

You don't need to invade a country to prove that America is strong or to keep America safe. That's the heart of my SMART security plan that I have been talking about for many years now. We've tried belligerence. We've tried force. And over the last decade—well, actually, we've tried all of this forever, and it just has not worked.

It's time, Mr. Speaker, for this war to end. It's time to implement a SMART security platform. It is time now, Mr. Speaker.

HONORING AMERICAN HERO
LANCE CORPORAL JUSTIN
GAERTNER

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

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great son of Trinity, Florida, Corporal Justin Gaertner of the United States Marine Corps First Combat Engineer Battalion. I have had the honor of getting to know Justin over the past year, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to share his story.

After being deployed to Afghanistan, Justin took on one of the most dangerous jobs there is in the Marine Corps. He was the lead sweeper, clearing roads of IEDs in advance of U.S. vehicles.

On November 26, 2010, Justin's unit was traveling with an eight-truck convoy. One of the trucks struck an IED. Following the explosion, one of Justin's good friends, Corporal Gabriel Martinez, lost both of his legs in a second IED attack while he rushed to aid that downed vehicle. Justin desperately wanted to help his friend, but his responsibility was to continue the mission, to continue to sweep for IEDs to ensure the safety of the rest of the convoy. It was during the sweep that a third IED was remotely detonated as Justin had just entered that area. The explosion propelled Justin into the air and took both of his legs and severely injured one of his arms. Justin paid a terrible price that day while helping to protect fellow marines.

When I first met Justin at Walter Reed Army Hospital in January of this year, he was more concerned about his brother marines that were still in country than he was about his own safety. He wanted to return to that company of marines to help ensure the safety of his fellow marines that were still left in Afghanistan. That's what heroes do. He's since made an incredible recovery while at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, but that was with the help of dedicated medical staff, the support of his mother and his family and of fellow marines. Justin is getting stronger every day.

When I first met Justin in January of this year, he told me one of his future goals was to compete in a marathon. Today I'm proud to announce that this past weekend, less than 1 year since he was wounded in combat, Justin completed the 2011 Marine Corps Marathon

in the hand crank division in 2 hours, 50 minutes, and 39 seconds. Justin and his family have been an inspiration to me and make us all proud to be Americans because of their sacrifice on the battlefield.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I want to take this opportunity to again thank Justin for his bravery and his sacrifice on behalf of his Nation. And I want to thank all the troops that have been in harm's way, that have volunteered to protect this great Nation at great risk to themselves.

SHADES OF GREEN

IN HONOR OF AN AMERICAN HERO, LANCE CORPORAL JUSTIN GAERTNER, 1ST COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, THE UNITED STATES MARINES

Shades . . .
 Shades of Green . . .
 On battlefields of honor bright . . .
 There are but all of those who but bring their most magnificent light . . .
 As Brilliant, as brilliant . . . as any seen in this sight!
 All in their Magnificent Shades of Green!
 For these are but, The United States Marines!
 Such men of might, who over evil do all in the darkest fights!
 Rushing into the face of death, as they are seen!
 Oh yes, to be a United States Marine!
 To but wear so proudly, those most Magnificent Shades of Green!
 As it was in battle . . . All in that fight . . .
 When a Combat Engineer, with nerves of steel . . . Named Justin so appeared . . .
 The kind of men who have no fear!
 As Justin, walked through the Valley of Death . . . out on attack . . .
 When, an IED . . . Almost took his life . . .
 While, all in that moment of death or light . . . his fine heart grew even greater in sight!
 And on that next day as he awoke . . . as his heart to him so spoke . . .
 So spoke to him, as tears rolled down his face . . .
 As he so realized, the full nature of what had took place . . .
 But, this Strong Son of the South . . . would not so give up now . . .
 Wiping the tears from his face, shining even brighter on that day!
 All in those Shades of Green . . . as his new battle was under way!
 As they took his legs, and most of his arm . . . but not take his heart that day!
 As something so told him deep inside, get up and start running now . . .
 As with his great heart, his first new steps he found!
 To fine the faith and courage to so move onward now!
 Because Marines Do! And Marines Win!
 And failure was not an option, to any of them!
 As one of Florida's brightest sons,
 He said to himself, I will stand and I will run!
 Pity get out of the way, I've got miles to go before I'm done!
 Justin time, as his brave heart so began to run!
 Taking him to even greater places and heights where mere men have never gone!
 Because Marines climb mountains
 Marines climb walls . . .
 Marines always stand tall!
 As there you go Justin, running to recovery!
 Oh what a discovery, an even brighter Shade of Green!

