

my colleagues to join me in heeding their call.

RISING GAS PRICES

(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, I rise today to shed light on a very serious problem—skyrocketing gasoline prices.

In the capital district of New York, prices at the pump today average about \$3.50 per gallon. Nationally, the average price is \$3.38 per gallon, and it continues to rise. Due to the continued conflict in North Africa and the Middle East, oil is over \$100 per barrel. There appears to be no end in sight.

For every \$10 per barrel rise in the price of oil, America sends an additional \$40 billion overseas, yearly. How can we expect to turn around our economy and create jobs when we are sending this much money to our enemies?

Plain and simple, we must start thinking outside the barrel—to create jobs and protect our national security. We as Americans are better than the ancient fuel that we put into our vehicles.

Using 19th and 20th century oil subsidies in this 21st century is outdated and foolish. We are literally giving away hard-earned taxpayer money to big oil companies that are setting record profits. What do we get in return? Sticker shock at the pump.

Mr. Speaker, this is unfair to hard-working Americans that play by the rules. We deserve better. Let's stop this sticker shock.

□ 1650

BABY KILLER FLEES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday was just a normal day in Houston, Texas. Seven families left their babies at Jackie's Childcare, and went along to work just as they did every day.

A daycare is supposed to be a place where parents trust caregivers with the safety of their kids. After all, that is what they are supposed to do—keep children safe. The owner, however, Jessica Tata, left the children by themselves and carelessly drove off to Target. Meanwhile, the pot of oil she had left on the electric stove caught fire, and those seven babies burned in a massive fire.

Elizabeth Kojah, Kendyll Stradford, Elias Castillo, and Shomari Dickerson all burned to death. They were all under the age of 3.

It took several days for the authorities to get their act together to file charges. Meanwhile, Tata was able to flee to Nigeria. As the Good Book says: "The guilty fleeth when no one pursueth."

There should be no question in any person's mind that Jessica Tata should be held responsible for this crime. So the long arm of the law needs to capture her and return her to Texas and let a jury decide what to do with that baby killer—because justice is what we do.

And that's just the way it is.

LOSING THE WAR OF COMMON SENSE

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, last week, while most of us were working from our districts, a newspaper article entitled, "Combat Troops To Get Gay Sensitivity Training," was published. The article explains how our combat forces on the front lines in Afghanistan will soon be required to take a time-out from their mission and be forced to participate in the Pentagon's homosexual sensitivity training regimen.

I still maintain the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell will harm recruitment, retention and readiness; but regardless of your opinion on that issue, it is remarkable that the courageous men and women who have voluntarily put themselves in harm's way are being subjected to such insane distractions while the war wages on around them.

Our Nation is at war against an enemy that wants nothing more than the complete destruction of our way of life. For the President and the Pentagon to dangerously distract the attention of our troops in forward operating bases away from the enemy and toward homosexual sensitivity training is outrageous.

To the men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces, I pray to God that you all return home safe and sound to your families. I, for one, believe in your mission and want to win the war on terror because we have certainly lost the war of common sense.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague came up to talk about high energy prices. We have consistently tried on this side of the aisle to talk about an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We are independent on electricity generation, but we are held captive to imported crude oil.

So what does that mean?

That means we are stuck with a one-fuel technology. In an all-of-the-above energy strategy, we envision a world where you go to a filling station, and you have fuel competing. You have coal-to-liquid technologies; you have liquid fuel by natural gas; you have renewable fuel by biomass. You have all of these issues to help decrease our reliance on imported crude oil. We have

the operability for an oil-sand pipeline from Canada.

We really can be independent on our energy needs based upon North American energy resources. We have to be about that. For the administration to celebrate opening up one permit on the gulf coast is a joke. We ought to get our drilling rigs back and operating.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUINTA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Democratic leadership for giving the Congressional Black Caucus this time to stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Wisconsin, in Ohio, as well as those in Indiana, and anywhere the rights of workers are being trampled upon. The similarities in what is going on here in the Nation's Capital and in the Wisconsin capital are not only striking, but it's the kind of coordinated attack against working men and women that we have become accustomed to seeing from Republican legislators and Governors.

I don't understand why Governor Walker can't take "yes" for an answer. The unions have agreed to most, if not all, of the concessions he asked for; but rightly, they will not—and should not—give up their right to collective bargaining.

No one knows better than the African American community what unions have done to lift people out of poverty, to ensure them decent jobs with decent wages and protections in the workplace. Not only African Americans, but all Americans have benefited from the work of our labor unions.

What Governor Walker is doing is not about balancing a budget or reducing a deficit any more than the cuts in spending are up here. It's about busting unions, thus making it possible for companies to run roughshod over workers' rights—a place no one in this country should ever allow us to go back to.

For the life of me, I can't understand what Republicans have against children—or is it just poor and middle class children? The Governor and his allies in the State legislature would rather take teachers out of the classroom—killing jobs—and jeopardize the education of Wisconsin's children than raise property taxes just a little bit to help cover the cost of providing a quality education even after the teachers

have agreed to give up some of their health and pension benefits negotiated in their contracts.

