

for the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee—is blank.

With 9.1 percent unemployment, we need a vigorous debate over this bill. Its jurisdiction includes job training, K-12 and higher education funding, and health care services. And yet unlike the other 11 appropriations bills, Labor-H is the only appropriation bill that has seen no action. Instead, the chairman has posted a draft bill on the Internet representing his own preferences for the people's budget. But the chairman, by himself, is not the subcommittee; and simply posting a wish list without ever bringing it to the subcommittee or the full committee for a markup is not an acceptable substitute for public debate and amendment.

This kind of action represents a clear violation of the majority's pledge to follow the regular order or the regular process. If no House markup is held, this would be the first time in nearly a decade that the subcommittee has failed to report a bill. It is time for the chairman and the majority to keep their promises and hold a markup for the Labor-H bill. The issues that face that subcommittee are far too important to be left to the chairman's personal wish list.

OPERATION FAST AND FURIOUS, WHO'S TO BLAME?

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when the coach messes up, blame the team. This policy occurred yesterday.

Yesterday, in an attempt to divert attention from the Attorney General, Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer took one for the head coach and testified about Project Gunrunner. He claimed that he knew about the practice of "gun walking" but still tried to punt the ball by placing blame on Team ATF for not stopping Fast and Furious. But the Department of Justice oversees the ATF, and apparently the Justice Department knew about Fast and Furious. So why didn't they stop it? Mr. Breuer said that he had talked to the ATF about it, and so he thought he didn't need to tell the Attorney General. So now it appears the dysfunctional Justice Department is responsible for this disaster.

Bottom line: Nearly 2,000 semiautomatic weapons were blindly sent into the hands of criminal narcoterrorists in Mexico, and people died because of this operation, at least two Americans and who knows how many Mexican nationals. Thousands of guns are still unaccounted for in Mexico.

Clearly, the Department of Justice needs a new head coach, and a special counsel should be appointed to investigate Fast and Furious.

And that's just the way it is.

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TRIBUTE TO LUKE WEATHERS

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, this weekend I had the privilege, unfortunately, to attend a funeral of a great American, a constituent of mine living in Tucson, Arizona, when he passed at age 91, Colonel Luke Weathers.

Colonel Weathers was a Tuskeegan Airman. Born in Mississippi, he came to Memphis at I think it was age 5, and went to the famous Booker T. Washington High School. At age 23, he went to Tuskeegan. He was one of the first Tuskeegan Airmen and was decorated with more honors and awards than you can imagine, every flying award you can possibly get.

He later went on to work with the air traffic controllers and was the first African American air traffic controller in Memphis, Tennessee, at our air traffic control station. He served 25 years with the FAA as an air traffic controller, serving duties in Anchorage, Alaska, where he started; also in Atlanta, Georgia; and in Washington.

Luke Weathers was a great man who didn't let race stop him, even though sometimes his country's policies made it difficult to both integrate the Air Force and the squadron and the FAA. And even his church where the funeral was, Little Flower, he was the first African American member of that church in 1963. I was pleased to be with the family, honor this man's memory, and appreciate what he did for our country.

Mr. Speaker, Luke Weathers was a great man.

HOUSE REPUBLICAN JOBS PLAN

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have passed over 15 bills that would help create jobs and, in addition, ease the energy needs of this country. But where are those bills, and why is the President asking us to pass his jobs bill which almost no Democrats have signed on to? We've passed over 15 bills. They're stuck in the Senate. One Senator has described the Senate as moribund.

Mr. Speaker, we can help create jobs in this country by empowering small businesses and reducing government barriers to job creation, fixing the Tax Code to help job creators, boost competitiveness for American manufacturers, encourage entrepreneurship and growth, maximize American energy production, and pay down America's unsustainable debt burden and start living within our means. People can find out more about our jobs program by going to jobs.gop.gov. I invite the American people to see what Republicans have presented to the Senate. Those 15 bills should be passed.