As Justin You Will Teach Us . . .
 As Justin, You Will So Beseech Us . . .
 As it's so deep down in our hearts Justin, that you will reach us!
 All in what your life means!
 And if I had a son, I wish he could so shine half as bright as this one!
 All in his most magnificent Shades of Green!
 As one day too Justin, up in heaven you will be seen!
 As an Angel, all because of how you so wore and so carried yourself . . .
 All in those most magnificent Shades of Green!
 Ooo . . . Rah!

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE
OF LABOR UNIONS

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, nearly 25 million Americans are currently unemployed or underemployed; yet despite this disparaging rate, efforts to strengthen the workforce are being derailed by special interest attacks on the middle class and workers. In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker has taken away nearly all collective bargaining rights from the majority of the State's public employees.

An Ohio referendum on State Senate Bill 5 aims to strip public workers of collective bargaining rights. For the 4 years prior to the enactment of Ohio's collective bargaining law, the State led the Nation in safety forces work stoppages. When the city and its safety forces had a dispute concerning wages, working conditions, and adequate staffing, there was no way to resolve the dispute. That is why the collective bargaining law was passed. And the law has worked. There have been no safety forces work stoppages in Ohio since the law was passed.

Only through collective bargaining do American workers still have a voice. Still, this right is being attacked.

The New Jersey Statehouse passed a bill destroying the right of public sector unions to collectively bargain over health care and pension issues. These efforts to turn back the clock on public safety and on those who protect and serve are unacceptable.

Today I rise in support of the workers of Wisconsin; I rise in support of the workers of Ohio; I rise in support of the workers of my home State of New Jersey. I rise today in support of the millions of Americans who stand as proud union members seeking fair labor treatment and a fair shot at the American Dream.

I have been protected by unions. I worked as a truck driver; I worked as a teacher; I worked on the docks of Newark; I worked as a waiter; I worked in the breweries of Newark—all of them protected by strong unions. And that's what helped me get through college and helped me get to the United States Congress.

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Today, I stand with 99 of my House colleagues to speak on H. Res. 452,

which I introduced yesterday and which will recognize the importance labor unions play by ensuring a strong middle class by advocating for more equitable wages, humane working conditions, improved benefits and increased civic engagement of everyday citizens—the 99 percent. Ninety-nine Members cosponsored this resolution, and I'm proud to introduce it.

Unions have pioneered benefits such as paid health care and pensions and have helped strengthen access to the American dream by helping to establish government policies and efforts such as family leave, minimum wage, and Social Security. Unions have also been effective in supporting immigrant rights, trade policy, health care and living wage legislation.

Unions have been the voice for everyday Americans—from consumer protections to health, safety, and civil rights. The labor movement has fought to allow workers to negotiate on more equal footing with their employers, providing for a healthy, balanced workplace.

Unions benefit everyone, members and nonmembers. According to the Economic Policy Institute, if more of the 66 million American workers who want to join a union could join one tomorrow, their paychecks and benefits would increase, but so would millions of others. The union premium, as it's called, succeeds in lifting wages of non-union employees in the same industries while not being a deterring factor of the State's economic or its growth record.

Unfortunately, there has been a decline in union membership, due largely to unfair labor practices and scare tactics by union-busting employers. Between 1999 and 2007, more than 86,000 workers filed unfair labor practice claims with the NLRB for being illegally fired by their employer for union activity.

As a result of such efforts to weaken unions, among other things, our economy continues to suffer and the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, undermining the foundation of the American middle class. Contrary to the belief of union bashers, unions do not increase unemployment or reduce job opportunities. Rather, there are a great deal of facts that correlate the strength of the economy and the middle class to the growth or decline of union membership.

