

A decade after that law, I am in Congress. And while some farms obey the heat protections, others are flagrantly violating it. The POWER Act will stop these violations. It would have let someone like Asuncion go to the authorities without fear of retaliation. It would have let him continue to work while he cooperated with Cal OSHA to take Giumarra to court and would have ensured that Giumarra treated all their workers fairly from then on. And I hope that because of the POWER Act, a son will never have to watch a father die in this way again.

The POWER Act will bring abused workers out of the shadows. It will give employees the courage to stand up to the world's biggest and strongest companies. The POWER Act will fundamentally change the very structure of workers' rights in this country. It supports every honest, hardworking employee across the country, protecting them. It's time that exploited workers were able to come out of the shadows, leave cruel conditions, and find jobs where they are treated with the dignity and respect that every employee in America deserves. It's time for the POWER Act.

RUSSIA

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, in August of 2008, Russia and the Republic of Georgia engaged in what author Ronald Asmus called "A Little War That Shook the World." And, Mr. Speaker, it did shake the world. For all of post-Soviet Russia's anti-democratic crack-downs, its aggressive and bellicose actions toward former Soviet states, it was still a shock to see Russian tanks roll across the border of a sovereign, democratic country. The military conflict lasted 5 days; and a shaken world moved on, soon forgetting the shock and outrage of what happened.

But for the people of the Republic of Georgia, this conflict goes on nearly 3 years later. They live with the tragic consequences that follow any armed conflict, including thousands of displaced persons and significant economic hardships. Beyond the human cost, they face a long-term strategic challenge of an occupying force in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia where Russia continues to violate the terms of the ceasefire to which it agreed.

As occupiers, they violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of an independent democratic state, one that has chosen a path toward integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions and, more important, one that has chosen integration with Euro-Atlantic values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Russia's recalcitrance has left the region in a bitter stalemate as it flouts international norms and its own commitments. Within the context of this

stalemate, the temperature has seemed to cool, with bitter hardship and frustrations supplanting heated military conflict.

But that cooling temperature is perhaps a very dangerous illusion. While the fear of overt military action may be waning, more subversive—but just as potentially deadly—action is taking place. Since 2009, the Republic of Georgia has experienced 12 acts or attempted acts of terrorism within its borders, which the Georgians believe are linked to Russian forces.

One such bombing, on September 22, 2010, took place right near the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi. Two thwarted attacks took place just this month. One improvised explosive device was intercepted on June 2, two days before several colleagues and I arrived in Tbilisi. Another was intercepted on June 6 while we were still there.

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We had the opportunity to discuss with President Saakashvili at length the nature of these attacks and attempted attacks. He and his administration are increasingly concerned about what they perceive to be a systematic effort to target the Georgian people and undermine their progress toward a peaceful, stable, democratic and independent nation. The intended targets of recent bombing attempts seem to suggest an increased focus on civilian casualties, which is particularly troubling.

As investigations proceed to determine the exact origin and intent of these bombings, it is more important than ever that we stand with our Georgian friends; that we stand with their right to sovereignty and territorial integrity; that we stand with their efforts to build a stronger democracy. In fact, the purpose of my recent trip to Tbilisi was to continue the work of the House Democracy Partnership, which has a longstanding program with the Georgian legislature.

My co-chairman, DAVID PRICE, and I have led a number of delegations to Tbilisi and hosted many Georgian legislators in Washington in order to provide training and support as they build their legislative institutions.

It is important to work with new and reemerging democracies as they grow and develop, but it is all the more essential for us to support those who are under attack for the very reason that they have chosen their democratic path.

The Obama administration has attempted to reset relations with Russia for a number of pragmatic and strategic reasons. I believe they were right to do so. But it is important to differentiate those relationships which are important for inescapable geopolitical considerations, and those which are based on shared values and goals. As a major international player and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, we must engage constructively with Russia, but

that does not mean we must turn a blind eye to its tactics or strategic aims towards the former Soviet sphere. To the contrary, we must engage with eyes wide open.