OPPOSE CONFEDERATE FLAG ON TEXAS LICENSE PLATES

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one day before the Nation gathers to commemorate Veterans Day, a day that brings all of us together, it saddens me to come to the floor of the House and announce under the leadership of Governor Perry, on November 10 in Texas, the Department of Motor Vehicles board will be voting to authorize a State-issued Confederate license plate.

Now, I realize that our work here in the Congress is about passing the jobs bill, which we are advocating to do. But I think it is a disgrace on the history of this Nation that a State-elected agriculture commissioner by the name of Patterson continues to push forward this untimely and ill-fated action.

The Confederate flag does not protect or honor Confederate soldiers. You can do that in museums. The symbol of a Confederate flag is that of a Klansman of the late 1880s and early 1900s; the brutality of slavery; the oppression of slavery; the Jim Crowism of the 1940s and 1950s. It's an ugly reminder of the past of our history. It is time to take America forward and Texas forward.

I will be in Austin on November 10 opposing that action. I ask all good-faith, well-intended Texans that want to take Texas forward to come and oppose any vote that would issue a Confederate flag. And I make a clarion call to all Americans who would like to drive to Texas, come to Austin and stand up against this dastardly deed. Stand up against promoting slavery and oppression. Come to Texas and tell Governor Perry and Commissioner Patterson enough is enough. Take the Nation forward. Don't take it backwards.

SALUTING MARK ANDOL'S COMMITMENT TO AMERICAN WORKERS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share the story of Mark Andol, a member of my western New York community. Mark owns a welding and fabricating company in my district. Like many American manufacturers, it lost sales to China in recent years and was forced to cut its 70-person workforce in half.

Mark was frustrated and decided to do something about it. He opened a general store that sells only products manufactured entirely in America. When it opened last year, the store offered 50 products. Since then sales have doubled, and it now sells over 3,500 products that are 100 percent American-made, right down to the packaging.

I visited Mark's store earlier this week and was highly impressed. I was

happy to invite him to the Make It in America working meeting hosted by the White House and our Democratic whip, Mr. HOYER, tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, Mark's experience demonstrates why we need to strengthen our trade laws and pass the China currency reform bill. In the meantime, I would like to salute Mark Andol for his commitment to the American worker.

JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUINTA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to take this hour together with my colleagues to discuss jobs in America. I think we know from our recent visits back to our districts that there's a great deal of pain in America. Americans want to go to work, and yet the jobs are not available.

Our President has proposed the American Jobs Act, a program that would put perhaps 1.9 million Americans to work as soon as the Congress of the United States were to pass that legislation. And so that's the subject matter of this hour, how to get Americans back to work and how to pay for it.

I'm going to start with the pay-for, a word that's used around here but perhaps not readily understood by Americans. Pay-for is how are we going to pay for the Federal programs.

Let's start with an analysis of the distribution of income in America. There's been more and more discussion about this in recent weeks, and appropriately so because what has happened over the last 25–30 years is a skewing, a wide separation of wealth in the United States to a point where it is now perhaps the widest separation between the very wealthy and the middle and poor people in America that has ever occurred in our history. Here's a pretty good description of it. If you take the top 1 percent, we've seen an enormous growth in their income, about 350 percent.

□ 1450

If you take the middle, the other 99 percent of the American population, you see very, very modest growth. And in the case of the poor, you've actually seen a decline in their income over the last two decades. And that's what's happened, this enormous separation between the very wealthy and the middle class, the working men and women of America. It's not that the real rich don't work; just not that many of them. But they sure have got a big share of the money.

Let's take, for example, the top executives of the oil industry. If we were to take the top executives of the big five oil companies and compare them

to a firefighter, a firefighter averages about \$47,000 a year. An executive, a CEO of an oil company, would have 307 times that amount of income. And if you take a teacher at say \$53,000 a year, the CEO would have 273 times the amount of income of a teacher. So what you're seeing here in just the oil industry—and this is repeated certainly in the banking and the Wall Street industries, the financial industries—you see this enormous separation. Thirty, 40 years ago, this was in the range of 40 times, maybe 50 times. But now we're talking 300 to, in the lower 300s, a separation of the super wealthy and the working middle class, the men and women that are out there constructing schools, making our schools or teaching our kids or protecting us, police and firefighters.

