard they're looking for work and to feel their sheer sense of desperation. They're losing their homes, their health, and their faith in the American Dream. Are we really prepared to just stand by and watch them sink into abject poverty?

Opponents of helping the unemployed like to talk about budget deficits. Of course, they don't seem to care about deficits when it comes to two wars that have cost a trillion dollars and two tax cuts, mainly for the wealthy, which cost \$1.7 trillion. None of that seems to matter. But now the stingy other body says we might pass this if we can take away \$25 a week from all the unemployed. Of course, we couldn't take the money from the hedge fund people. That would be too tough on them. When it comes to helping the unemployed, they just say, We can't afford it. But I wonder if they have truly considered the real cost of abandoning these families.

Ending assistance to the unemployed will reduce consumer demand right at the point when the economy is struggling to rebound after the worst recession in 70 years. It would surely increase the number of homes that would go into foreclosure. And it would drive some individuals permanently out of the labor force if we don't do something. All these outcomes will increase our Nation's budget deficit. But even worse, they'll bring about a crippling deficit of hope—hope for the future.

Helping those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own is the right thing to do for families, for the economy, and, ultimately, for the Federal budget.

Our failure to get this bill passed has very real and very immediate consequences. Tonight, thousands of people in every corner of this country will suffer because we have chosen to quibble and stonewall instead of act. These benefits help millions of people put bread on the table while they look for work. I sincerely hope the other body will take pity on the unemployed of this country and pass a bill today.

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

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