

ground by the British. And after the War of 1812 was over with, America found itself in a situation that's not unfamiliar with us today. America was out of money.

So what did people decide to do here in this body of Congress about how to get more money into the Federal Treasury? They thought of a unique approach that maybe we ought to think of and do today.

Right now we talk about raising taxes, cutting spending, and we need more revenue. Maybe we ought to think outside of the box when it comes to revenue instead of more government taking from the people and giving it to its special groups. Let's do what they did at the end of the War of 1812.

The Federal Government decided that it would sell some of the land to Americans—what a novel thought—and let Americans own America. They could produce that land, and then they could pay more taxes. And that's what they did at the end of the War of 1812.

We talk about the land in America. Who is the biggest landowner in this country? Uncle Sam. Uncle Sam owns 27 percent of the land mass in the United States. This poster here shows the land area in red, including Alaska, that is owned by the Federal Government, Uncle Sam. Twenty-seven percent of the land! Half of the land west of the Mississippi, or in the West, belongs to the Federal Government. Those folks in the West, half of it belongs to Uncle Sam. He's their neighbor in every western State. It's different in the East because much of that land was sold at the end of the War of 1812.

Now, 27 percent, what does that mean? That's really hard to understand how much that is. If you were to superimpose the 27 percent of the land mass in the United States into Europe, you would find that Uncle Sam would own almost all of Europe. Western Europe is about 27 percent of the land mass of the United States. And of course that includes the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Poland, and even Spain.

Now, we're talking about a lot of land. Does Uncle Sam really need all of that land? Much of it's unproductive, not paying any taxes, not paying any revenue to local and State governments.

So maybe we should do something that our forefathers, our ancestors did—sell some of that land to Americans and allow that revenue to come into the Federal Treasury so we can pay off all of our debts that we have accumulated over the years. Twenty-seven percent of the land mass is 623 million acres in this country.

Ronald Reagan tried to do that when he was President, but it did not go very far at all. You know, even President Obama mentioned about a month ago that there's 300 acres in Los Angeles County that's owned by the Federal Government. We could sell that for \$2 billion.

So maybe we need to think outside of the box. I've introduced the American Land Act. We talk about the American Jobs Act. The American Land Act would require that the Federal Government sell a portion of that land over a period of years.

Now, I want to be careful to state we're not talking about the national parks. We're not talking about Yosemite. We're not talking about the marshes and environmentally sensitive areas in this country. We're talking about unused land by the Federal Government. And then we could raise some revenue.

I believe that this could be up to about \$200 billion of revenue that would be brought into the United States. Sell it to Americans and that will bring revenue into our treasury. When Americans own America, they can also develop that land. Then they can be productive and then they can pay even more taxes.

□ 1020

When people own land, they pay property tax. That tax primarily goes to local and State governments, which pays for our school systems. So that undeveloped land, that unused land, some of that should be sold to Americans. Let Americans buy American. Real property in the hands of real Americans. What a novel thought that is.

Uncle Sam, the Federal Government, is all about power and control over everything. Loosen up a little, and let Americans buy part of America. Uncle Sam shouldn't prevent Americans from having a real stake or share in our country, the United States of America. It doesn't belong to Uncle Sam—at least it shouldn't. It should belong to Americans. The United States owns most of the grand estate in this country, and it's time to let more Americans own it because America should belong to Americans.

And that's just the way it is.

A REFLECTION ON THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SYSTEM AND LABOR UNIONS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. It is unfortunate there is an attempt to scapegoat America's unions for the economic problems that beset us.

After all, it was not America's grocery clerks, nurses, teachers, postal workers, and electricians who nearly caused the meltdown of the economy. It wasn't America's labor unions that were pushing for tax loopholes that made our revenue system a hopeless, inefficient mess. It wasn't unions that pushed for shortcuts for worker safety that produced the tragedy that we've seen in our mines. America's working men and women didn't engineer poor loans, systematically cheat consumers,

and transform financial institutions into giant casinos.

