

with Congress to review such actions. But in the following weeks, there has been little evidence to suggest that the President is serious.

Let me be clear: Federal regulations do have their place in ensuring the safety of both workers and consumers. Federal laws have contributed greatly to maintaining our clean air and water as well as the safety of our transportation system, our food and consumer products, to name but just a few. No one is saying we shouldn't have any regulation. But for all the good that a responsible government can provide with reasonable oversight, make no mistake that overzealous regulation can stifle our economy and contribute to a reduced quality of life for all Americans. That is why House Republicans are working to pass legislation to rein in out-of-control Federal regulations that strangle job creation.

Last week, the House passed the TRAIN Act. If enacted into law, this one bill would prevent the administration from imposing some of the most controversial new EPA rules, which further threaten job creation and the economy. It would also force the administration to review the impact of new regulations before they're applied. Today, the House is considering two additional significant regulatory reform bills—the Cement Sector Regulatory Relief Act of 2011 and the EPA Regulatory Relief Act of 2011.

I urge that Congress pass this and help put the government on the side of the American workers and job creators, not against them.

THE AMERICAN AWAKENING

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Three years ago, after a decade of deregulation, the repeal of Glass-Steagall, which was the deregulation of derivatives, Wall Street—the “job creators”—gambled our economy into oblivion, but they never paid the price.

Remember George Bush and Hank Paulson, who was the Secretary of the Treasury? Well, he was kind of a stand-in, because, actually, he was the former chairman of Goldman Sachs, pretending to be Secretary of the Treasury. He took care of his buddies on Wall Street, but he was aided and abetted by none other than Tim Geithner, the chairman of the New York Fed. In fact, in one of the most outrageous moments of this whole scenario, Tim Geithner, now Secretary of the Treasury—although he wasn't chairman of Goldman Sachs, but it's probably in his future—decided to pay off the gamblers 100 cents on the dollar when the government had to do the biggest bailout in history of AIG. Now, that was incredible—100 cents on the dollar.

At the time, I proposed that, in fact, Wall Street should pay for its own bailout—that is, a tax on speculators and

reinstituting a tax we had from 1916 to 1966 while we built the greatest industrial Nation on Earth. It didn't hurt investment in capitalism then. It wouldn't hurt it now. In fact, if we reined in some of the speculators, our real economy would be better off for it.

But now there's sort of been this amazing political jujitsu where somehow the Republicans, aided by the Koch Brothers, who have also subsidized the Tea Party, have changed the narrative. It was the government. It was overregulation. Overregulation? Oh, come on, guys. There were no rules. They gambled our economy into oblivion. You cannot pretend that this wasn't wild and reckless, but you've changed the narrative. You took over the House.

Now, this fall, something is happening. Something in this land is happening. I call it the American awakening—the occupation of Wall Street, which is now spreading to other cities across this country.

□ 1020

They make fun of these young people because they are not totally focused on what they want, but what's happened is their future has been stolen from them. I saw some Fox commentators yesterday morning making fun of them saying, Oh, do you think they got time off from work? Oh, well, they don't have jobs, do they?

No, they don't have jobs. What are we doing to create jobs and give these kids a future in this country and rein in the gamblers on Wall Street and restore the real economy, the productive economy of this country? Nothing. In fact, you want to go back to 2008. That was your dream.

It is time to begin to deal meaningfully with these problems in this country and that we have the greatest disparity of wealth in our history. Corporate profits are up; jobs are down. CEO pay up; jobs are down. Bonuses on Wall Street, whoa, six figures, up. Jobs, down.

It's time to rectify this, and I think the young people and the others who are joining them on Wall Street get it. They may not be totally focused, but they know that this isn't a country that gives them a fair shot at the American Dream anymore. It's a stacked deck, and it's time for a new deck and a new order.