In fact, it is my understanding that, just like the Republicans here insisted on tax cuts for the wealthy, who did not need them, before anything could be done to help struggling families, Governor Walker also enacted tax cuts as soon as he came into office. The spending cuts, as I understand it, would not have been necessary in Wisconsin if those tax cuts had not been enacted, just as the devastating cuts in health care, education, community economic development, and job creation programs in homeland security and public safety would not have been needed here if we had not given the wealthy a tax giveaway in December.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she might consume to the former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, who is always here, standing for the rights of workers, for the rights of children, for the rights of people everywhere, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE of California.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Let me thank the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands for, once again, coming to the floor and organizing us to make sure that we sound the alarm, to make sure that we put out the facts about what is taking place. Tonight, of course, we are talking about the union-busting efforts of Governor Walker in Wisconsin.

So thank you, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN, for your leadership and for your tireless work.

I am pleased to participate in this Special Order tonight as we provide some perspective about the importance of preserving and respecting the process of collective bargaining and of supporting the rights of public employees to protect union benefits won by virtue of the blood, sweat, and tears of unionized workers.

We are talking about the implications of the union-busting efforts undertaken by Wisconsin Governor Walker; but the reality is there is a sweeping antiunion sentiment overtaking our Nation, and public employees who are union workers are being used as scapegoats to balance State budgets. This practice is not only wrong; it is cruel and is calculated. Let's take a look at the facts.

In Wisconsin, for example, Governor Walker is attempting to ram through legislation that cuts State employee benefits and strips unions of their collective bargaining rights by allowing them to bargain only on wages, keeping benefits and other issues off the table, severely limiting union say on hiring, firing, assignments, and other work rules. The Governor appears ready to rush through radical changes that would take away rights from workers without making any effort—any effort—to talk to those workers, much less negotiate a fair agreement with them.

Governor Walker is calling employee unions unreasonable, but his administration has made absolutely no effort to work with or to even contact any of the unions he is attacking. He is demonizing public employees who are protesting at the capital. That's why 74 percent of Wisconsin residents oppose this and the Republicans' bill to take away these rights from the struggling middle-income/middle class residents of Wisconsin.

His proposals are an affront to all workers. When he says that State employees should contribute more, all he is really saying is that they should accept massive cuts in salary without being offered a seat at the negotiating table.

□ 1700

And we're not talking about huge salaries here.

This is not about budgeting; this is about union busting. And it is the kind of policy that will only hurt workers in the State and across the country, but it only leads to stalled economic growth and the slashing of jobs.

The process of collective bargaining has led to the rise of the middle class. It is a fair process that allows employers to sit at the table and craft an agreement that serves both parties. It's a fundamentally American process. It's a democratic process. Yet Governor Walker is bent on undermining decades of hard-earned concessions won by organized labor and its membership. If the Governor is successful in his union-busting efforts, we will see further assaults around the country on union workers and in other States that are really experiencing budgetary woes.

So in response to Governor Walker's action, elected officials—and we are very proud of and stand in solidarity with the elected officials in Wisconsin—decided to protest against his actions.

Public employees have shown that they are serious about balancing the budget by agreeing to Governor Walker's pension and health care requests, concessions that the Governor himself says will solve the budget challenge, but still it seems like this is not enough. The Governor's efforts are denying the rights of tax-paying nurses, educators, emergency response workers—all people who probably are our next-door neighbors. We all know public employees who this will hurt. These are union workers who need and should have a voice.

At the same time, he is pressing for a bill that will do nothing to fix the budget. This bill will shatter relationships among educators and school leaders, undermining current innovations around teacher compensation, evaluation and improvement. It will really have a chilling effect on teacher recruitment and sends a terrible message about the value of public service.

Mr. Speaker, there are ominous signs on the horizon that reflect a growing sentiment by Governors who seem bent

on union-busting, anti-democratic initiatives to really undo longstanding collective bargaining agreements. Union workers and public employees are being used as scapegoats to balance the budget. Teachers, nurses, police, firemen and others who perform their jobs dutifully are being treated shabbily by this Governor and those who share his union-busting and anti-collective bargaining philosophy. I hope that cooler heads prevail, and I urge the Governor to pull the State back from this radical governmental overreach.

I see my colleague from Wisconsin, Congresswoman GWEN MOORE, will be with us. And I just want to say to Congresswoman MOORE that my constituents in the Ninth Congressional District stand in solidarity with you and with all of those bold and brave leaders who have left the State, and also on behalf of all of the union workers and all of those who have come to the Capitol to say enough is enough. So thank you, Congresswoman MOORE, for your leadership.

Thank you, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Congresswoman LEE, and thank you for your leadership.

We have a number of women leaders here, and I would like to now yield to the gentlelady from Maryland who has been a leader on many issues, including during the health care reform debate to make sure that those who were insured were protected, Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN.

I'm here today because I look at the fight and the struggle of the workers in Wisconsin, the public sector workers, as connected, the dots connected to the struggles of workers across this country.