Georgia is not the only state to have emerged from the Soviet orbit with democratic intentions, only to face deliberate, significant pressures and obstacles from Moscow.

The nature of our engagement with Russia will get more scrutiny than ever as Moscow moves toward entry into the World Trade Organization. Bringing them into a rules-based trading system will help us deal with the challenges that we face, but we cannot lose our resolve to address these challenges, or lose sight of the fact that the fate of democracy in the post-Soviet world is one of them. Those who are working diligently against great odds to build democratic institutions must know that the American people stand with them.

TAX LOOPHOLES

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, in their agitation over the debt, our Republican friends have obstinately focused on program cuts alone, ignoring the harm to American families and the economic recovery. Their mindless slashing of the budget is costing jobs, while damaging communities. Yesterday's news about EPA cuts hurting local efforts at clean air and clean water is another example.

More than a quarter of the deficit growth since 2001 resulted from the economic downturn which reduced tax revenues and increased programmatic spending. You spend more on unemployment when more people are unemployed.

Our focus should be on job creation, which reduces unemployment costs and increases tax revenue. However, in their first 6 months in the majority, the Republicans have not passed any legislation to create jobs.

The government's budget is often compared to a household budget, but every family knows that expenses are just one side of the equation. How many Americans, in tough times, take on second or even third jobs to increase their income because some expenses just can't be cut?

As a Nation, we have the ability to increase our revenues, our income. An obvious place to look for additional income is closing tax loopholes and ending unnecessary subsidies, for example, for large oil companies would be one of the best places to start.

Tax incentives are intended to help businesses create vital American jobs or develop technologies to improve our way of life. We as Democrats support those tax incentives that increase domestic manufacturing and other American businesses which create jobs and

aid the economic recovery. These tax breaks promote our national economic priorities and put people back to work.

But when a company's profits are \$10.65 billion in just 3 months, such as ExxonMobil's were earlier this year, who can reasonably argue that that company needs expensive incentives to stay in business and make money?

The 10 most egregious tax loopholes enjoyed by the large oil companies have helped the five largest companies make a combined profit of nearly \$1 trillion over the last decade.

The billions we spend every year on subsidies for the largest oil and gas companies are not moving us any closer to energy independence or a clean energy economy. The subsidies are not necessary and they're not useful for our economy.

In 2010, nearly 60 percent of big oil companies' profits went to stock buybacks and dividends, not job creation. With oil produced at \$11 a barrel, and sold for \$100, tax breaks for oil companies are simply wasteful hand-outs, transferring money from working families to corporate stockholders. The difference over what was sold for an average barrel of oil, \$72 average production price; average production cost, \$11.

No American family should be giving up their dinner to donate money to the millionaire next door. Removing these tax incentives will save taxpayers \$40 billion over the next 5 years with only minimal impact in the profit, not in their operations. Cutting subsidies will not raise oil prices, which are set in a global market that this year will be in the range of \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion.

Subsidies in the Tax Code, instead, should be directed toward emerging technologies like wind and solar. That's where the real jobs are. A University of Massachusetts study found that incentives for clean energy create two to four times more direct and indirect jobs compared to investments in oil and gas production.

Another obvious place to cut is the ethanol tax credit. We don't need to subsidize something that industry is mandated to buy.

We cannot ask children and seniors to bear the brunt of sacrifice while we are simply giving more money to large corporate interests that don't need it. We must make tough choices to ensure we leave a sound economy to the next generation, but we have to make those choices wisely so we leave a Nation that is competitive, prosperous, healthy, and educated.

CONGRATULATING NEW JERSEY'S TOP RANKING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate eight outstanding public high schools in New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District that were recently recognized by Newsweek Magazine as among the top

500 public high schools in America for 2011.