Reregulate the reckless gamblers on Wall Street. Rein them in, take steps to rebuild our real economy, give people a future, invest in education, invest in the basics of this country, transportation, infrastructure; and we can be a great Nation again. But if we continue down this path, or even if they accelerate us down this path with helping the job creators destroy the economy again, there's no hope.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR SEEMINGLY ENDLESS WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise along with others this morning to note the 10th anniversary of our seemingly endless war in Afghanistan. This is a war that long ago became much more about money for the Pentagon and defense contractors than about any real threat to the American people.

And, unfortunately, just yesterday we authorized spending at a level of \$118.7 billion for the coming year in Iraq and Afghanistan. Madam Speaker, we have turned the Defense Department into the Department of Foreign Aid, and the American people are tired of it. They want us to stop rebuilding Iraq and Afghanistan and start taking care of our own people.

We have spent and are spending billions and billions, hundreds of billions that we do not have, that we are having to borrow on people who do not appreciate it unless they are on our payroll.

I know last year, Hamid Karzai, the leader of Afghanistan, told ABCNews that he wanted us to stay there another 15 or 20 years. Well, he wants our money; but we don't have enough of it, and we can't afford this.

Alfred Regnery, the publisher of the conservative The American Spectator magazine wrote last October that “Afghanistan has little strategic value” and “the war is one of choice rather than necessity.” He added that it has been a wasteful and frustrating decade.

General Petraeus testified in front of one of the congressional committees several months ago that we should never forget that Afghanistan has become “the graveyard of empires.”

The American people do not want, nor can we afford, endless, permanent wars; nor do they want 11- or 12-year wars that last about three times as long as World War II.

Charlie Reese was a columnist for the Orlando newspaper, and a few years ago, probably in the mid- or late 1990s, he was voted the most popular columnist by C-SPAN viewers. Over 25,000 people, I think, participated in that poll.

But he was very much opposed to these wars, and he wrote this about the Iraq war, but it applies equally well to Afghanistan: He said this war was “against a country that was not attacking us, did not have the means to attack us, and had never expressed any intention of attacking us. And for whatever real reason we attacked, it was not to save America from any danger, imminent or otherwise.”

William F. Buckley, Jr., the conservative icon, wrote this a few years ago: He said, “A respect for the power of the United States is engendered by our success in engagements in which we take part. A point is reached when tenacity

conveys not steadfastness of purpose, but misapplication of pride.”

I want to repeat that. He said, “A respect for the power of the United States is engendered by our success in engagements in which we take part. A point is reached when tenacity conveys not steadfastness of purpose, but misapplication of pride.”

I think the American people long ago reached the point where they felt that these wars should come to an end and we should start taking care of our own country.

Georgie Ann Geyer, the conservative foreign policy columnist, wrote this a few years ago: “Americans, still strangely complacent about overseas wars being waged by a minority in their name, will inevitably come to a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe.”

Madam Speaker, fiscal conservatives should be the ones most horrified by all this waste and all this spending. I wonder sometimes if there are any conservatives at the Pentagon, any fiscal conservatives at the Pentagon.

I will say once again, these wars became long ago more about money and power than they did about any real threat. It is a shame what we are doing to the young people of this country, both those in the military and those outside the military.

Just this past Sunday, I went to the funeral of another soldier, a young 21-year-old man in Madisonville, Tennessee, who had been killed in Afghanistan. And I can tell you it's time to stop all the killings of all of our young people and let them have a good future in this country once again.

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I, first of all, wish to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. JONES, and Mr. MCGOVERN, who spoke earlier; and I intend to address the issue of the war in Afghanistan.

This war has got to end. It's got to end because it's making us weaker, not stronger. It's a dead-end strategy that is the result of decisions that were made that do not treat with the respect they are entitled to the willingness of our men and women in uniform to serve. They will do whatever it is we ask them to do.

Our job is to give them a policy that's worthy of the sacrifice that they are always willing to make. This war in Afghanistan has been going on for 10 years. It has morphed into the United States military and the United States taxpayer having the burden of building a nation in Afghanistan. That can't be done. We know it can't be done, but there is an unwillingness to have a reckoning in this Congress and in this country to turn the direction of our na-

tional defense into fighting terrorism in a sensible way, not nation-building in Afghanistan.