For 20 years we've seen an erosion of the organized labor force, the organized workforce. And it isn't just the private sector workers who have lost over these 20 years. It's also our public sector workers. And this is the fight in which we're engaged now, Mr. Speaker.

The union movement and collective bargaining have brought us minimum wages, not for our organized workers, but for those of us who are not organized, have brought us decent workplaces, safe working conditions, health care insurance, disability, vacation, family and medical leave, and the list goes on and on.

And so I want to step back in our history a little bit, Mr. Speaker, and take a look at what has happened to the organized workforce—jobs shipped outside this country for private sector workers, a depletion of the organized workforce. We've also seen a circumstance where our State and municipal employees have done everything that we've asked them to do even in a tough economy in saying that they will make concessions, as all workers have in this economy, because they believe

in holding the line for all of their workers so that people will not have to lose jobs. But they've taken furloughs, they've taken pay freezes, they've taken cuts in benefits. And even in Wisconsin, we know that the workforce there, the public sector workers have given on all of those money issues.

And so we have to ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, what is at the bottom of this. And what's at the bottom of this, in my view, Mr. Speaker, is that this is about busting up unions. We started with the private sector workers. We've put a kibosh on the ability of all of our workers to organize and to bargain for themselves, and now we're with public sector workers.

So I think that this is a race to the bottom, Mr. Speaker. It's a race to the bottom for the American worker, and so the struggle for workers in Wisconsin is a struggle for all workers.

When a worker is asked to give up \$50 a month in contributions to a pension plan or \$100 a month, let's think about what that means for that family. That \$50 or \$100 is the difference between having oatmeal and cereal and milk and eggs and paying the utilities every month. That's what \$50 or \$100 means. It's not something that's just thrown away.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I stand here with my colleagues in deep solidarity with the workers, the public sector workers of Wisconsin, because I know that as sure as their struggle goes, the struggle with all workers goes across the country. And we have to link those fights. We have to end this decades-long race to the bottom, Mr. Speaker.

We're being asked to look at trade agreements where we trade away private sector jobs, our public sector workers, our teachers, our firefighters, our law enforcement, people who take care of our children on a day-to-day basis. We're saying to them, you're not valued; you're not worth enough even in this economy. I don't think that that is the message that the American people want to send.

And, Mr. Speaker, clearly the polls show that across this country a vast majority, an overwhelming majority—upwards of 60 percent—of the American public believes in the right to bargain collectively. And what is collective bargaining? Collective bargaining is sitting around a table, having a fair shake, getting a fair deal, and dealing as equal partners.

Let's look at what's happened in Wisconsin and across this country. Contracts were struck. Now, if a contract were made in the private sector and one of the parties wanted to renege on that contract, the other party would probably take them to court. They would be in litigation.

Yet here in Wisconsin and across this country, workers are being asked every day, they're being told every day that the person who is on the other side of an equal-bargaining table is going to renege on a contract. There is something deeply anti-democratic about that.

So I'm here, Mr. Speaker, because public sector workers in Wisconsin deserve our solidarity. As a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, we know deeply of the struggle for freedom and for justice, and we know an injustice when we see it; And we are witnessing what looks to be an injustice in Wisconsin and Ohio and Indiana and perpetrated all across this country when it comes to the rights of workers and the ability to organize and the ability to bargain collectively for a decent workplace, for decent wages, and for the ability to take care of one's family and oneself.

□ 1710

We stand toe-to-toe, shoulder-to-shoulder, and union card-to-union card with our public sector workers and with all workers across this country who deserve not a race to the bottom, Mr. Speaker, but a race to the top.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Congresswoman EDWARDS, and thank you for those really strong words to encourage our union members in Wisconsin and Ohio and Indiana and wherever else unions are under attack. We appreciate your being here with us this evening and for reassuring those workers that you and the Congressional Black Caucus are standing firmly with them.

At this time I would like to yield such time as she might consume to the gentlelady from Ohio, a former mayor, also a strong fighter for children, for the poor, and for the underserved, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so very much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong opposition to attempts by the Republican Governor of Wisconsin and the Republican Governor of the State of Ohio, from which I hail, to undermine collective bargaining for public employees.

In my State, Ohio Senate Bill 5 is a measure currently under consideration by the Ohio General Assembly that would strip State workers of their collective bargaining rights. Today, this bill was approved by the Senate's Insurance, Commerce and Labor Committee. It now moves to the State Senate floor for a final vote, which could begin as early as today.

This vote comes after Ohio State and local union workers gathered in protest yesterday at the statehouse. Just yesterday, more than 8,500 people surrounded the statehouse to express their disapproval.

I firmly support the right of public employees to collectively negotiate. Who are we as a Nation when we tell our firefighters, our police officers, and other public protectors that they don't deserve a say in their working conditions? Does a teacher's experience or education have no economic value?

Ohio's proposed legislation is less about fiscal responsibility than it is an overt political attack on public workers who speak with a collective voice.

As labor battles erupt in State capitals across this country, a majority of Americans say they oppose efforts to weaken the collective bargaining rights of public employees.

