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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. ROBY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 11, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARTHA ROBY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

AMERICANS' PRIORITY IS JOBS

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, ask Americans their priority, and they'll tell you it's jobs. There are 14 million Americans out of work. There are 9.3 million more Americans working part-time because they can't find full-time employment. There are millions more Americans whose incomes have stagnated because of the persistent unemployment which has dragged down economic growth. In fact, median household income has

fallen 9.8 percent since the recession first began in 2007. More troubling, although the overall economy has been growing again, household incomes continue to fall. Since December 2007, American households have lost more than \$5,400 per average household.

There are several factors leading to this decline. One of the most significant is that in order to find work, many millions of unemployed Americans are forced to accept lower pay. With millions of Americans still desperately searching for jobs, businesses can afford to offer lower wages. With millions of American families slipping below the poverty line and wondering where the next mortgage payment or meal will come from, prospective workers can't afford not to take the pay cut.

It's clear we must pass the American Jobs Act. This is a plan that reduces business taxes to encourage private sector hiring and increases infrastructure investment to repair and rebuild America, creating jobs. And it cuts taxes for every working American. While the lingering effects of the worst recession in 80 years continue to drive down Americans' income, we can increase their take-home pay with the Americans Jobs Act, putting more money back in the pockets of average American families. Increasing American paychecks and creating jobs—that ought to be our priority.

But Republicans in Congress have a different priority: cutting. Last Congress, Republicans' big marketing blitz wasn't about creating jobs, it was about cutting. Last Congress, Democrats passed business tax cuts to spur job creation, approving infrastructure improvements to create construction jobs and backstopping faltering State and local education funding to save teaching jobs. And we saw results. The Great Recession resulted in 8 million jobs lost. But thanks to our efforts, like the Recovery Act and the HIRE

Act, we created 2.6 million jobs. A good start, but not enough.

But what were the Republicans doing last year? They were trumpeting their YouCut program. Perhaps if Democrats had named our efforts YouHire program, Republicans might have taken more notice.

Unfortunately, through fighting and threatening, delaying and denigrating, Republicans have made clear that cutting remains their top priority. Their first bill introduced this year, H.R. 1, wasn't about jobs; it was all about cuts. In fact, economists predicted it would cost 200,000 jobs.

Surely their second bill was about jobs? No. H.R. 2 tried to repeal important health reforms so that people with preexisting conditions wouldn't be protected; so that parents wouldn't be able to keep their kids on insurance, especially during tough times, through the age of 26; so that the doughnut hole for our seniors could be closed and they could get a 50 percent brand name drug discount this year.

But if Republican voodoo really worked, why isn't our economy better? Why are American incomes still dropping? This entire year in place of actual job creation legislation, Republicans have focused instead on ever-increasing cuts. And since the beginning of the year, the economy has faltered. Their single-minded focus on attacking private sector employees has paid off; we've lost 535,000 public jobs all across America. It's time to invest in America again. Let's support the American jobs bill.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT CREDIBILITY IN QUESTION

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the United States Government has facilitated smuggling automatic weapons

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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into Mexico, weapons that were purchased by straw buyers in the United States with the oversight of the ATF. Approximately 2,000 weapons were knowingly sent to our neighbors in Mexico by our government. Most of them are still unaccounted for. But we do understand that those weapons probably have been used illegally in Mexico to kill Mexican nationals. How many, no one knows.

Two of those automatic weapons have turned up at the murder scene in Arizona of Border Patrol agent Brian Terry. And one weapon apparently was used to gun down U.S. agent Jaime Zapata in Mexico.

The Mexican government has taken to the airwaves complaining of the U.S. smuggling operation. Mexican officials want answers, and even want U.S. Government officials responsible to be extradited to Mexico for trial. No wonder.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear: These weapons are not BB guns or .22 rifles; they are semiautomatic weapons and also include sniper rifles. Sniper rifles are used to assassinate specific targets.

The ATF and the Justice Department have stonewalled the release of information regarding this operation called Fast and Furious, and the public's not getting much data on this idiotic idea. Why would the U.S. Government send automatic weapons to the drug cartels in Mexico? Mexico is at war with the drug cartels. The drug cartels are the enemy of the Mexican people, not to mention they are the enemy of the United States. This gun running issue is nonsense.

Now the Justice Department is supposed to investigate this operation, which includes investigating the ATF and the Justice Department. The Attorney General, who's head of the Justice Department, at first said he didn't know anything about this operation until recently. Now it seems evidence shows he was given a memo last year about the whole idea. Did he not read the memo? Granted, the Attorney General has experience not reading important documents, like the Arizona immigration law. You remember, Madam Speaker, the Attorney General publicly criticized the Arizona bill, and then he testified before the Judiciary Committee to a question I asked him that he hadn't even read that bill.

