

Dream to be tarnished. We send a message to the American people, those who are currently unemployed and those who are one bad break away from unemployment, that we will bail out banks but not support them as they fight to take care of their families.

The Civil Rights Act and the amendments that have followed demonstrate what makes America exceptional. Here, regardless of the color of your skin, the god you pray to, your ethnicity, your age or sex, you will be judged on your performance. We haven't always lived up to our principles, but it is the collective momentum towards these values that makes America great.

Discrimination against any American is an affront to the very idea of America. A new class of citizen now needs protection from the superficial bias that is not based on the ability to perform. Using current employment status as a requirement for application or consideration is shameful.

There are 13.9 million Americans currently unemployed; that means 13.9 million Americans are considered by some employers to be no longer viable for employment. They are dismissed out of hand.

But, Mr. Speaker, I refuse to believe that every unemployed individual is unqualified for a job. It is an arbitrary way of narrowing an applicant pool by finding a loophole that allows discrimination.

I ask each and every Member of Congress to stand with me and to say to those 13.9 million Americans who are unemployed, you are not forgotten, your chance has not passed. We should pass the Civil Rights Act of 2011. We should not allow the opportunities that all Americans deserve to be taken away. Current joblessness should not disqualify you from employment. Your ability is more valuable than any label ever placed upon you.

CUBAN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and support the efforts under way throughout my wonderful State of Florida to honor the courage, the achievement, and the legacy of Cuban Americans in the United States.

The following cities, in addition to the Florida House of Representatives, have passed resolutions in support of designating a day to recognize the many valuable contributions of Cuban Americans to the United States. Hialeah Gardens, Hialeah, Doral, Florida City, West Miami, Miami Beach, the City of Miami, Pembroke Pines, Homestead and Key West.

Cuban Americans have had a profound and lasting influence on the history, values, and culture of the United

States since the arrival of the earliest Cuban settlers more than 400 years ago in St. Augustine, Florida.

According to the 2007 census survey, 251,000 Cuban American-owned businesses generated \$51 billion to our economy. Several local south Florida municipalities have recognized the important contributions that the Cuban American community has made to the economic and cultural development of our great Nation.

Cuban Americans have become dedicated public servants, having held posts at the highest levels of government.

Cubans settling in the United States look at this Nation, our wonderful United States of America, with gratitude; and many have risked life and limb to defend this bastion of freedom and democracy. Countless Cuban Americans have served bravely in all branches of the United States Armed Forces and have fought honorably in many wars.

One such hero is Armando Alejandro, who voluntarily enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served two tours of duty in Vietnam. Armando was also a volunteer for the Brothers to the Rescue, a pro-democracy organization whose mission is to promote and support the efforts of the people of Cuba to free themselves from the Cuban dictatorship through the use of active non-violence.

While he and his fellow Brothers to the Rescue volunteers were carrying out such a humanitarian mission on February 24, 1996, the Cuban regime ordered Cuban military jets to shoot down their unarmed civilian aircraft.

□ 1010

The shoot-down resulted in the unjust killings of Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro, Mario de la Pena, and Pablo Morales.

Last month, I wrote a letter to Secretary Clinton and Attorney General Holder asking the administration to take immediate action to indict Fidel and Raul Castro for their role in this horrible shoot-down. The United States must make it clear that we will not stand for the Cuban tyrannies, manipulation, and unapologetic crimes against the American people nor for its abuses against its own people of Cuba.

No matter how the regime and its enablers try to spin it, the Cuban tyranny remains as oppressive and uncompromising as ever. Its methodical release and exile of political prisoners is nothing but an attempt to curry favor with those with whom the regime seeks business.

This weekend's conviction and sentencing of U.S. citizen Alan Gross to 15 years in prison is a clear reminder of this. This deplorable act is another illustration of the regime's willingness to use human beings as political pawns to advance its destructive agenda. The United States and all responsible nations must demand the immediate release of Alan Gross and all prisoners

who remain wrongfully imprisoned in Castro's gulags.

