

Internet watching the Egyptian people, Christian and Muslim alike, demand free and fair elections for the first time.

The history of the Christian church in Egypt far exceeds that of Islam. Even now, Coptic Christians make up 10 percent of Egypt's population of 80 million people.

Unfortunately, some fringe groups of extremist Muslims took this opportunity to attack their fellow Egyptians simply because they are Christians in an attempt to drive them out of Egypt. In some cases, they were successful.

Our country was founded on the principles of religious freedom. As a Christian and a Member of the House of Representatives, I'm hopeful that this example of a broad range of beliefs of our 435 Members will stand as an example to the Egyptian people.

I would ask the Egyptian people and the current military leadership to stand with the Christian minority in Egypt and ensure their ability to freely practice their faith is not impugned by the current leadership or the one that may be elected in the future.

I will continue to keep the Coptic Christians in Egypt in my prayers, and I would ask my colleagues to do the same.

YELLOWSTONE RIVER PIPELINE SPILL

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, last week-end while most Americans were celebrating the Fourth of July, Montanans were, unfortunately, immersed in what has become a new American tradition: cleaning up oil spills.

After Exxon's Silvertip pipeline failed and spewed 40,000 gallons of toxic oil into the Yellowstone River, Exxon quickly labeled the incident a "freak accident"—a phrase commonly used by the oil industry after major spills. But an exhaustive history of Big Oil's spills makes it clear that these incidents are not "freak accidents" but evidence of Big Oil's neglect.

Perhaps the most blatant, recent exhibit of empty safety promises belongs to TransCanada, who dubbed the Keystone pipeline "the safest pipeline ever built." A year and 12 spills later, Keystone was shut down and deemed an "imminent threat to life, property, and the environment."

Before we permit the Keystone XL pipeline—another deadly TransCanada pipeline—we need to reauthorize our pipeline safety legislation because our pipelines need to be as consistent as Old Faithful.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this last weekend we celebrated America's Inde-

pendence Day; and as I visited with constituents, they asked that we create another independence movement, independence from Middle Eastern oil, and I agree.

Unfortunately, rather than pursuing energy independence, the Obama administration keeps fostering an energy-dependence policy that costs American jobs, brings higher prices at the pump, and endangers our national security by making us more dependent on unstable Middle Eastern governments.

House Republicans have responded by introducing and passing four bills to increase our domestic energy production and create American jobs. But the Senate has taken no action. Liberal Democrats are obstructing the opportunity for jobs for Americans, lower energy costs, and a new era of independence.

It's time, Mr. Speaker, to declare independence from Middle Eastern oil and start using our own resources for the benefit of all Americans.

U.S. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN LIBYA

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, within the next 24 hours, the House will have the opportunity to end U.S. military involvement in Libya. And we should do so for the following reasons:

First, the war is illegal under the United States Constitution and our War Powers Act because only the U.S. Congress has the authority to declare war, and the President has been unable to show that the U.S. faced an imminent threat from Libya. The President even ignored his top legal advisers at the Pentagon and the Department of Justice, who insisted he needed congressional approval before bombing Libya.

Second, the war has reached a stalemate and is unwinnable without the deployment of NATO ground troops, effectively an invasion of Libya. The whole operation was terribly ill-considered from the beginning.

While NATO supports the Benghazi-based opposition situated in the oil rich northeast, there is little evidence that the opposition has the support of the majority of Libyans. The leading opposition group, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, which had been reportedly backed by the CIA in the 1980s, should never have launched an armed civil war against the government if they had no chance absent a massive NATO air campaign and the introduction of NATO troops.

It's time to put an end to this war. Vote to cut off funds.

□ 1410

REPUBLICAN JOBS PLAN

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, rising unemployment continues to populate the headlines. An article last week by the AP points out that several cities in my State of Michigan, including Battle Creek, which I have the privilege of representing, endured big increases in unemployment. Michigan's unemployment stands at over 10 percent. The policies of this administration exacerbate bad situations. We do not need more overspending, higher taxes, rising energy costs, government takeover of health care, and more regulations.

My Republican colleagues and I have put forth a jobs plan. We know government cannot create jobs. Instead, we can support an environment where the private sector flourishes and creates jobs. Our jobs plan will reduce regulatory burdens, which are currently costing small businesses over \$10,000 per employee each year, requiring congressional approval for any regulation that has significant impact on the economy. Our jobs plan will fix the Tax Code, streamlining and lowering tax rates. Our jobs plan will encourage entrepreneurship. Our jobs plan will increase domestic energy production and will cut unsustainable spending that creates crushing burdens of debt.

At home last week, I was constantly reminded how the lack of good-paying jobs is affecting my constituents. It's truly time for America to stand up for its liberty and its next generation.

MINNESOTA GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(Ms. MCCOLLUM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, this week in Minnesota our State government is shut down due to a budget crisis. I want to applaud Governor Mark Dayton for negotiating in good faith, making productive compromises, and for never forgetting the needs of Minnesotans, especially our most vulnerable citizens.

The Republicans controlling the Minnesota Legislature issue ultimatums, and they want to mortgage our State's future by cutting health, education, and law enforcement. In Congress and in Minnesota, Republicans use the same playbook: First, create a crisis, put jobs at risk and the economy in peril; then ignore the needs of middle class families, and then fight to protect the interests of millionaires and billionaires.

What we are seeing in Washington and St. Paul is the radical tea party Republican extremism threatening jobs and the economy with destruction in the name of political advantage. This is a dangerous political strategy, and it needs to end now. Democrats and Republicans need to work together to solve our Nation's problems. The American people and Minnesotans expect that of their elected leaders.