No doubt there were some consumers who took unfair advantage as well as others who were not as vigilant as they should have been in the financial meltdown; but the truth is they were part of an unprecedented economic scheme that played on those weaknesses, the gullibility and some individual greed to make it into a vast industry.

Are there some areas where unions are too effective in securing benefits for their members? That probably depends on who you ask about the give and take of the collective bargaining process. The leadership of unions are, in fact, much more democratic than their corporate counterparts. Union officials are routinely challenged for reelection. There are insurgents even in the most powerful and entrenched unions, something one seldom sees on the boards of public corporations. How many business directors are defeated? It's not easy to even have opposing nominees through today's shareholder democracy. It's pretty sketchy compared with what happens with unions.

There is a very direct remedy for union power in the negotiation process. For 18 years, I was a local elected official, part of that time responsible for a collective bargaining program. I like to think that I bargained tough but that I bargained fair—but I bargained. I've supported collective bargaining rights for public employees since I was first in the Oregon legislature and still believe that honest, tough, principled negotiations will lead to the best results.

Having someone attempt to dictate working conditions unilaterally is not calculated to produce enhanced productivity. It matters how people are treated and how they feel. Employee-owned corporations illustrate this principle in spades, some of which are not only employee-owned but have unions in addition. One of the best performing of the world's economy is Germany, where they still manufacture and have a huge export market for high-value products. The Germans work hard to integrate labor and business with government in the decision-making process, something that is, sadly, too rare in the United States.

Unions are not the answer for every employee and every company, but every employee and every company ought to have that option. Even companies that are nonunion benefit. I've had executives from successful companies candidly tell me that they treat their employees right because they don't want them to unionize. Even these nonunion company employees benefit from higher wages, better benefits, and a system that respects worker rights because of the competition with the unions.

Instead of treating employees fairly by allowing them to organize, far too many corporations have chosen instead to attack the fundamentals of collective bargaining. It is today an art form in some companies to stall, delay, intimidate, even to flagrantly violate the

laws of collective bargaining in this country, weak as they are and as ineffectively as they are enforced.

Collective bargaining has been systematically under attack by my Republican friends in Congress as Republican administrations have fought to make a National Labor Relations Board that is toothless, passive and unable or unwilling to protect the rights of employees to organize. This is not calculated to produce a spirit of cooperation. It is not clear that people need to cheat in order to avoid any excesses of collective bargaining.

I would argue the opposite.

It's not just workers in companies, union and nonunion, who benefit from unions. American society benefits. It was organized labor that spearheaded the effort for a 40-hour workweek. It is not just rhetoric that unions brought you the weekend. Unions have played a key role in extending security to millions of Americans in the workplace, in consumer safety and in environmental protections.

Again I don't pretend unions are perfect and I've had some differences with them over the years. But make no mistake: Unions are amongst the few who stand up to some of the more egregious economic follies, for justice in the workplace, for protecting the unorganized, fighting for a minimum wage, even a living wage.

It's important to reflect about our collective bargaining system. I'm all for fine tuning, but I am adamantly opposed to gutting rights and protection of workers.

I think we all should start by acknowledging the debt we owe to unions and work to stop this wholesale assault on America's workers.

**THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION,
"THE SINGLE BIGGEST IMPEDIMENT TO JOB GROWTH"**

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. A legendary Georgia businessman recently called the Obama administration "the single biggest impediment to job growth."

That same man, Mr. Bernie Marcus, also says the business that he founded would have never succeeded if he were trying to start it today. Home Depot, his Georgia-based company, currently has more than 2,200 stores all across the United States. They support more than 300,000 American jobs, and they generated \$68 billion in revenue just last year.

Now, imagine the impact on our country if companies that start out like Home Depot—which started as an individual store—or other small businesses weren't able to flourish. That is what the Obama administration is trying to do to the American Dream today. By creating a huge bill with ObamaCare and a failed stimulus bill and by piling thousands of new government regulations onto the backs of

small businesses, it is no wonder that job creators are afraid to expand and hire new people.