I want to join with my colleagues today to just talk a bit about what is happening not just in Wisconsin—although we are here today because of all that has gone on in Wisconsin.

And I would now yield back to our chair so that we may discuss this in another form.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Certainly.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And before we begin that, I'd like to just ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to enter extraneous material on the matter under discussion this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And to begin this dialogue, I'd like to turn now to the gentlelady from Wisconsin who feels it and who knows it, GWEN MOORE.

Ms. MOORE. Well, thank you so much for yielding, and thank you, Mr. Speaker, during this hour.

I want to thank the Congressional Black Caucus members and the women of the Congressional Black Caucus for joining me here today. The Congressional Black Caucus has always been known as the conscience of the Congress because we understand budgets, and these initiatives to break the collective bargaining agreements are being presented to us in the context of a budget. And we all know that budgets are not about numbers, and this is proof of that. It's about values. And where you place your money is where you place your heart.

And so I'd like to talk about the situation in Wisconsin.

You know, there are a few things that have been misinformation, just let me say that, around this budget. And I appreciate the fact that we have a physician here with us this evening who is an expert on the Medicaid program. We have an attorney here with the gentlelady from Ohio. And we have the gentlelady from Maryland who is an expert on all kinds of programs that deal with family issues.

So I need you to help me sort out some of the things that have been misinformation and disinformation in this campaign.

Let me say that I once served on the Joint Committee on Finance and put the budget together as a State senator in the Wisconsin Legislature. So I know that the opening balance to the budget was a \$121 million surplus. Now, that's not a lot of money when you consider that \$65 million is required for a statutory minimum balance in the account. But it left a cushion of \$54 million in those accounts. Nothing like the \$3.6 billion deficit that the Governor likes to present as his raison-

d'être for these draconian cuts in collective bargaining.

Now, what is a structural deficit? A structural deficit simply is the difference between what the agencies of the government request and what the Governor provides. And so when is the last time the agencies have gotten every dime that they've asked for? Never. So it's a phony structural deficit. But given the fact that our Governor, just like any Governor, has budget challenges, I respect the fact that, you know, sometimes you have to make unpleasant cuts.

So what the Governor proposed to do was to realize savings by requiring that State employees, except for the police and fire and State troopers, pay 5.8 percent of their pension funds and a little over 12 percent of their health care funds, and to make those contributions, generating \$725 million in savings. Miraculously, the unions agreed to do that.

But the Governor said, No. No, I do not want to negotiate with you. I want to strip you of your rights to collective bargain. And the exact words of the bill were that they were prohibited from bargaining about anything related to their conditions of employment.

So I was wondering if I could yield to the gentlelady from Ohio and talk about that kind of legal jargon, that they are unable to negotiate on any conditions of employment except for the 1 percent wage within the consumer price index.

Ms. FUDGE. Let me just say to you—and I thank you for yielding and allowing me this time—as mayor of a city, I balanced budgets for 9 years. I understand what it takes to balance a budget.

But let me just suggest to you that Wisconsin, being very similar to Ohio, when you look at the fact that wages and benefits for public employees in the State of Ohio account for only 9 percent of the budget, so Ohio is saying, as you are, that they've got this huge, huge deficit. They're saying we've got an \$8 billion deficit. Well, just like in Ohio, if we were to fire every single public employee in the State of Ohio, we would save about \$2 billion this year. They would still have a \$6 billion deficit. So public employees are not the problem.

And for them to suggest that the only thing they can talk about is wages is ridiculous. It is nothing more than a smokescreen. They are basically saying: We are taking all of your rights. And that is what it boils down to legally is that they really have no rights at all. There is no collective voice. There is nothing that they can do to protect themselves. They have taken away their seniority, their security. It is just, to me, the most barbaric thing I've seen in a long time.

Ms. MOORE. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. FUDGE. I will yield.

Ms. MOORE. There are some things that I don't understand.

Now, another myth and an untruth that has abounded in this debate is that somehow these public sector employees who are very well educated—I mean, some of them are nurses, school teachers, career executives in State government. Well-educated people make less, it is true, they make less than their peers in the private sector because as part of their compensation they have accepted less in wages so that they could have a pension, so that they could have health care benefits.

□ 1720

And so the misinformation, the effort to gin up antagonism against public employees is totally faulty. Because the pensions, and I want you to share this with me as a lawyer and as a former chief executive, the pensions are obligations because people have already earned that money in lieu of the salary they may have received in the private sector.

Ms. FUDGE. My colleague, who also is a lawyer, was talking about that earlier in her remarks today.

Ms. EDWARDS. If the gentlewoman would yield, I think that we have to be really clear here that this is not a valid substantive debate. I think that we tend to want to address substantive arguments to refute the misinformation that you describe. This is an ideological debate that is about one thing only, and it is about busting up the union. It's an ideological debate. It's about privatizing a pension system. It's an ideological debate that says that services can be provided better in the private sector. So I think we have to be very clear here that if this were a valid substantive debate, then I think that the workers of Wisconsin would win on that. This is an ideological battle.

