

should not be deported. In other words, let them go.

As a result of Washington's inaction, several States have been burdened with the costs of illegal entry, from health care to incarceration costs. Arizona, South Carolina, Utah, Georgia, and Indiana have been forced to do the job the Federal Government just won't do—protect the citizens from the costs of unlawful entry into America.

Arizona implemented a law that requires authorities to check the immigration status of anyone who is already legally detained for some offense and when there is a "reasonable suspicion" the person is in the country illegally. But the administration says not so fast, that immigration enforcement is their job.

They just refuse to do it.

It also seems the government is more interested in smuggling guns to Mexico under the botched Operation Fast and Furious than it is in preventing the smuggling of people and drugs into the United States. Now the Department of Justice has gone into the business of using taxpayer dollars to actually sue States for doing the job the Federal Government won't do. Yesterday, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case of *Arizona v. The United States*. Governor Brewer of Arizona has said, "Arizona and its people suffer from a serious problem without any realistic tools for addressing it."

The Federal Government leaves States with no other choice than to do the job the Federal Government refuses to do. If Arizona is not allowed to enforce immigration laws and if the Federal Government does not enforce immigration laws, then Arizona and other States will continue on a dangerous path to becoming lawless territories with rampant illegal entry. Ignoring laws and open-door policies will only entice more people to come to this country illegally instead of using the front door.

Now, I fully support legal entry into America, and my staff spends a lot of time helping people come to the United States legally. The immigration model we have is a mess, and it needs to be streamlined and more efficient; but people should come here the right way or not come at all. After all, it is the law.

But the defiant Attorney General has made it clear that he will continue his crusade against the States that try to crack down on illegal entry. Why? Because the States want to uphold the law. Meanwhile, sanctuary cities get a pass from the Federal Government for ignoring the law.

We hear the rhetoric that illegals are here to do the jobs Americans won't do. Now State after State is getting sued for doing a job the American Government won't do—protecting the security of the Nation and enforcing the law. Arizona had to enact this law to protect itself because the Federal Government doesn't adequately secure the border.

It is time for Washington to stop its war on the States and to join with the States in enforcing the law of the land. Hopefully, the Supreme Court will rule the Arizona law to be constitutional.

And that's just the way it is.

THE CARIBBEAN BORDER INITIATIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, American citizens in the Caribbean are facing a security crisis. While the national murder rate has declined in recent decades, the number of homicides in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands remains unacceptably high. Since 2008, the murder rate in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands has been about five times the national average and about twice as high as that of any State.

Most of the murders committed in Puerto Rico and the USVI are linked to the drug trade. As Attorney General Holder and other officials have acknowledged, the Federal Government's effort to prevent traffickers from transporting drugs across our Nation's southwest border is causing traffickers to turn increasingly to the Caribbean to ship drugs into the United States. As the National Drug Intelligence Center recently observed, violence by traffickers in the two territories has "become indiscriminate, endangering the lives of . . . innocent bystanders."

In response to questions I posed, Attorney General Holder recently called drug-related violence in Puerto Rico and in the USVI a national security issue that we must confront. At my urging, Congress has also taken notice of the problem, directing Federal law enforcement agencies on three separate occasions to devote more attention to the Caribbean region.

According to briefings provided to my office, 70 to 80 percent of the cocaine that enters Puerto Rico is transported to the U.S. mainland. Because Puerto Rico is a U.S. jurisdiction, once drugs enter the island, they are easily delivered to the States through commercial airlines and container ships, without having to clear customs or having to otherwise undergo heightened scrutiny. Once in the States, these drugs destroy lives and communities in my colleagues' districts. So this is a problem of national, not simply regional, scope.

That said, the primary reason the Federal Government must do more to reduce drug trafficking in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands is that U.S. citizens in these two territories are dying in unprecedented numbers. Our Nation has devoted considerable resources in confronting drug gangs that are operating along the southwest border, and rightfully so. Yet Puerto Rico's murder rate is four to five times higher than that of any Southwest border State.

According to a recent piece in *The Washington Post*, since 2008 the island has received less than one-fifth of the funding that the Federal Government has provided to combat the drug trade and associated violence in Mexico and Central American nations.

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The number of authorized positions at key Federal law enforcement agencies in Puerto Rico is too low. The number of vacancies is too high. And interdiction assets, like planes and boats, are in short supply.

Since taking office, I have urged the Federal Government to devote resources to Puerto Rico at a level commensurate with the severity of the problem it faces. Specifically, I have asked the White House drug czar to establish a Caribbean border initiative modeled after the successful Southwest Border Initiative.

The time for half measures and piecemeal efforts has passed. What is needed instead is a well-planned, well-funded, well-executed, governmentwide strategy that will encompass all Federal agencies charged with fighting drug trafficking and related violence. To protect the lives of the U.S. citizens in the Caribbean and to reduce the flow of drugs headed to the States through that region, the Federal Government must make a commitment of resources to Puerto Rico and the USVI that is similar to the commitment it has made to the southwest border.

The challenge we face today is similar to the one we faced back in 1994. I was Puerto Rico's attorney general back then and lobbied successfully for Puerto Rico and the USVI to be federally designated as a high-intensity drug trafficking area, which contributed to a significant reduction in the island's violent crime rate. The problem has evolved over time, and the Federal response must evolve along with it. I will not rest until it does.