Further, a recent report from the Congressional Budget Office also infers the impact that union membership decline has had on our economy and wealth distribution. The report found that from 1979 to 2007, average inflation-adjusted after tax income grew by 275 percent for the 1 percent of the population with the highest income. For those in the top 20 percent of the population, average real income grew only by 65 percent. However, the bottom fifth rose only by 18 percent. Three-fifths of the people are in the middle, and they grew by 40 percent. So that is

not an equal distribution of growth wealth.

The Wall Street Journal has stated “the main reason U.S. companies are reluctant to step up hiring is scant demand.” Demand is scarce because wages are stagnant while profits are up. The chief investment officer at JPMorgan Chase states: “U.S. labor compensation is now at a 50-year low relative to both company sales and U.S. GDP.” While wages are down, profit margins are up.

Let me ask you to support this legislation. We will continue to stand on the steps of Ohio, march in the streets of New Jersey, in our neighborhoods. I, in addition to the 99 Members of the House who support this bill, we urge its passage.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

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

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about the partisanship and venom in Washington this year. And while we will certainly see fierce debates in the future, I believe Members of this body can still come together and find common ground.

On the surface, my colleague HANSEN CLARKE and I are very different. He is a lawyer representing the city of Detroit with a liberal voting record. I'm a conservative physician representing rural northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. We are both new to this House and share an interest in learning more about the unique challenges facing Michigan's citizens. After meeting HANSEN during freshman orientation, we agreed to tour each other's district.

In August I had the opportunity to head down to Michigan's 13th District in Detroit. There we toured employers such as Edward C. Levy Company and Mercy Primary Care Center and got to have some lunch on Mack Avenue. It was great to learn more about the district and be back in Detroit where I did my medical training. Next week Congressman CLARKE will tour with me in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We will be meeting with area employers in Marquette and Escanaba, and will be getting a chance to see the splendor of Lake Superior with a visit to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Munising. I hope HANSEN will even get to try one of northern Michigan's famous pasties for lunch.

Mr. Speaker, although HANSEN and I are from different parties and dramatically different parts of the State, we are united in the goal of improving economic conditions in the great State of Michigan. We believe that neither party has a monopoly on good ideas, and by working together, we can help shape a better future for our children and grandchildren.

Despite our difference of opinion on many issues, we both recognize that America remains a place in the world

like no other, and that with liberty, courage, and hard work, there is no limit to one's destiny. I encourage all Members of this Chamber to pair up and schedule a visit to a different district.

Congressman CLARKE, I'm honored to have you as my friend, and I look forward to having you in Upper Michigan next week.

WORKING TOGETHER TO SERVE AMERICANS

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

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman BENISHEK for that wonderful invitation for me to visit your district. Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, it's one of the most beautiful areas you can ever see in the country. It has delicious food and great people. I know I'm going to have a wonderful time. But also, too, my visit to northern Michigan will help DAN and I have another set of common experiences that we can use to help serve our people together.

With his area in northern Michigan and with the area that I'm hired to represent, metropolitan Detroit, we can focus on the common needs of our people. Let me give you an example. When Representative BENISHEK visited the east side of Detroit with me this past summer, we found out we had a lot of things in common. I'm born and raised on the east side. Well, he actually lived on the east side when he attended one of the finest medical schools in the country, Wayne State Medical School in the city of Detroit.

We visited several places, but in particular we visited the Mercy Primary Care Center. This is a health clinic located right in the heart of Detroit. Firsthand, we were able to hear from and see the challenges that many of our veterans are facing. Our veterans—these were young men and women who, because of their loyalty to our country, were sent overseas. They risked their lives. They risked their mental and emotional well-being. Many of them came back to Detroit only to face a place where they can't even find a job. They can't even find a home. They are out on the street with no place to live. No one should have to live in that type of indignity.

Representative BENISHEK, as a physician and as a Member of the House committee that oversees the Department of Veterans Affairs, he wanted to work with me to better serve these veterans. So he and I are now working together with the Department of Veterans Affairs to better provide shelter, health care, and training to these homeless veterans in the city of Detroit. This is an example of how Republicans and Democrats can work together to help our people.

And you know what? It's not really that hard for he and I to work together. The folks that he represents