It's an ideological battle that's rooted in tearing apart, slashing and burning public sector workers under the ruse, under the guise of balancing a budget.

Ms. MOORE. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. EDWARDS. I will.

Ms. MOORE. It is very interesting that you should raise that, because in fact the governor of our State, in his previous capacity as the Milwaukee county executive, hired private security guards for the county jail. And a court just this past January ordered Milwaukee County to restore those public servants to their jobs. And in fact, they are required to do that. And it was all presented as a budgetary crisis. The Court found that the county exec, now our governor, had overstated the savings that would be realized by privatizing those county prison guards. And it's been the same tactic.

Indeed, the police and firefighters and State troopers were excluded from the collective bargaining prohibitions and the prison guards were not. And as a State legislator, and I served with our current governor, he did introduce a bill to privatize our prison system. So that's a very important insight.

Ms. FUDGE. I would say just to take a step further what my colleague has said, there is an assault on working people all over this country and in this House as well. As these communities and these States have become Republican controlled, we now hear as we talk about our own budget and our own CR that we have to deal with entitlement programs. And they continue to throw in there Social Security. It is not an entitlement program. It is funded by payroll taxes and taxes on employers. It is not an entitlement program. But we still today hear them talking about wanting to privatize it.

They want to take away the rights of workers across this country. It's not going to stop in Wisconsin, or Ohio, or in Indiana, or in Florida. It is a plan. And we need to realize it now, because all workers, and those as you talked about who are retired, are going to feel the effects of this as we go forward. So this is just the tip of the iceberg. This is a battle we have to win.

Ms. EDWARDS. If the gentlewoman would yield, we have just gone through an exercise and continue to go through a budget exercise here in this Congress with respect to Federal workers. So I have said to some Federal workers your struggle as a Federal worker is connected to the struggles of private sector workers, is connected to the struggles of public sector workers at the State and municipal level. And let me tell you about that.

First, we have Federal workers who are facing a 2-year pay freeze. And they have accepted that because they are good public servants. Then they face the mythology of people who say that Federal workers are greatly overpaid when it comes to the private sector. But just as in Wisconsin, when you examine deeply the work that the workers do, you examine their job skills compared to the private sector job skills, and what you find is in fact they are greatly underpaid in the same job categories requiring the same skills and education as their private sector counterparts.

Now, I don't want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in fact private sector workers have made out like bandits over the last 20 years, because what we know is that private sector workers, including the organized workforce, have faced stagnant wages and benefits over the course of the last two decades. And that's why I think it's really important for us to connect the dots with workers, because I think that opponents out there who would like to privatize the public workforce, opponents out there who would like to delegitimize and disaggregate unions, who would like to bust them up, also want to suggest that in fact it's the public sector workers fighting against the private sector workers fighting against the Federal workers.

No, this is an entire workforce, as my colleague from Ohio has pointed out, across the board, across this country that has suffered massive, massive assaults on working people, on middle

class people when it comes to wages and benefits. And Wisconsin serves the purpose of highlighting for us the transparency and the meanness of what it takes to go after working families.

Ms. MOORE. Reclaiming my time, you know, I will tell you there are a couple of other myths I want to bust before I turn to the gentlelady, the doctor, physician in our caucus, to talk about Medicaid a little bit, because that links in with this union-busting effort. You know, Congresswoman from Maryland, you talk about trying to pit private sector workers against public workers, I am happy to say that those unions in the private sector in Wisconsin have stood firm with the public sector employees.

I am happy to report to you that the firefighters and the police, those unions that were exempted from this collective bargaining fiasco, stand firm with public employees. Why? Because they get it. They get it that the gains made by organized labor inure to all workers.

In Wisconsin in the 19th century, May 5, 1886, five people in my district, in Bay View in Wisconsin, were killed, and four were wounded, attacked by troops called on, sicced on them by the then-Governor Jeremiah Rusk, fighting for the 8-hour workday.

Workers in unions have won the weekend, safety conditions in the workplace. Workers have won these benefits, and they have inured to the private sector. And those people who are in the private sector need to respect the sacrifice, the blood and the tears.

You know, Wisconsin was a State where the first workers comp law passed, the first State to have unemployment compensation. It was the birthplace of AFSCME. This has been a progressive State.

We have 14 very brave State Senators who have left the State so that they would not have to vote on these draconian union provisions. And the governor has said that because they are leaving that there are going to be massive layoffs and firings, and it will be their fault.

□ 1730

Well, I just wanted to point one thing out. He revealed his budget just yesterday afternoon, and he has reduced State aid. He has reduced shared revenue to all of the counties, villages, cities, and municipalities to the tune of \$6.9 million. He has reduced aid to schools, kindergarten through 12th grade and technical colleges, to the tune of a billion dollars.

So these local communities, school districts, will have to lay off snow shovelers and teachers. Teachers will find themselves in classrooms with, they predicted, as many as 60 kids in them.

They are cutting Medicaid in this State, and I will get back to that later, because they are draconian cuts.