In all, New Jersey claimed 36 high schools of Newsweek's top 500. In the Seventh Congressional District in New Jersey, that I have the honor of representing, I congratulate the Academy For Allied Health Sciences in Scotch Plains; the Union County Magnet High School, also in Scotch Plains; Watchung Hills Regional High School in Warren; Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights; Westfield High School in Westfield; the Academy for Information Technology, also in Scotch Plains; Cranford High School in Cranford; and Jonathan Dayton High School in Springfield.

Newsweek contacted more than 1,100 high schools across the country and reviewed their graduation and college matriculation rates, SAT and Advanced Placement test scores and other information, as well as the school's ability to turn out college-ready and life-ready students.

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I congratulate all of the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other property taxpayers who help make New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District the home to so many of the top-performing high schools in the Nation. When it comes to the best education in the country, New Jersey's public school system makes the grade.

WE NEED A FAIR, BALANCED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, we are some 3 years into the worst recession since the Great Depression. I have heard repeated claims that these are times that call for courageous leadership and bold decisions. Well, there certainly has been no lack of audacity during recent talks on the budget.

I'm joining my colleagues on the Budget Committee here today to ask, on behalf of my constituents in New York's 21st Congressional District, for less hubris and more humility from some of our Nation's leaders as we attempt to solve a problem that impacts the lives and livelihoods of our families, our friends, our neighbors, and our constituents.

I have but two requests: first, that any budget agreement must not hurt our economy further. In 2008, the financial crisis brought this Nation to its knees. It was a crisis of our own making; and though we must not dwell on blame, we must learn from this experience to avoid the mistakes of the past.

Is there no way to encourage business growth, small and large, without wasting \$130 billion a year on tax giveaways and without gutting programs that educate our workforce? I refuse to believe that there is no smart solution to this problem. My constituents refuse to believe it. We have learned our lesson, and we know better.

Second, any budget agreement must take a balanced approach. It is the height of arrogance to sit down at a negotiating table to solve a fiscal crisis and declare an \$800 billion question off limits. Federal Government subsidies for some of the most profitable corporations on Earth, oil tax breaks that trace their roots to policy decisions made nearly 100 years ago must be on the table. Tax breaks for the wealthiest 2 percent of America must be on the table. Tax earmarks for corporate jets, for snow globes, for golf bags, these must be on the table.

America is watching. America is waiting for us to wake up, eat our Wheaties, and flex the powerful muscle of human reason to get this country on a sustainable path. Sustainability means cutting spending where it is not needed and where it offers no common good. It means cutting tax kickbacks where they are not needed. It means protecting the present and the future of Medicare in a form that provides more than a coupon to our seniors and more than an unsympathetic "so be it" to proud men and women who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. It means knowing that the Big Five oil companies can stand on their own two feet. It means playing for the same team, putting everything on the table and winning this one not for our campaigns, but for our constituents.

If I might refer to this chart using data from OMB and the Ways and Means Committee, my Republican colleagues have shown the so-called "courage" to ask America's seniors to make yet another great sacrifice for their country—giving up their hard-earned, guaranteed Medicare benefits in favor of a voucher. This will lead to thousands of dollars in new out-of-pocket expenses each year.

Certainly the \$165 billion in cuts is rivaled by the \$131 billion yearly giveaways, that \$165-billion-a-year question from the Republican budget that is on the table in these talks. I do not like it. I will not vote for it. I will fight it every time it comes to this floor for a vote, but it is on the table. It is being discussed and debated, fought for and against in a process that makes our democracy run as it was intended to. But again, we will fight any cuts and any end to Medicare.

But there's another line on this chart, and that's this \$131-billion-per-year question of giving tax breaks to wealthy special interests. Look, the two of them are comparable, giving oil companies more subsidies versus taking away Medicare. This is the question of using taxpayer-subsidized support from the Federal Government to add a few extra billion to the Herculean profits of some of the world's wealthiest corporations.

The Big Five oil companies have pocketed almost \$1 trillion in profits in the past 10 years. In the midst of our recession, they are doing just fine. They have told us, We don't need the tax breaks. So why would my colleague