And so, after 2½ years of growing the Federal Government and \$4.5 trillion in spending later, the Obama administration has given us another proposal of the same old failed policies. Unfortunately, their latest solution to our 9 percent unemployment rate comes with a price tag of almost a half trillion dollars, money that we just simply do not have. So to pay for the American Jobs Act, as I like to call it "stimulus part II," our Democrat leaders want to hike taxes on families and job creators.

We've been down this road before. The stimulus did not work 2 years ago, and it will not work today. Hiking taxes in the middle of a recession will make our economy worse, not better. When will this administration learn that more of the same just simply isn't good enough anymore? Jobs will come when government gets out of the way—by getting rid of ObamaCare, by stopping the reckless spending here in Washington and the threat of higher taxes, and by ending the uncertainty in the marketplace.

□ 1030

Congress needs to pass my jobs bill, which would immediately and permanently lower the corporate tax rate to zero, and it will permanently lower the capital gains tax to zero. This will stimulate our small businesses so that they can do what they do best, grow, expand and to thrive.

In the words of Mr. Marcus, the founder of Home Depot, "It's time to stand up and fight."

The free enterprise system has made this country what it is today, and we must have policy that makes it prosper.

**CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOR
PUERTO RICAN CIVILIANS**

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask us to take action on a scathing Department of Justice investigation of a police department that "regularly violates the constitutional rights of civilians through illegal searches, detentions, and arrests," that "continues to demonstrate a deliberate indifference to the public's safety and the civil rights of individuals engaging in protected speech activities during protests," a police force where "officers engage in a pattern and practice of unreasonable force and other misconduct to suppress the exercise of protected First Amendment rights."

The report details the abuse against the people of Puerto Rico that they are facing by the Puerto Rico Police Department. Underscore, I said, "I rise to bring the urgent attention of the U.S. House of Representatives to a human rights and civil rights crisis." I further

stated, "where the right of students to protest and speak their minds is being denied with clubs and mace and pepper spray."

I spoke those words 7 months ago on this floor. The DOJ report states that the Governor of Puerto Rico has "supreme authority" over the police. Did he use that supreme authority to respond to Puerto Ricans who asked for help? Yes, he did.

The Governor's ruling party took immediate action after I detailed the abuse. The ruling party was outraged. It was outraged at me. Facing a civil rights crisis, the ruling party of Puerto Rico acted without hesitation, convening the legislature to urgently pass legislation to censure me for speaking out.

In part, the censure reads: "Congressman LUIS GUTIERREZ made false allegations about a supposed human rights crisis in Puerto Rico; he expressed himself in a denigrating and malicious manner about the honorable body of the Puerto Rico police; all of which tends to hurt the good image and good name of Puerto Rico."

Here's the problem: The ruling party of Puerto Rico has made clear time and time again they are not concerned about the abuse of their people, only that the world might notice that abuse. They don't seem to understand that if you love people, you stand up and you speak out, not pretend that everything is all right.

For standing up, the Government of Puerto Rico gave me a 600-word censure. But the government didn't give one word, not one word of censure, to what happened to Rachel Hiskes.

Here's what the DOJ describes happened to her:

"A student journalist, Rachel Hiskes, entered the Capitol with other individuals and attempted to access the senate chambers.

"Puerto Rico Police Department officers, who had been dispatched to the capitol earlier in the day, stopped Hiskes and hit her.

"She was not resisting or combative. Hiskes then sat in the hallway with other visitors in protest. A capitol employee then sprayed Hiskes and others with chemical irritants.

"As Hiskes tried to get up, an officer hit her across the back with a baton, causing her to fall. An officer continued to push and strike her with his baton, driving her toward the doorway.

"When she reached the door and had her back to the officer, the officer shoved her out onto the concrete stairs using his baton and hitting her in the neck.

"Hiskes was never arrested or charged with any crime."

Instead of protecting people like Rachel, the government derided the people.

This Governor's chief of staff, a man he has absurdly tasked with responding to the Department of Justice report, said protesting workers would be treated as "terrorists" and boasted he would