In the meantime, we are providing \$7.6 billion for roads. That's local

money and Federal money together. We are providing a total, 100 percent tax relief for capital gains taxes for businesses that locate in the community for up to 5 years. We are providing, his special sessions bill provided at least \$200 million worth of tax breaks at the same time we are reducing school aid by a billion dollars.

I see that the gentlewoman from Washington D.C., also a very esteemed attorney, has come to join us here. We are talking about the loss of the collective bargaining agreements in Wisconsin, something that has no fiscal impact, but that the governor insists must be a part of his budget.

I yield to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. I am in solidarity with the gentlewoman from Wisconsin and with my friend from the Virgin Islands as well, those who have come down, and in special solidarity with the workers in Wisconsin, in Ohio, in Indiana, who are fighting for their collective bargaining rights. Now, unlike the gentlewoman from Wisconsin, I don't know whether paying 5.8 percent into their retirement benefit is good or not, or whether paying 12 percent of their health care costs, I know it's double or triple the amount. I don't know about any of that.

I do know that when you have health care and retirement systems, there is usually a quid pro quo. You take less pay.

But I don't know the answer to that. All I know is that in a democratic society, where people have won collective bargaining rights, those matters are bargained at the table.

I am here to reinforce the importance of collective bargaining rights that are now on the table of the country, beginning in Wisconsin, spreading rapidly and, watch out, they could come, this insidious movement against collective bargaining could even come to the Congress of the United States. We have to stop it in its tracks in the Midwest.

In any free society, there are four or five rights that everybody will cite, the right to free speech, the right to religion and, guess what, the right to bargain collectively. Once you have established that the workers have elected a union, it is one of those fundamental rights.

I want to say to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin, if one of the developing countries that we always complain are not democratic enough, were to take away the collective bargaining rights of some of its workers, well, you would have to fight people at the well in order to quell the stampede of people saying you have violated a fundamental right of a free society.

I have just come from a hearing on the Postal Service. It was amazing to hear management and the private sector say that the reason you have a post office today and that it hasn't gone down the drain is because the workers across the table from management have helped them to manage the downsizing of the Postal Service.

The best thing that you can have when there is downsizing to be done is, indeed, to have a union. Because when people know that the downsizing, that the rights they hope they had that they don't have have been bargained for, they will accept those rights in a way they would not if management came in and just pulled them himself. That is what Governor Walker is trying to do right now.

Ms. MOORE. You know, you have made a very good point. If you going to downsize and if you are going to make those sacrifices, number one, our workers have said we will negotiate that. We will try to help our State.

But if you are going to downsize at least you ought to think that you are doing it for the public good. You don't want to think that you are doing it so that could give \$200 million in tax cuts so that you could privatize the nuclear power plants in the State. You would think that if you are going to pay 12.8 percent of your own health care that that would mean that at least the Governor was going to protect the most vulnerable who are on Medicaid.

But I am sorry, it's sad to be able to share with you, Dr. CHRISTENSEN, that in his budget he is limiting a family care program, it's a Medicaid program to pay for in-home services for seniors and people with disabilities, to only those who are currently enrolled; all the 2,000 people on the waiting list, no services. He is going to seek permission from the Federal Government to cut eligibility standards, to cut off certain categories of nonpregnant or non-disabled adults or lower eligibility, and he is not a fan of Planned Parenthood. He wants to cut off family planning services for men.

He is expecting—right now, they are forced to continue their maintenance effort, at least until July, when the enhanced FMAP runs out. But he is again seeking those waivers so that he can cut off categories of people.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. If I could just say for a moment it sounds very much like what's happening here.

As the gentlewoman has said and our other colleagues have said, this is not just an issue for Wisconsin, Ohio, and Indiana; this is an issue for our country. And the same thing that's being done in Wisconsin is what is being done here.

Tax giveaways to the wealthy and to business while we cut health care programs, education programs, community, economic development programs for people across America who need them.

And that's why we have decided today, as a caucus, to come here and to voice our support and to give encouragement to the workers and to your legislators who have had to leave Wisconsin to prevent these devastating cuts that will further damage the health of—and I am sure your State is no different from other States, where the poor people of color, women, are not getting the kind of health care that they need.

What we need is to make sure that the benefits that we passed last year in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act are implemented in Wisconsin and everywhere. What your governor is doing is going backwards instead of forward.

Ms. MOORE. Backwards instead of forward, \$900 million from our school system, \$250 million in State aid for the University of Wisconsin system, \$71.6 million from the technical college system, low-income children and families requiring women who receive TANF, temporary assistance, they are cutting them by \$20 a month, 3 percent of the TANF check.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. And the check is not that big to begin with.

Ms. MOORE. The check is small.

□ 1740

There is some talk of requiring them to move from 28 hours of work a week to 30 hours of work a week and reducing the amount of child care that they can get.

Again, the theme for this budget, our Governor's budget, is that Wisconsin is open for business. Well, no State can be open for business by slamming the doors of educational opportunity and denying babies, poor people, and seniors health care. It is more a case that we're selling our State to business interests.

