

North Carolina (Mr. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, around the world, the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively through a representative of their choosing, with their employer, over wages and benefits and conditions of employment, is recognized as an important human right and as a hallmark of democratic societies. But in the United States those rights have been under assault by some politicians and by some employers who want to turn the clock back three-quarters of a century.

When workers want to join a union here and bargain collectively with their employer, too many employers intentionally delay and delay, abusing the legal system to deny their employees the rights that we scold developing nations for denying their workers.

I rise in support of the proposed National Labor Relations Board rule to streamline and modernize union election procedures, an important and overdue step to restore fairness to our inefficient and outdated system that has allowed too many abuses. The new NLRB rule would speed up union elections, giving employers less opportunity to interfere illegally with organizing drives. The rule also allows smaller groups of workers to form unions.

Under the current NLRB system, employers willing to break the law have many opportunities to delay a union election, stretching out the time period when they can intimidate and coerce workers, all in violation of the law. The effect of this rule is to help workers exercise their free choice to join and be represented by a union without illegal interference.

Streamlining NLRB elections is a long overdue and small step to ensure workers the right to speak with one voice to a representative of their choosing.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the last week we have heard that Brian Hayes, the only Republican member of the NLRB board, NLRB, is threatening to resign specifically to deny the board the quorum to act under the law, to deny the board the quorum to perform the duties that the law places upon them. Republicans in this Congress have now tried to defund the NLRB to take away the NLRB's ability to impose sanctions on employers who violate the law, and now they are trying to shut the board down altogether by abusing the other body's advice and consent powers to block any new appointments to the board and by having a Republican member resign specifically to deny the necessary quorum to act.

Today, we are considering the so-called Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act; and despite that Orwellian name, the bill is designed to do the exact opposite. It is intended to deny workers the right to unionize without delay and litigation, to deny those rights through delay and litigation and

by allowing employers to decide which employees, which workers get to vote on whether there is a union or not to stuff the ballot box, under this bill, to add new workers to the unit that will decide whether to have a union or not.

Under the bill there would be a waiting period, if there is an election dispute, whether it's well grounded or frivolous, a waiting period for preelection hearing, a waiting period for unions to receive the better contact list; and the only goal for that, for those waiting periods, is delay. The arbitrary waiting periods ensure that election will be delayed, and nowhere is there any assurance the election will really be held.

My Republican colleagues blame frivolous lawsuits for many of the ills of our country; but this bill would reward frivolous lawsuits by providing more time for employers to find fault, real or fabricated, with the election process; and by blocking the NLRB's current rule that would allow elections to move ahead before the complaints are resolved, this bill would allow employers to use litigation, frivolous or legitimate, to block elections.

Finally, this bill would allow employers to stuff the ballot box with a radical rewrite of our labor law so that the employer would decide which employees, which workers get to vote. They can add employees who were never engaged in the organizing drive, and they can keep the list of voters of the workers eligible to vote from those supporting a union until just before the election.

American workers deserve the same rights that we urge around the world for workers, the right to form a union, the right to speak with one voice and bargain with their employer so that our workers can win better wages and better benefits and rebuild the American middle class.

UNEMPLOYMENT REMAINS TOO HIGH AND GLOBAL MARKETS SHOWING SIGNS OF INSTABILITY

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the economy received an early holiday gift this past week when Black Friday and Cyber Monday shopping figures outperformed expectations. However, we still face significant challenges. Unemployment remains too high and global markets are showing signs of instability, both of which are the lingering effects of the Great Recession. Casting a grim shadow over all of our actions is the fact that some Members of this body still persist in ignoring the public and letting ideology stand in the way of striking a reasonable balance to tame our national debt and grow the economy.

Of note is the recent report released by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, showing that the Recovery Act we passed 2 years ago has been

a significant success in an otherwise gloomy economic picture. According to the CBO, the Recovery Act increased GDP growth by up to 1.9 percent in the third quarter of this year, a quarter in which we had 2 percent growth. That's an extraordinary impact.

