

alma mater, Villa Maria Academy. To care for the sick and elderly, the sisters founded St. Vincent Hospital in Erie and the St. Vincent School of Nursing.

The dedication of the Sisters of St. Joseph has no bounds. They serve as nurses, teachers, social workers, ministers, and community leaders. As a former student of the sisters, I am eternally grateful for their love and guidance.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania today, and I thank them for 150 years of service to our community.

VAT TAX IS ONE TAX AMERICA CAN'T AFFORD

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot lately about the need for a European-style value-added tax in the U.S. to solve our budget problem. And just yesterday, the ruling coalition in Britain announced that it wants to raise their nation's value-added tax from 17.5 percent to 20 percent. It's estimated that this increase would cost 163,000 jobs and reduce consumer spending by \$5.3 billion in the United Kingdom.

It's not a surprise that the VAT tax is creeping up in Britain. The average rate in Europe is now around 20 percent, and Greece raised their VAT rate to 21 percent as part of their bailout agreement. This is yet more evidence that the VAT taxes are easy for countries to raise during times of fiscal crisis.

With so much discussion about an American VAT, we have to be aware of what the true cost of such a tax would be to our own job growth and consumer spending. Early proposals might call for a 5 percent VAT tax, but in truth, the seemingly easy revenue would make it all too easy for the U.S. Government to quickly raise taxes to European levels. This seemingly easy tax revenue would have a great cost—American jobs. The VAT tax is one tax we can't afford in America.

HONORING MARNA DAVIDSON

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

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Marna Davidson, a great educator and leader in our community. Marna has worked in the south Florida office of the United Federation of Teachers for many years and has helped to run an extraordinary program for retired teachers in our community. After a total career of 45 years, Marna has decided to retire this year, and I would personally like to thank her for her service and wish her a wonderful retirement.

People like Marna are what make south Florida the best place to live in the country. Her lifelong dedication to teachers and her tireless dedication and commitment have had a real and lasting impact in our community. Of her decision to retire this year, Marna said she wants to "leave while I'm still in love." That sentiment truly captures Marna's spirit. And while the Boca Raton-based UFT office will surely be sad to see her go, we all respect her wise decision and wish her the very best in the next phase of her life.

Thank you, Marna.

AMERICA SPEAKING OUT

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

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, from the bailouts to the failed stimulus bills to the government takeover of health care to the failure to prevent and respond timely to the BP spill disaster, Americans are sick and tired of being ignored by their government. Republicans have heard this outcry and believe it is time to let Americans lead the way, so we've launched a new initiative aimed at giving every American a voice in Washington.

America Speaking Out was created as a platform for Americans to share their priorities and ideas for a national policy agenda. In addition to open forum town halls held across the country, we've launched Americaspeakingout.com, an online tool where Americans can go and express their opinion about what issues they believe government should be addressing regardless of party affiliation.

Through initiatives like America Speaking Out, Americans can make their voices heard in Washington. Now is your time to speak out, America.

JOB CREATION

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a very important matter, job creation.

2010 has shown that America is slowly getting back to its feet in terms of recovery. The newest job numbers indicate that over 419,000 jobs were created last month. According to a recent Associated Press release, Texas has the greatest amount of job creation in 2010.

Texas employers expanded payrolls by 43,600 during the month of May, making it the State's largest monthly gain in more than 3 years. Companies like American Airlines, AT&T, and Texas Instruments are creating jobs in my district because north Texas is a good place to do business.

As a country, we are getting stronger and stronger, but we still have a long ways to go. We must continue to invest in American businesses and in the American people. I urge my colleagues

both in the House and Senate to come together to enact policies that create and encourage job creation.

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WHY DOES THE ADMINISTRATION WANT TO PURPOSELY AND PUNITIVELY DESTROY JOBS?

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a Federal judge stated yesterday the administration's ban on deepwater drilling was improper and illegal. The government imposed a 6-month moratorium after the BP disaster. Non-BP oil-related industries sued, saying the ban would put them out of business and cost thousands of jobs.

The government tried to justify the ban, but the judge said, "The government's explanation abuses reason and common sense." The government claimed its engineers supported the ban, but that's just not true.

The judge granted the injunction, stating the ban was "arbitrary", "capricious" and "punitive". In other words, the administration had no scientific basis for this absurd moratorium. The judge stated the oil-related industries "would suffer irreparable harm" by the moratorium. Of course, the administration doesn't care. Determined to stop deepwater drilling, the administration is going to appeal and issue another moratorium.

Mr. Speaker, why does the administration hate the energy industry in the gulf? Why does the administration want to purposely destroy American jobs? President Reagan was right: "The government is the problem."

And that's just the way it is.

DISCLOSE ACT

(Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise with regret today to express my concern about proposed changes to the DISCLOSE Act that I cosponsored. One particular change is deeply troubling—both on the politics and the policy. Having worked on campaign finance and ethics reform for many years, I didn't come to this conclusion lightly or uninformed. I was among the first to say that the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United was both wrong and shouldn't have given corporations a blank check in our elections.