So the central issue here is not just the money, which I'll address; it's not just the time that this war has been going on, which I'll address; it's the basic strategy. This nation-building approach, over 100,000 American troops in Afghanistan, over 110,000 contractors, does that make sense when the enemy that we're fighting is decentralized and dispersed? It's not a nation state threat.

And the answer to that, we all know—it's common sense, you don't have to be a military strategist—is no. And the main reason we continue on in Afghanistan is because arguments are made that it will look bad or it will look weak if we leave.

Mr. DUNCAN said something, I think, that makes a lot of sense. When you are persistent in the face of facts that show that what you are doing is wrong, it's time to adjust the strategy. We in this Congress owe it to the men and women in uniform to give them that strategy that's worthy of their willingness to sacrifice.

We went into Afghanistan for a legitimate reason. That reason does not exist today. We went in because that was the launching sight where Osama bin Laden planned the 9/11 attacks. And we had a right, in our national self-defense, to take out the sanctuaries and to pursue Osama bin Laden.

Those sanctuaries have been taken out, and now what we are engaged in is a continuation and a stumbling ahead towards a policy of this nation-building where we have 100,000 troops, 40,000 international troops, 110,000 contractors, where we're throwing money at problems as though these contractors can get something done, and the corruption associated with a lot that contracting is rampant.

□ 1030

There are 286,000 Afghan National Security Forces troops who are poorly trained and leave at a moment's notice. This has come at an enormous expense to this country: \$10 billion a month; \$2.3 billion a week; \$328 million per day; \$13.7 million an hour.

What is happening? Is that where the threat to the country is coming from? The terrorist plots that we can identify that have happened in recent years, the Fort Hood shooting that killed 13 people in November 2009, that was planned in Yemen by Anwar Al Awlaki. The plot to bring down Northwest Airlines Flight 253 on Christmas Day 2009 was planned in Yemen by the same man. The attempt to bomb Times Square in May 2010 was planned and ordered by the Pakistani Taliban. And the October 2010 plot to bomb cargo planes was again planned in Yemen.

So the threat is real. Terrorism is a threat to this country. We have to address it, but we have to have a strategy that works. And having 100,000 of our

troops in one nation when the terrorist threat is dispersed and decentralized throughout other parts of the world doesn't make any sense. It's time for this Congress and this President to call the question, change the strategy which requires us to right-size what our effort is, because that will, A, protect the American people in a better, more effective way; and, B, it will be a sustainable strategy, which has to be a responsibility of the policymakers.

There's been enormous sacrifice by the men and women in uniform. The troops from the State of Vermont have sacrificed and lost more lives in the Iraq and Afghanistan war on a per capita basis than any other State in the Nation. They are entitled to a policy worthy of their sacrifice.

SUFFOCATING REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

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

Mr. HURT. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Virginia's Fifth District, on behalf of the small business owners and farmers across central and southside Virginia who have been directly negatively impacted by the suffocating government regulatory environment.

These good people have been so overburdened by an overreaching government that they are left struggling to make ends meet in these challenging economic times, unable to expand their businesses and discouraged from starting new ones. Over the past 2 months, I have traveled through the Fifth District, making stops from Green County to Danville, from Martinsville to Brunswick County. I heard from constituents about the very real effects that unnecessary government regulations are having on their businesses and their lives.

Just this last week, I visited with a convenience store owner in Campbell County who has five stores and 48 employees. He has the desire and the resources to expand and build two more convenience stores, creating more jobs in the area, but he reports that he is unwilling to do so because of the mandates and taxes that will be imposed on his business as a part of the job-destroying government takeover of health care.

Last week I also visited with an owner of an auto repair shop in Appomattox. He told me that he first started his business back in 1987. Back then, he was able to get his business up and running in one day. One day was all it took for him to obtain all of the required permits and licenses and pay all of the required taxes and fees. After running his shop for a number of years, he then moved on to another job. Then just recently in 2011, he decided he wanted to reopen his shop and found that instead of taking one day to wade through the regulatory redtape, this year it took him 5 months.