Thanks to the Recovery Act, 2.4 million people, according to the CBO, now have a job and the overall unemployment rate is 1.3 percent lower than it otherwise would have been if we'd done nothing, as my friends on the other side of the aisle wanted us to do.

According to CBO's in-depth analysis, the Recovery Act will continue to have a significant impact on the economy. Although it was designed to operate from 2009 to 2011, CBO found it will continue to drive GDP growth next year, adding 1 percent to the economy and will further increase employment by 1 million jobs.

After opposing any stimulus action in the midst of the worst economic contraction in 80 years, the Republicans actually criticize the Recovery Act now for the fact that it didn't do enough. That speaks less to the merits of the Recovery Act, I'd suggest, than it does about the magnitude of the Great Recession. And it is extraordinarychutzpa from the other side to just say "no" and now criticize the Recovery Act for being inadequate.

The Great Recession was, in fact, the Nation's worst economic collapse in 80 years. What began in the subprime housing market quickly spread throughout the financial industry, threatening economic ruin. At its height, more than 700,000 Americans were losing their jobs every single month. Millions more lost their homes through foreclosures. The Great Recession was already one of America's worst before President Obama was ever sworn into office, and during that economic maelstrom our first act in the 111th Congress was to pass the Recovery Act to help, on a party-line vote, I'm sad to say.

□ 1040

Many of my Republican colleagues point to the continued weakness in the economy as an indication of the Recovery Act's failure, rather than acknowledging that it is actually a function of the severity of the recession and failing to acknowledge their own supine, Darwinian response to it. They claim that, as the economic turmoil which began in 2007 raged all around us, Americans would have been better served had Congress simply done nothing and hoped for the best. Now, as the lingering effects of the recession continue to hold back a robust recovery, they continue to defy reasonable bipartisan attempts to put people back to work and get our country moving again.

The Recovery Act cut taxes for 95 percent of all Americans—both families and small businesses. It kept thousands of teachers, police officers, and firefighters on the job. Recovery Act dollars funded highways and transit

improvements in every State, putting hundreds of thousands in the depressed construction industry back to work. There was a time when cutting taxes and investing in infrastructure was a bipartisan endeavor and had broad Republican support as well as Democratic support.

But there's still time for redemption. The President's American Jobs Act now provides another opportunity for our Republican friends to actually partner with Democrats and support economic recovery. The American Jobs Act provides incentives for companies, large and small, to hire additional workers; it cuts taxes on every working American in order to further spur economic demand; and it provides support for sorely needed infrastructure investments to repair America's bridges, roadways, and schools. In short, it builds on the success of the Recovery Act we passed 2 years ago.

There are 2.4 million Americans with jobs today because we took action 2 years ago. With 14 million more waiting, we can't afford now to do nothing. We must act.

THE BENEDICT ARNOLD ALLY

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani said that there will be no more "business as usual" with the United States. I couldn't agree more. The United States should not be doing business as usual with our unfaithful ally Pakistan. Since 2002, we have given Pakistan over \$14 billion in so-called security-related aid and over \$6 billion in economic-related aid. The American people have not gotten their money's worth.

Pakistan seems to be the Benedict Arnold nation in the list of countries that we call allies. They have proven to be deceptive, deceitful, and a danger to the United States. Here's some of the evidence.

In May of this year, Navy SEALs discovered Osama bin Laden living the high life in an Abbottabad mansion right in the backyard of the Pakistani military community, but Pakistan claimed they had no knowledge of the world's most-wanted terrorist that was living right under their noses. This is questionable at best. Mr. Speaker, that dog just won't hunt.

Since then, the more we learn about Pakistan, the worse it gets. Shortly after that raid, Pakistan also arrested CIA informants in Pakistan that led the United States to capture or take out Osama bin Laden.

Pakistan has tried also to cheat the United States by filing bogus reimbursement claims for allegedly going after militants; 40 percent of these claims have been rejected by our government.

There is more. Pakistan tipped off terrorists making IEDs, not once, but

twice, in June 2011, after we gave them intel on the bomb-making factory location and asked Pakistan to go after them.