ALLOW THE JOB CREATORS TO CREATE JOBS

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I stand to tell a rare success story that I saw firsthand last week. Custom Aluminum Products, a local manufacturing business employing more than 360 people, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Throughout those 50 years, they have grown from a small local manufacturer to a nationally recognized leader in the aluminum industry.

I tell their story today because Custom Aluminum is a thriving local business—expanding, employing, and excelling despite the economic and regulatory burdens. We have much to learn from stories like this: that if given the opportunity to excel, our small businesses will answer the call; and that it is never the role of the Federal Government to create jobs. Instead, government must get out of the way of small businesses by reducing job-killing regulations and bureaucratic red tape and allowing the job creators do what they do best: create jobs.

We must bring back certainty to the small business community and rebuild their confidence in our economy so that we can get Americans working again and celebrate many more local success stories like this in the coming months and years.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT DESTROYS PATIENT ACCESS

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to bring your attention to the front page of USA Today. The story is titled, "Medicaid Payments Go Under the Knife." This is an issue that, unfortunately, is going to continue to get worse. Medicaid isn't just going under the knife; it's being slashed.

The simple truth is that Medicaid has become a coverage without access and only an empty promise for the people who arguably may legitimately need its services. And the Affordable Care Act is only going to exacerbate the problem with patient access to physicians. The new health care law has changed what was a program that was designed for the poorest of the poor, pregnant women, children, and the elderly, and turned it into a one-size-fits-all government program. States will add 16 million new people to the program, millions of younger adults, putting an even greater strain on the State budgets.

The health care law never addressed the root problem. We need to ensure that Medicaid spending is directed in a fashion that provides an actual safety net for those in need and allows States to create a range of products to give

Medicaid patients access to their physicians and better care. We actually need to get back to the basics. And it is essential that we examine Medicaid and realize the ramifications before our States sink even deeper into a budgetary crisis.

CHINA HOSTED INDICTED WAR CRIMINAL

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, China recently rolled out the red carpet, pictured behind me, for Sudanese President Omar Bashir, an internationally indicted war criminal facing charges on 10 counts, including murder, extermination, forcible transfer of population, torture, and rape.

Prior to the visit, I wrote a letter to President Hu Jintao urging the Chinese Government to withdraw their invitation. Not only is Bashir wanted for his role in genocide in Darfur, but, as I speak, atrocities are unfolding against Christians in the Nuba Mountains—reliable reports of door-to-door targeting and killings, mass graves, Antonov bombers indiscriminately shelling civilian populations.

Consider this reality: Bashir is a wanted war criminal. His murderous aims are unchanged. The Chinese Government treats him as a friend and extends every diplomatic grace. And China owns our debt.

What is wrong with this picture? An indicted war criminal with the President of China.

DISMANTLING MEDICARE AS WE KNOW IT

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to our friend from Texas who spoke just a few minutes ago, talking about Medicaid. It is true that entitlement programs need to be reformed. It's also true that costs need to be reined in. That's what affordable health care reform actually did.

The answer certainly does not lie in the Republican budget passed earlier this year on a party-line vote, which would dismantle Medicare as we know it, turning it into a voucher system, the Ryan plan, and would turn Medicaid into a block grant program which would further impoverish our States at a delicate moment of their recovery.

We need reform in entitlement programs, but the Republican budget, Mr. Speaker, is not the answer. It is the death knell for a program that covers a third of all Americans' health care.

SOLVE THE DEBT PROBLEM

(Mr. LANKFORD asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Speaker, today I rise after spending the week of July 4th in the heartland of America, central Oklahoma, where I had the opportunity to hear the thoughts of the families in my district regarding our economy and the debt.

No one approached me during the last week to tell me they wanted more government spending to create jobs. No one asked me to create more instability in our economy by raising taxes. In fact, no one told me they wanted to celebrate Independence Day by seeing more government dependence.

But over and over again, people asked me to work on solving the problem of the debt, not just voting for another blank check debt ceiling. We need real spending limits to offset our serious budget shortfall. We can't pretend that we can borrow forever with no consequences.

There is a limit to how much debt this Nation can carry and our worldwide markets can sustain. Our current real debt equals our GDP. And I would hope that many others in this House would see that as a problem as well.

Second, we need to address our entitlements. These programs are critical safety nets for the neediest Americans, but they will be worthless for everyone if we allow them to go insolvent.

And, finally, we need a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution, with real teeth to hold Washington accountable. There is simply no other way to bring future stewardship of taxpayer money. Fifteen years ago, the Balanced Budget Amendment failed to pass the Senate by one vote after it passed this House with overwhelming bipartisan support. Our fiscal reality would be very different.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a crossroads in our nation's history. We do not have a debt ceiling vote crisis, we have a debt crisis. We need to stop focusing on a single vote and instead focus on the future consequences of our actions. It is time to put America back on track to debt reduction and job growth.

□ 1420

THE DEATH PENALTY AND THE MURDER OF ADRIA SAUCEDA

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, 16-year-old Adria Saucedo was abducted, raped, and strangled in 1994. Her skull was crushed with a rock and her nude body was left with a stick protruding from it on a dirt road in San Antonio, Texas.

Fifteen years ago, Humberto Leal, a Mexican national, was convicted of the grisly murder and sentenced to death by a Texas jury. Tomorrow, he is to be executed in Texas.

But the Mexican government and the administration say that Texas violated an international treaty and should