

New Jersey are demanding more public and private union employee sacrifices, Republicans in Washington are using the budget fight to roll back the rights and protections of American workers.

Their spending priorities in their so-called continuing resolution of last week show their hand. They voted to take away workers' ability to repeal unjust and unfair and illegal actions in the workplace by getting rid of the National Labor Relations Board. They voted to undermine the wages of construction workers on Federal projects. They voted to roll back workplace health and safety protections guaranteed by Federal law.

While protecting subsidies for corporate interests, they have sought to cut education funding and critical support for workers in need of job training, and yes, even kids in Head Start.

These rights and services helped to build and sustain our Nation's middle class in the last century making the United States the greatest economic power in the history of the world. We have the greatest workers in the world because of these rights. But now the rights and economic strength of America's middle class are at risk. It's under a systematic assault in the statehouses controlled by Republican legislatures and Republican Governors and in this House of Representatives controlled by the Republicans—a systematic assault that goes beyond after the unions, after the workers have agreed to givebacks, to furlough days, to give back health care benefits, pension benefits. They want more. They want their union. They want their rights in the workplace to be terminated. It's un-American.

There's a reason that we have collective bargaining in this country, because we know that workers should have a right to bond together to improve the workplace, to improve their working conditions. And when they do, those rights flow to the rest of middle class working families in this country. In even the non-union workplaces, those rights are there. That's how we achieved an 8-hour day, that's how we achieved vacation time, that's how we achieved health care, that's how we achieved overtime whether you're in the union or not.

But now they want to take away the rights of unions to organize in the workplace, the rights of workers to organize.

But the Republicans have asked for no sacrifices. In all these cuts, they have asked for no sacrifices of the well-off and the well-connected. In fact, these cuts are being made in the name of the well-off and the well-connected so that they will be able to push for lower wages, for lower benefits, for lower health care for our workers, for lower take-home pay. And what does that do to the economy? It makes America poor.

How do you build a strong middle class community on the back of low-wage earners? You can't do it. It's never been done.

But the fact is, many years ago America decided we wanted a strong and a vibrant middle class, and we did that by forming a union and by giving people the right to have a say at work. We know study after study where workers have a say in the workplace, they work harder, they're more productive, they're more innovative, they're more open to new ideas.

But what do we say to workers with the Governors of Wisconsin and Ohio and Indiana? Do what we tell you to do, do it for less pay, do it for less benefits, and do it because we told you so. That doesn't sound like America to me. It doesn't sound like a powerful country that has the best and most productive workers in the history in the world. That sounds like something that we're not familiar with in this country. That sounds like an autocratic system that just demands and takes but never gives.

EPA "DUST" POLICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, "Houses were shut tight, and cloth wedged around doors and windows, but the dust came in so thinly that it could not be seen in the air, and it settled like pollen on the chairs and tables, on the dishes."

Ma and Pa Joad did everything they could to save their farm from slipping away into the dust bowl, but ultimately they lost to a force far greater than any effort they could muster.

Mr. Speaker, though this is just one line ripped from the pages of "The Grapes of Wrath," farmers and ranchers today are facing a modern day dust storm—the wrath of the EPA. Just when you think you've heard it all, bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. come up with some hair-brained idea that leaves you scratching your head in wonderment.

The Environmental Protection Agency has apparently run out of things to regulate and tax so they are considering new guidelines for regulating "particulate matter emissions"—more commonly known to you and me as "dust."

Now, I know what you are thinking, this just cannot be true. What kind of crazy scheme is this?

Well, the EPA "Dust Police" would specifically regulate farm dust. Farmers would be required to have dust collectors on their harvesters, planters, combines, and haying equipment.

But my personal favorite is the crackdown on dust created from driving a pickup truck down a dirt or gravel road. I am not making this up. The Federal Government is considering farm dust regulations that are caused from driving on a dirt road.

So I thought, well, maybe this is just some backdoor attempt to rid America of our majestic four-wheel-drive pickups that liberals loathe so much

and find some way to force these battery-operated toy cars on the rest of us.

But the new proposals don't just apply to dust created from driving. No, they are fair and they are balanced in their overreaching authority. Farmers and ranchers are going to have to somehow limit the dust created by livestock on their property as well.

So, say Bessie the cow kicks up too much dust running over to your pickup truck at feeding time. The EPA is going to fine you for Bessie's misconduct. You need to move your cattle to another pasture during the daytime? Well, don't do it on a dry day because they may kick up too much dust.

The Dust Police solution is to manure dusty dirt roads with water, or—get this—pave them with asphalt. Now, this is another can of worms.

Every farmer and rancher will have the "Water Police" raining down on them by the time the first drop hits the dirt. I would think EPA would be aware of the fact that we already have a shortage of water on ranches and farms in our country. But make no matter to them, they still want you to control it.

And what about this paving the asphalt over these roads? Really, they can't be serious. Aside from the sheer magnitude of this undertaking, the idea is completely unfeasible and it's cost prohibitive.

The absurdity of these types of Federal regulations is what makes normal Americans all across our country frustrated with Washington, D.C.