CIA Director Leon Panetta asserted that Pakistan had not done enough to bring Osama bin Laden to justice, saying there is "total mistrust" between the United States and Pakistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan is chumming up to the Chinese. It sounds to me like Pakistan is playing both sides in the war on terror.

This so-called ally takes billions of dollars in U.S. aid while, at the same time, supporting the militants who attack us. According to Admiral Mike Mullen, the Pakistani Government supported the groups who were behind the September 11 truck bombing attack in eastern Afghanistan that wounded more than 70 U.S. and NATO troops.

Based on this evidence, I have introduced legislation to freeze all U.S.A. aid to Pakistan with the exception of funds that are designated to help secure their nuclear facilities. By sending aid to Pakistan, we are funding the enemy, endangering Americans, and undermining our efforts in the whole region.

In the past week, relations between American and Pakistani officials have even further deteriorated. Saturday, NATO and Afghan forces near the border of northwest Pakistan and Afghanistan reportedly came under attack from Pakistani fire and responded in self-defense. Twenty-four Pakistani soldiers were killed. But Pakistan says it was NATO who fired the first shot. Of course we cannot believe what Pakistan says. They will lie when the truth is obvious. But the facts will eventually come out as to what really happened in this episode.

Hatred for America is still at an all-time high in Pakistan. This week on TV, Americans have seen Pakistanis burning American flags and cursing our Nation. And just today in Politico, we have this lovely photograph of Pakistani women proclaiming "Down with U.S.A."

Pakistan leaders are continuing to vilify the United States on the one hand and, on the other hand, take our money. Most importantly, crucial NATO supply routes have been cut off by Pakistan, stopping supplies from getting to our troops in Afghanistan. Monday, 300 trucks full of supplies were turned away at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Pakistan has cut off the supply routes to our troops; now it's time we cut off the money to Pakistan.

Pakistan has made it painfully obvious that they will continue their policy of dangerous, dishonest deceit by pretending to be our ally in the war on terror while simultaneously giving a wink and a nod to extremism. By continuing to provide aid to Pakistan, we are funding the enemy, endangering Americans, and undermining our efforts.

Seven in 10 Americans believe we need to stop or decrease foreign aid to

Pakistan. After all, it is their money. We should stop foreign aid to Pakistan until we know whose side they're on. We don't need to pay them to hate us; they'll do it for free, Mr. Speaker. Maybe we shouldn't pay them at all.

And that's just the way it is.

COST OF COLLEGE SMOTHERING OPPORTUNITY

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, it has now been 2 months since the Occupy Wall Street movement spread all across this country; and despite attempts to marginalize it, parody it, sometimes even suppress it, the fact is that one message has come through loud and clear, particularly from young Americans who have participated in this grassroots movement across the country, which is that the spiraling cost of college is smothering opportunity for millions of young Americans all across America.

Yesterday the Secretary of Education, Arnie Duncan, presented a speech in Nevada which I think starkly presents the challenge which we face as a Nation. Today, the average student loan debt for graduating students is \$25,000. That's the average. There are, again, millions of students who are graduating with six-figure debt. And in an economy like the one they're facing today, this is really an obstacle which will probably burden them for the rest of their lives. And as we are seeing in polls, the cost of college is discouraging many younger Americans, high school-age Americans from even considering the possibility of pursuing a higher education degree.

First of all, let's be very clear here. The value of higher education is still, despite some critics, indisputable. If you look at the unemployment rate today, 9 percent across the board in terms of our country, the fact of the matter is that those who have pursued high school and above have much lower rates of unemployment today than those who have been unable to reach those training levels and education levels.

Nationally, today the graduation rate of the U.S. has now fallen to 12th internationally. Back in the 1980s, the College Board, which is the organization which tracks graduation rates across the globe, determined we were number one in the world in terms of college graduation rates. Yet today, in 2011, we are 12th. If anybody thinks that is a situation which bodes well for our ability to compete internationally going into the future, then, frankly, they're not paying attention in terms of where the high-value jobs of the future are. They are, in fact, in hard sciences; they are, in fact, in areas of critical workforce needs which, as baby boomers retire in growing numbers across this country, we must have if we