I would yield to the gentlelady from D.C.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentlelady for yielding because I want to bring this right home to what is happening on the floor of this Congress as we speak. There is too little recognition of what you have indicated that when you cut agencies, you strangle services. That goes for the Federal sector as well. And I think we have to be very wary that this could come to the Federal sector. Federal workers have been targeted. They've got a great big bull's eye on their backs. They are among the best educated workers in the United States.

Bear in mind, I say to the gentlelady, because this will particularly be important in your State, the deadly deficit commission warned that no cutting should be done in this year, 2011, small cuts perhaps in 2012 and no real programmatic cuts until 2013. And they gave as a reason—this is the deficit commission—they gave as a reason that you would strangle the recovery. It's a fragile recovery. Mr. Bernanke spoke. I don't know if anyone mentioned that.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. We haven't mentioned it yet.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Bernanke spoke. I'm not on that committee, but I heard what he said. He has said, as well, don't harm the recovery. You don't, in the midst of a bear recovery, start acting as though you had a full-fledged economy. Everybody has been talking about a double dip. They are going to find out what a double dip is. If we had what independent observers say, 700,000

jobs gone because of these cuts, gone in Wisconsin, gone from the Federal Government, there is no way for us to recover. We cannot kick workers to the curb without having an effect on the recovery itself.

Watch out, Wisconsin. And particularly I say to my Republican colleagues, watch out that you don't bring it here and don't mess with collective bargaining of our Federal employees the way you're doing in Wisconsin. This is not Wisconsin.

Ms. MOORE. In January, our economy nationwide gained 36,000 jobs, hardly anything to brag about. But I can tell you this: this Wisconsin State budget fires 21,600 State employees alone. And when you consider the cuts to municipalities, cities, villages and counties, there are thousands more that are going to lose their jobs. So you talk about hurting the recovery, how can you recover when people don't have jobs to consume and those who do have jobs find their income cut by 6 and 7 percent because of these givebacks in their pensions and for their health care?

Not only that, they're balancing the budget on the backs of children and on the backs of seniors, but they're also penny wise and pound foolish. I live on a Great Lake. Twenty percent of the Earth's fresh water is in those Great Lakes. And what does this budget do? It reduces the "burden" that municipalities have in cleaning the water. It reduces standards for water cleanliness. It ends the recycling program. So it is penny wise and is probably going to destroy the environment, reduce educational opportunity and reduce health care to the most indigent and vulnerable in our population.

But we're giving tax breaks to the wealthiest Wisconsinites to encourage them to invest, 100 percent forgiveness of capital gains taxes, \$7.6 billion for roads, and we are going to privatize the nuclear power plant. One of the great contributors to the Governor's campaign happens to be in the nuclear power plant business. And we're all doing this in the name of balancing a budget.

I hope that the people in Wisconsin don't fall for this trick.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I'm sure they're not because people across America are not falling for it. The New York Times/CBS did a poll. They showed that the majority of Americans—and I'm sure in the States that are facing these issues—oppose efforts to weaken collective bargaining rights of public employee unions and are against cutting the pay or benefits of public workers to reduce State budget deficits. They oppose weakening collective bargaining by 60 percent, including large numbers, and not just Democrats but independents, they oppose cutting pay and benefits. The majority of Americans, over 56 percent, oppose cutting pay and benefits. And most of those who were surveyed are not union members and don't have union mem-

bers in their family. So the American people get it. They don't like what they are seeing.

Ms. NORTON. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Surely.

Ms. NORTON. This is very important because it means that Americans understand a fundamental right when they see one. And they are saying, and they know best of all, we're willing to take these cuts, don't go into people's fundamental rights, in fact, don't cut as much as you were doing.

Look, this majority rode into town on the promise of jobs. Where is the jobs bill? Instead, they proceeded forthwith to cut jobs. They cut jobs first in the health care bill. Now they are cutting hundreds of thousands of jobs on the floor with their own version of deficit reduction. All we're asking for is balance.

The workers in Wisconsin are willing to take cuts. They said so. Look, we'll take your cuts, Governor. Don't take away our collective bargaining. Everybody is willing to share. The Governor wants it all. Collective bargaining is about sharing. They need collective bargaining to get a fair deal for all concerned in Wisconsin.

And I compliment the gentlelady from Wisconsin for reinforcing her workers and reinforcing what the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands has told you is the view of the majority of the American people.

Ms. MOORE. I thank you so much, gentlelady from the Virgin Islands, for pulling this hour together.

As my aunt used to always say, the truth will set you free. And I hope that those who have watched this debate will try to see through some of the partisan bickering that has gone on.

Just to reinforce a few points that we've made, the effort to take away the ability for union members to not only collective bargain for themselves, but when they win those rights, so-called freeloaders, the people who are not in the union, benefit from those gains. That has nothing to do with budget issues. It has nothing to do with money. Those rights are things that have something to do with your conditions of employment, your ability to relate to your employer and to negotiate with him on non-economic issues as well economic issues.