I will say there is a little good news on the horizon. We're not all out of touch here in Congress. My colleague, Representative KRISTI NOEM from South Dakota, filed an amendment to the continuing resolution last week to eliminate funding to the EPA to enforce the dust regulations. I'm proud to say that this passed the House of Representatives, and it's now down the hallway with the Senate. Let's see what they do.

This type of Federal meddling is exactly what causes businesses to go out of business, lay off workers, and in many cases fail. These types of expensive regulations will finally shut the barn door on the American rancher and farmer for good.

I understand that dust may seem like a serious threat to someone who has never been outside the EPA's marble Potomac palaces or elite castles of academia. But let's use some common sense here. Farmers and ranchers are the best environmentalists in our country. No one respects the land or animals more than those who actually live on it and depend on it for a living.

Instead of burying us in ridiculous regulations that do nothing to improve the quality of life or the environment, the government should look for incentives to encourage farmers and ranchers to produce more, not less. We don't need the EPA-inflicted dust bowl to devastate the American heartland.

The EPA should just head on down the road and leave this regulation in the dust.

And that's just the way it is.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, March 2, 2011, marks Texas Independence Day. A hundred and seventy-five years ago, the Texas Declaration of Independence was ratified by the Convention of 1836 on Washington-on-the-Brazos in Texas. This is an important day for Texas, and patriotic Texans observe this occasion with great pride.

In 1824, a military dictatorship took over in Mexico abolishing the Mexican constitution. The new military dictatorship refused to provide trial by jury, freedom of religion, public education for their citizens, and allowed for the confiscation of firearms—this last one particularly intolerable, particularly for Texans.

The Texas Declaration of Independence states that Texas' government had been "forcibly changed, without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central military despotism." It stated that because of the injustice of Santa Anna's tyrannical government, Texans were severing their connection with the Mexican nation and declaring themselves "a free, sovereign, and independent republic fully invested with all the rights and attributes" that belong to independent nations; and a declaration that they "fiercely and confidently" committed their decision to "the Supreme Arbiter of the destinies of Nations."

□ 1030

The Texas Declaration of Independence was needed because this military dictatorship had ceased to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the people of Texas. Failure to provide these basic rights violated the sacred contract between a government and the people, and Texans at that time, and want to still today, stand up for their rights. In response, the Mexican army marched to Texas, waging a war on the land and the people, enforcing the decrees of the military dictatorship with brute force and without any democratic legitimacy.

Today, 175 years later, Texas President and Governor of Texas, Sam Houston, and other delegates signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. General Santa Anna's army besieged the independence forces at the Alamo in San Antonio. Four days after the signing of this Declaration of Independence, the Alamo fell with her commander, Lieutenant Colonel William Barret Travis, and former Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett and approximately 200 other Texas defenders.

All these men were killed in action in a heroic sacrifice for Texas freedom.

If this tragedy were not enough, weeks later Santa Anna's Army massacred 300 unarmed Texans at Goliad on March 27 of 1836. In a dramatic turnaround, Texans achieved their independence several weeks later on April 21, 1836. Roughly 900 members of the Texan army overpowered a much larger Mexican army in a surprise attack at the Battle of San Jacinto in Harris County, Texas. This battle is memorialized along the San Jacinto River with the San Jacinto Monument in our congressional district. The monument's larger than the monument here in Washington, the Washington Monument. Sam Houston High School, which we have a lot of schools in our district named for Sam Houston, actually received a Texas historical marker about 3 weeks ago.

Today we give thanks to the many Texans that sacrificed for the freedom we enjoy today. God bless Texas and God bless America.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 32 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord God of the Universe, Our Hope in times of testing, Our Consolation and Strength always, while this Chamber goes about its work to establish security and good order for the Nation, breathe forth a new Spirit of creativity and learning in the hearts of Your people and guide the course of world events.

By drawing closer to Your Holy Will and revealed Word, may the hidden treasures of lasting freedom empower Your people to seek the truth and do what is right in conscience so we may witness to Your presence in our midst both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Missouri (Mr.

CARNAHAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CARNAHAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a Joint Resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 44. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2011, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 388. An act to prohibit Members of Congress and the President from receiving pay during Government shutdowns.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

GAO REPORT ON WASTEFUL SPENDING

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Government Accountability Office released a report detailing billions of dollars of waste in the Federal Government. Redundant and ineffective programs infect the government like a plague. For too long, Congress has punted on its responsibility to rein in wasteful spending. And when I read this report, I had the same feeling as my constituents did. I hated it.

According to the report, there are 15 agencies implementing Federal laws on food safety. There are 80 different programs and numerous agencies that work on economic development, 24 Federal agencies for information technology, and 82 programs dealing with teacher quality across multiple agencies. What is this costing us? Billions. Who's paying for it? You guessed it, the American taxpayer.

The American taxpayers' dollars are being wasted by keeping these redundant programs on the books. We should immediately begin looking at ways to eliminate redundancy, stop wasting billions of tax dollars, and allow hard-working Americans to keep more of what they earn.

SPENDING CUTS

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House