Anyway, if he didn't know about the smuggling operation, he should have; he's in charge. And if he did know about it and approved it, he should be held accountable for this nonsense. I'm not sure what the Attorney General's claim of defense will be this week. It reminds me of my days on the bench as a judge in Texas when a defendant in a homicide case would say first, I wasn't there. And then he would say, well, if I was there, it wasn't me. And if it was me, I acted in self-defense. In other words, don't hold me accountable.

So just what is this Justice Department's defense to all of this? We shall see. But the idea that the Justice De-

partment should investigate the Justice Department and the ATF is absurd. The Justice Department has no credibility on this matter, and whatever their investigation shows, the American public cannot trust its trustworthiness. Having the Justice Department investigate Fast and Furious, the ATF, and the Justice Department is like having Al Capone investigate bootlegging. The President should appoint a special counsel to investigate this operation of government gun running to Mexico.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1210

TRADE POLICY THAT CREATES JOBS IN AMERICA

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, at last, it's been a long year. The House this week is finally getting around to considering legislation to create jobs. You have got to admit, their objective, and the dream of Grover Norquist, of delivering a government so small that you can drown it in a bathtub has kind of a depressive effect on investment in the economy.

Cutting investment in education has lost jobs; it hasn't created jobs. Cutting investment in infrastructure—28 percent unemployment in construction, allied trades, small businesses that provide the work and the equipment, which are all private sector jobs—is not too good. So their pursuit of these goals so far this year has had a bit of a depressive and negative effect on the economy.

But to congratulate the Republican leaders, finally they've turned to creating jobs this week. Three trade agreements. Now, these are kind of musty, dusty trade agreements. They were negotiated by the Bush administration. Unfortunately, they have been adopted by the Obama administration. Nothing ever changes down at the Trade Representative's office. It doesn't matter who's in charge—Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George Bush, Barack Obama. People in the Trade Office push the same policies. So these are job-creating trade agreements. Congratulations. We're building upon the success of the past. NAFTA, great success. The WTO, great success. Job creation. Phenomenal job creation. The only problem is the jobs are being created in foreign nations because of our failed trade policies in this country. We are hemorrhaging jobs.

This is the record over a decade:

We lost 15 factories a day—15. Now, some of them were kind of small, local small businesses, but Republicans love to talk about their advocacy for small business. Fifteen a day for 10 years, that's our current trade policy. So what else? Well, that figures out to about 1,370 manufacturing jobs a day over the last decade.

So, learning from past experience, we are now going to do exactly the same thing yet again. We are going to adopt—I can predict the future. The Republicans will all vote for it and a substantial number of my colleagues, a minority of Democrats, but they'll sign on too, to this false promise of job creation under the guise of free trade.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, for starters, the Korea Free Trade Agreement will cost us 160,000 jobs. Bye-bye to the last vestiges of the auto parts industry. They have little provisions, like 35 percent Korean content requirement, which means they can source all their stuff from China, or maybe even better, North Korea, where they use slave labor. It will be really cheap. And we're going to ask our workers to compete with that. There goes another industry.

Now, Colombia and Panama. Well, EPI estimates they're kind of dinky economies. That will only lose us about 55,000 jobs to start. So, for starters, we're creating a quarter of a million jobs overseas with more failed trade policies.

There are other minor problems. Colombia: they kill labor organizers. But, hey, they promised they won't do that anymore.

Panama: a huge haven for drug smugglers, terrorist money, and others. They launder money, but they promised the Obama administration, even though Bush said they could keep doing it, they promised the Obama administration they won't do it. They will no longer allow people to secret ill-gotten gains in Panama unless it's in their national interest. That's a little bit of a loophole.

So these are a great deal for the American people. How's that? I don't know. Because the special Trade Representative's office, unfortunately, rather meekly and quietly, the President, and the Republican leadership say these are a good deal for the American people because, yes, they will benefit Wall Street and a few multinational corporations. They'll just cost another quarter of a million Americans their jobs.

It's time to put an end to this craziness. I can hope—but it won't happen—that we can stop these trade agreements here this week on the floor and look for a new trade policy, a trade policy that creates and brings jobs home to the United States of America. I thought that's who we were here to represent.

DO NOT ISSUE CONFEDERATE LICENSE PLATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. There are many times that we come to the floor to address our current plight. I do wish to say to the American people that we're well aware of the importance of jobs and the focus of creating