This budget crisis is a creation of this Governor. We started out with a surplus budget in Wisconsin, and the first thing he did when he came into office was to provide at least \$300 million in tax benefits to the very wealthiest and then declare that we now have an emergency.

I would yield back to the gentlelady for closing.

□ 1750

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. So you did say that the emergency was sort of created?

Ms. MOORE. Exactly. That is the same reason that the Governor, then-

county executive, lost his case by firing those 26 guards because he is creating, once again, the same pattern, creating a false emergency.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Do you see the same thing happening here in this Congress?

Ms. MOORE. Exactly.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for joining us this evening to talk about this issue. Again, this is not about budgeting. It is about union busting, and it is the kind of policy that will not only hurt workers in the State and across the country, but it only leads to stalled economic growth and the slashing of jobs. It is the kind of policy that hurts our Nation.

We want to make sure that our workers in Ohio and Wisconsin and Indiana and everywhere know that the Congressional Black Caucus stands with you. We want to let our country's labor leaders, the union leadership know that we stand with them and support them, and that we have the highest respect and support for the Democratic legislators who have drawn the line and did what had to be done to stop the egregious attacks on the middle class and the poor.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO ZIMBABWE—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112-12)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2011.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. While some advances have been made in Zimbabwe, particularly on economic stabilization, since the signing of the power-sharing agreement, the absence of progress on the most fundamental reforms needed to ensure rule of law and democratic

governance leaves Zimbabweans vulnerable to ongoing repression and presents a continuing threat to peace and security in the region and the foreign policy of the United States. Politically motivated violence and intimidation, and the undermining of the power-sharing agreement by elements of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front party, continue to be of grave concern. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

The United States welcomes the opportunity to modify the targeted sanctions regime when blocked persons demonstrate a clear commitment to respect the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. The United States has committed to continue its review of the targeted sanctions list for Zimbabwe to ensure it remains current and addresses the concerns for which it was created. We hope that events on the ground will allow us to take additional action to recognize progress in Zimbabwe in the future. The goal of a peaceful, democratic Zimbabwe remains foremost in our consideration of any action.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 2, 2011.

CRISIS FACING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, it is a treat to be able to join you tonight, my colleagues and friends, and to talk about a great crisis that our Nation is facing. It is becoming increasingly apparent to Americans not only that we have a problem with unemployment and jobs, but we have a problem with the Federal budget and the deficit and the spending and the taxing—all of those things that go into an economy.

These problems are far more significant than I think many Americans are aware. I would like to talk about that tonight and to keep it fairly simple, and to let people know, as President Reagan said, while the solution is simple, it is not easy. It requires a great deal of courage.

I am going to start tonight in perhaps an odd way. I am going to ask you, please, to picture that you are either a Senator or a Congressman in 1850 in America. In 1850, you would have noted that there was increasing discussion as the new territories became available, whether they would be allowed to come into our Nation either as a free State or a slave State. It created a lot of political tension between the different Representatives representing different points of view on that subject.

By 1852, the book "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was written. It became a very

popular book, and it tended to further inflame the issue, the great question of the day. The question was slavery; what would America do with that question.

By 1857, the Supreme Court, deciding to legislate from the bench, which has always turned out to be a bad idea and beyond their constitutional authority, came up with a decision that came from my State, the State of Missouri. It was called the Dred Scott decision. It said essentially that black people were not people; they were property. But beyond that, it also said to the Congress and to the Senate that they could not make any kinds of deals as to which State would be slave or free because each State could do whatever they wanted.

And so the stage was set as the tensions grew for Abraham Lincoln to be elected to be President. And as he was on the train approaching the capital, leaving Illinois, a number of Southern States seceded from the Union. And almost as though in slow motion, a great locomotive drove off the edge of the cliff pulling the train with it, and America was immersed in a terrible, terrible Civil War. It was a war that was ultimately to claim 600,000 lives. That is more than all the people who are Americans who have been killed in all of the rest of the wars we have fought in our Nation's history. Of course, a statistic like 600,000 may seem to make your eyes glaze over, but then you start to hear the individual and personal stories of people who were horribly touched and families that were destroyed by the horror of the war, and you recall the words of the second inaugural address of Abraham Lincoln and he talked about the fact that the war had been far, far worse than anybody had ever imagined was possible.

That great tragedy, that terrible cost that was paid by our Nation, was a result of a failure of leadership, a failure to deal with a massive fundamental question that everybody knew was there all through the 1850s—the question of slavery. And the failure was not just in the Congress, in the Senate, but it was in the people of the States for being too disengaged and unwilling to take that question head on.

The parallel today, I think, is a little bit frighteningly similar. Today, just as there was in 1850, there is a gorilla in our tent, and that is the problem with the Federal Government spending too much money. So what I want to do is put that in very simple terms not so your eyes will glaze over, but so we get some sort of a sense of balance as to what is going on; because my proposition is that we are spending too much money, the government is spending too much money, and it is unsustainable.

Now, this is something that many thoughtful liberals, as well as conservatives, agree is true. There is disagreement as to what to do about it. But the numbers are the numbers. There is something about mathematics that is