I am proud to say that despite the challenges and the passing years, Cuban Americans remain undeterred in our fight for freedom, justice, and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I join in the support of these resolutions and again urge that a date be set to honor the courage, the achievements, and the legacy of Cuban Americans in the glorious United States.

THE COST OF THE ENERGY TAX PREVENTION ACT

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, Colstrip, Montana, is home to the second largest coal plant west of the Mississippi. One boxcar-full of coal is burned every 5 minutes.

The burning coal creates sodium, thallium, mercury, boron, aluminum, and arsenic, which is pumped out of the factory and into the air. The chemicals that are pumped into the air are caught in the factory's scrubbers and then dumped with coal ash into giant settling ponds. These ponds are shallow artificial lakes of concentrated toxicity which leach this poison into wells and aquifers.

The sludge flows into the surrounding towns and countryside, bubbling up against foundations and floorings, cracking the floor in Colstrip's local grocery store. Ranchers in eastern Montana are now suing the plant for damages; noxious water, they cite, is the only liquid that fill their wells and stock ponds.

James Jansen, a renowned climate scientist, says Colstrip itself will cause the extinction of 400 species. But Colstrip burns on. Why? Because we have no national energy plan, and because there are currently no Federal enforceable regulations specific to coal ash.

This lack of federally enforceable safeguards is exactly what led to the disaster in Tennessee, where a dam holding more than 1 billion gallons of toxic coal ash failed. The TVA disaster destroyed 300 acres, dozens of homes, killed fish and other wildlife, and poisoned the Emory and Clinch Rivers.

From Tennessee to Montana and across the Nation, the story is the same: We have no national conservation plan, no national energy policy, no regulatory enforcement authority.

What is worse, today we are faced with a bill, H.R. 910, the Energy Tax Prevention Act, which purports to protect citizens from taxation. In reality, this bill is a death sentence not only to our land, air, water, animals, and plants but to humans.

This bill overturns proven scientific findings that carbon pollution endangers the health of Americans. It repeals the greenhouse gas reporting rule and removes the Environmental Protection

Agency's authority to require energy efficiency at power plants and refineries. This bill simply says that science doesn't matter.

I stand here today to refute that claim and, further, to protect the integrity of science. It is this science, these facts and figures, that have led hundreds of scientists to confirm that global warming is real. In fact, over 200 peer-reviewed scientific studies have found that global warming is real and that man contributes to it. To this date, zero peer-reviewed studies have found otherwise.

It is this science that led the Supreme Court to rule that the Environmental Protection Agency does in fact have the authority to regulate greenhouse gases, and it is this science that led the Congress to pass the Clean Air Act, the act which designated the EPA as the body charged with overseeing, adapting, and implementing these regulations.

In the coming months, EPA will begin regulating greenhouse gases from certain emitters for the first time. These regulations have become hugely controversial and, sadly, political. These rules seek to combat man-made climate change; man-made climate change that is melting our polar ice caps, that is raising the level of our oceans, and that is modifying our seasonal temperatures; man-made climate change that is altering the duration of our growing season, that is flooding part of the world and is causing multiyear droughts and others; man-made climate change that is allowing particulate matters to infiltrate our children's lungs, making them suffer from lifelong asthma and making us die earlier.

And still, here we are, ignoring cries from health and medical professionals who have asked us, as Members of this body, to fulfill the promise of clean, healthy air for all Americans to breathe.

Support full implementation of the Clean Air Act and resist any efforts to weaken, delay, or block progress toward a healthier future for all Americans.

Ignoring requests from former senior military officials who wrote just last week, "America's dependence on oil constitutes a clear and present danger to the security and welfare of the United States," and that, "As former senior military officials, we are concerned about congressional efforts to undermine the Environmental Protection Agency's regulatory authority that is critical to reducing our dependence on oil," Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford the costs of the Energy Tax Prevention Act: Lost and devastated ecosystems, lost jobs, and lost lives.