I put those graphs up because it provides us with a solution. Before I get to the solution, let's just take one more look at the way this income distribution is occurring here in the United States. The rising inequality since the 1970s saw a very sharp break in the prosperity from an earlier era. From 1946 to 1976, the top 1 percent actually had a very small portion of the total wealth. From 1976 to 1990, we've seen enormous growth in the average income—not the wealth but the average income—of the top 1 percent so that now it dwarfs the rest of the population. So this is why you see Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Oakland, and the other cities talking about the 99ers, the 99 percent. The 99 percent are the rest of us, and the 1 percent are the CEOs, the Wall Street barons and those that have made enormous amounts of income over the last 20 years.

In the last decade, that's become even more apparent with the Bush tax cuts that occurred in 2001 and 2003. They basically significantly lowered the tax rate for the super wealthy and allowed them to keep even more of the extraordinary growth in their salaries and their income.

So how does that relate to American jobs? Well, very, very directly. The American jobs program that the President put forth called the American Jobs Act would provide very substantial opportunities for employment. And what I'd like to talk about is small businesses here. The small businesses of America are given a very substantial tax break in two different ways if they are to hire new people. For example, small businesses with less than \$5 million of payroll are able to not pay their payroll tax, in other words, keep that money and go out and hire people. In addition to that, with Veterans Day coming up in just 1 week, we ought to be thinking about the veterans. We know that we have more than 1.5 million Americans that have been overseas fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan, and a few other places around the world. As those veterans come back, they have become the highest proportion of unemployed in America.

It would seem to me that since we are asking so much of those men and

women that have served in our Armed Forces, particularly those that have served in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, we ought to be looking to their interest very directly and making certain that our programs are focused on them. Well, this is not lost on our President. In the American Jobs Act, he deals very directly with this by providing employers with a very powerful incentive to hire veterans. So with Veterans Day coming up, let's take a look at that. Let's take a look at what the President is proposing for the 877,000 unemployed veterans, the men and women that were out there fighting for this country, protecting us and doing what has been asked of them in an extraordinary way. More than 6,000 of them have given their lives, and over 40,000 have been seriously wounded. Of that 40,000, a very large proportion are permanently, permanently damaged in many difficult and extraordinary ways. And 877,000 of them are unemployed. And the President, looking at the necessity of building jobs in America, said, let's take care of those people.

So what he has proposed, and I think this is a terrific idea, is that small businesses, in fact, any business that is out to hire a veteran will be given an immediate \$5,600 tax credit so that the taxes owed by that business or that employer would automatically be reduced for every veteran hired by \$5,600. Hire an unemployed veteran, and you can reduce your taxes by \$5,600. Even more so, if that veteran happens to be among those that have been wounded—and as I said, that is over 40,000—if you were to hire one of those wounded veterans, one of the seriously wounded that is connected with their service disability, the tax credit increases to \$9,600. That's a very, very powerful incentive for businesses to hire our veterans. So with Veterans Day 1 week away, it's incumbent upon the 435 of us here in the United States Congress to not just talk the talk, but begin to vote to provide the veterans with the services that they need.

Now why did I start off with this graph? Why did I start off with this, showing the income disparity in the United States? Because this is how we should be paying for it—those Americans that have done extraordinarily well. And we're not talking about just extraordinarily well; we're talking about extraordinarily extraordinarily well. They have seen their income rise to a point of astronomical figures in some cases. And certainly it's seen on Wall Street. It's time for them to push aside the George W. Bush tax cuts. These tax cuts allowed them to keep a very large portion of their income. Taxes went down on income over \$250,000 for joint filers, it went down from 39 percent to 35 percent. And do keep in mind all of the tax writeoffs that they're able to take advantage of that most Americans can't get. But nonetheless, since they've had 11 good years, 11 good years where they have received a significant tax cut, I think