As an early cosponsor of DISCLOSE, I am dismayed that, in order to gain passage, we have fallen prey to bullying and threats from one of the most powerful special interest lobbying organizations in the country. Carving out an exception on behalf of one big group like this is just not the way to do reform. Shame on us.

I proposed an amendment that would treat all of these organizations the

same and guard against unfair, undisclosed contributions. Corporations would be required to disclose if they had received more than 15 percent from any corporation or from donors who had contributed more than \$100,000 regardless of the number of members or whether they are on the right or the left. We shouldn't draw these arbitrary lines. We should be looking at the corrupting influence.

The question is "Who owns our elections?" Yet, before we answer that, we need to know who owns us—the NRA or the American people. You decide.

BUDGET

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we heard Washington won't have a budget blueprint this year. For the first time in modern history, Congress will not perform one of its primary responsibilities.

I believe it is simply not acceptable to pass the buck at a time when families are feeling uncertain about what comes next in this economy. All across this Nation, families are making tough choices. Is this decision to forgo a budget simply to pass on making tough choices? Without a budget, Congress is avoiding the tough choices American families and small businesses must make every day.

This failure to govern and to lead is especially alarming as spending deficits and debt continue to spiral out of control. The Treasury Department reported recently that the Federal Government is now \$13 trillion in the red, marking the first time the government has sunk that far into debt.

The United States simply cannot continue on an unchecked spending spree that will put the future of our economic strength in jeopardy in the short term and for the next generation. We have to control spending in Washington. It must start now. American individuals and families are looking for leadership.

I ask leaders of this House today to reconsider this decision and to perform the duties we are elected to do.

ENERGY REFORM

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, I understand the Republican party's love affair with fossil fuels. After all, the fossil industry has dominated the direction of energy policy in this country for the last generation, but the American people know that our future is not with fossil fuels, that it is not with oil and that it is not with coal. It is with alternative and renewable energy. They know also that this is the way we will help create new jobs in the economy.

In a recent poll, almost 70 percent of the people said they thought an emphasis on alternative renewable fuels, just like we have done in our ACES Act, will create jobs for the American economy—in one estimate, up to 2 million jobs. In my own district, General Electric is bringing back 800 jobs to build energy-efficient appliances—400 of them coming back from China.

Energy reform is a job creator. The American people know it. I hope the Republican Party will join us in bringing the energy situation in this country into the 21st century and will join us in creating new jobs for a new American economy.

BP OIL SPILL

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, the difference could not be any clearer. As tar balls continue to roll onto the beaches of the gulf coast States, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are apologizing to BP for the government's holding them accountable. While they continue to chant "drill, baby, drill" and to put forward ideas that benefit Big Oil, Democrats are moving America in a new direction.

I rise today to stand with the families, the small businesses, the communities, and the economy of the gulf coast and our country to say that we can no longer be held hostage by our gluttonous dependence on dirty oil, most of which is imported from our enemies around the world. Instead, we must change our priorities and stand up to special interests by continuing to promote a clean energy economy and to create good-paying American jobs for American families. In fact, 87 percent of Americans support requiring utilities to produce more energy from renewable sources, sources that cannot be outsourced or imported.

A clean energy economy will make our country safer, more energy independent and will create jobs. In the meantime, let's be strong and steadfast and hold BP accountable.

DUMPSTER DIVE

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today out of disgust over recent comments by Rush Limbaugh about child hunger.

A few days ago, I was sent Mr. Limbaugh's response to the news that more than 16 million children will face "a summer of hunger" because they won't have access to free or discounted meals they usually get at school.

Mr. Limbaugh ultimately recommended these children dumpster dive—dumpster dive to find food until school starts back up. In the midst of a

deep recession that has forced millions of Americans to face the daily fear of losing their homes and of failing to provide food for their kids, all Mr. Limbaugh can contribute is another awful example of shameless and callous commentary.

Ask yourselves: When is the last time that Rush Limbaugh missed a meal? Take a look. You judge for yourselves.

FELLOW AMERICANS, LET US REMEMBER OUR OWN BASIC DIGNITY AS A PEOPLE

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to put something on our minds.

When President Obama, head of the executive branch of our Federal Government and as an invited guest speaker of the House of Representatives, has his remarks interrupted in defiance of the rules of the House by a Member of this House, shouting "you lie"—and no amount of apology can remove the scar on this House's dignity—when the commander of the United States forces in Afghanistan—General McChrystal—and his subordinates feel free to make mocking criticisms of their Commander in Chief, Barack Obama, to the national media and when these acts of disrespect and insubordination are openly directed at President Obama, our Nation has entered into an era of negativity and cynicism unprecedented in this Republic's history.

Only one question comes immediately and painfully to mind with these outrageous words and accusations, which would once have been universally deplored and which would have been far beyond and beneath the pale of what Americans and America are all about.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

REQUIRING CERTIFICATION FOR SMALL BUSINESS LENDING FUND

Ms. KOSMAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5551) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make a certification when making purchases under the Small Business Lending Fund Program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5551

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,