PASS A COMMONSENSE ENERGY PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) for 2 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, let me cut to the point. Gas prices have skyrocketed at the worst possible time, the economy is in a slump, and people are hurting. The administration and congressional Democrats are making the problem worse with their burdensome energy regulations that destroy jobs and drive up costs. Democrats and the White House are blocking commonsense reforms that would allow for more targeted energy exploration here at home, which would lead to lower gas prices and additional job creation and greater security.

Three weeks ago, I had the privilege of sitting in the office of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel. He expressed great appreciation for America, but also ended by saying that he was greatly concerned that America was unwilling at this time to do what was necessary to make sure that we had an energy plan of independence from, as he called it, the earthquake zone of the Middle East. And I agree. So I am joining with my colleagues, my Republican colleagues, their common sense and pro-growth, in proposing an alternative.

I believe we should allow for more exploration in Alaska, so I cosponsored H.R. 49, the American Energy Independence and Price Reduction Act. I believe we should pass an all-of-the-above energy plan. So that is why I am becoming an original cosponsor of H.R. 909, A Road Map to America's Energy Future. And the government should stop the painfully slow permitting process for drilling in the gulf, so I joined with Representative SCALISE and others of my colleagues in the House to urge the President to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, the current energy policy is one of overregulation, and it is not working. We must work to change that now. I stand ready to work with my colleagues to create an energy policy that lowers energy prices and allows for more job creation. The people of my district and of this great country are demanding nothing less.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this morning thousands of people on Capitol Hill turned to NPR radio or the NPR Web site to find out the latest developments on the horrific situation in Japan, the potential nuclear meltdown, and with the fast-moving events in the Middle East. This is why the Pew survey revealed yesterday that, while media across the board is declining—broadcast television news, newspapers, radio—that we are watching a renaissance as far as public broadcasting, in particular NPR, which is increasing its audience, its revenues, and its reporting staff.

But the health and vitality of NPR is not a reason to slash the financial sup-

port for public broadcasting. First and foremost, it is a miniscule part of the budget, less than one half a cent per day for each American. But more important, this is the type of infrastructure America needs right now.

The public broadcasting support provides a unique service that is not available on commercial television. The education, culture, news, even the boring news, is an area where there is no commercial market. That is why you will search 500 stations in vain on cable and satellite to find that type of programming that is available for news and for educating our children, not selling them something.

□ 1020

More significant, the amount of money that comes from Public Broadcasting to NPR is a tiny fraction of its budget. Most of the Public Broadcasting support that is provided by Congress goes to local stations, with particular emphasis on rural and small-town America.

Taking as an example my home State of Oregon with its award-winning Oregon Public Broadcasting, it costs 11 times more to broadcast to the far eastern reaches in Burns, Oregon, than it does in metropolitan Portland. That is a pattern that is repeated coast to coast. Rural and small-town America relies more heavily on Public Broadcasting. It doesn't have the population base to ever provide for itself.

Slashing Public Broadcasting funding is not going to stop Public Broadcasting in New York or Washington, DC., in Seattle or Los Angeles, or even Portland, Oregon. What it will do is make the programming less rich, and it will reduce the ability to provide those services in the outlying areas.

Even the most recent flap about the media ambush of a former NPR fundraiser, which produced an 11-minute video that appeared to be very damning as far as Public Broadcasting is concerned, well, it took NPR to do an in-depth study. It reviewed the entire 2-hour conversation captured on tape to find out that the edited 11-minute version was misleading, trying to portray the point of view of the ambush journalist. This is the same guy who was caught by law enforcement officials trying to illegally "bug" the office of Senator MARY LANDRIEU in Louisiana.

In the course of 2 hours, it was very clear, reviewing the entire record, that it had been inappropriately edited to suggest that there was an acceptance or that it was amusing that there was somehow an attempt to impose sharia law across the country. It ignored the fact that the NPR employee made it clear that there was a firewall between any contributions and influencing the editorial content.

That is why NPR and PBS are the most trusted names in broadcasting, and why 78 percent of Americans in a recent poll said they wanted Public Broadcasting support maintained or