DIGGING OURSELVES OUT OF THIS RECESSION

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

Mr. CRAVAACK. Mr. Speaker, my message is simple and direct: Last month, this administration put yet another hold on implementing the Keystone pipeline project and adding tens of thousands of American jobs to our fragile economy. This decision is bad news for laborers in the great State of Minnesota and around the country who were eager to begin working on the project next year. If we do not approve this deal and put people back to work, the jobs and the oil will simply go another direction—such as China—and they will not be coming back to the United States.

What part of this bill just doesn't make sense to the folks in the White House and the Department of State?

We cannot wait. The American worker is the most productive worker in the world, and so many people in my district thirst for good-paying jobs that will come with projects like Keystone.

Some of these regulatory agencies are simply out of control and seem bent on stifling job creation here in the United States. If the government would simply get out of the way, put politics aside, and dedicate to empowering the American worker, we can start digging ourselves out of this recession and get Americans back to work.

REMOVE KEYSTONE PIPELINE FROM THE BILL

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

Mr. RANGEL. Well, it looks like this august body will continue to work until we find some solutions to the problems facing the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs, their homes, their savings through no fault of their own and have limited income.

It has taken some time for the Democrats in the House to persuade the majority that this is a time when we just can't lay off people and stop spending, even though that has to be a part of the ultimate solution to the problems that we face. But laying off people, especially at this time of the year, is not only an insensitive thing to do, but, in my opinion, the economics of it all is that if people don't have the resources to purchase their needs, then, of course, our small businesses are the ones that suffer financially; and, as a result of that, they may have to lay off workers. It just doesn't make economic sense, nor is it a very sensitive thing to do during this time of year.

Now very soon, this body will be considering what is referred to as the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011, which means that we will now have united—or apparently it appears to be united—this entire Congress, saying that we must continue to have this low-income tax cut that working people enjoy to continue beyond its expiration of December 31, and that even though there are some people who claim that a lot of Americans don't pay any taxes—well, you can't explain that to a person who works hard each and every day and they find out what their pay was supposed to be, but, when they get home and look at their check, it's less. But just because it's not Federal income tax, that doesn't mean that they're not paying into their Social Security and they're not paying for their health benefits. So the President, in his wisdom, and this Congress support that we extend relief of that payroll tax so that these people have this disposable income during this time of the year.

And of course we have this controversy where every year, for whatever reason, Republicans can't grasp the understanding of what unemployment insurance is all about. And I

shouldn't say Republicans. I'm talking about those people that belong to the Republican Party that truly believe, if you give someone a hand up at a time when they've lost their job and the Federal Government said that you have paid into this safety fund and you try to help them for what they paid into, that you are convincing them that they should not look for work.

Now, this great country exists because of our working middle class. It's because people don't enjoy work, but they have the dignity of working, the pride in letting their family know that they're providing for food and clothing and investing for the future. So perhaps I shouldn't blame the entire Republican Party. But they have managed every year not to deal with this extended unemployment compensation so at least these people can plan not just for the holidays but plan for their basic needs.

Somehow, with all of this feeling that it is about time that we came together and have done something, the Republicans have added to this the Keystone energy pipeline. Can you imagine how many people who are expecting relief from their government will be going to sleep tonight wondering whether they are going to continue to get a break on taxes next year, whether or not they are going to get a break on payroll taxes this year, and whether or not they are going to get extended unemployment compensation is all dependent on whether or not the Congress supports the Keystone energy pipeline?

Let's get rid of all the pipeline language. Let's do what the bill is supposed to do, and let's not put in something that could impede the passage.

RAISING TAXES ON JOB CREATORS

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday it was announced that a small business in my district will be closing two locations in Illinois and transferring those jobs out of State. I believe at this time, they are taking them to Texas. But we have seen this story over and over again, whether it be taking jobs to Wisconsin, whether it's taking jobs to Indiana. I believe this speaks volumes about the economic situation not only in Illinois but in our Nation and the policies that I believe that this body must put in place in order to empower small business owners and job creators all across the land to be able to have confidence, invest in their business, and grow jobs.

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You see, the difference in the State of Illinois is that in Illinois we raised taxes on businesses over 45 percent this last year. It put enormous pressure on small businesses throughout the State, and I would argue all job creators

throughout the State. What is even worse, Mr. Speaker, is that those companies that have more employees and a little bit higher clout have been able to rattle the saber and call the Governor and say we're going to pick up and leave the State of Illinois and take jobs elsewhere. While we want to make sure that we keep those jobs in Illinois, the unfortunate thing is we have got some crony capitalism going on, so the State is going to bend over backwards to make sure some of the larger employers stay in the State of Illinois.

The problem is that small businesses, the ones that I talk to each and every day, when they call the Governor, they don't get their phone calls returned. It, indeed, puts a greater burden on small businesses. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of all net new jobs are created by small businesses all across the land. This is the economic engine that we need to make sure that we are supporting, to make sure that we are putting more Americans back to work.

There are 29 million small businesses in our Nation. If we can create an environment right here in Washington, D.C., and you hear me say it's creating an environment, it's not creating jobs because the government doesn't create jobs; it's the private sector that does.

But what the government can do is create an environment, whether it be through regulation, whether it be through comprehensive tax reform, whether it be through a variety of measures that enable those 29 million small businesses in our Nation to create a single job. If half of those businesses created a job, Mr. Speaker, think about where we would be then.

This is why the American people want Congress to act, and I think we've got a responsibility to reach across the aisle and find common ground. We need to get rid of the crony capitalism. We need to create a level playing field where businesses all across the land can compete and can win because this is an opportunity for Republicans and Democrats alike to put forward comprehensive tax reform, something that has been touted by the Simpson-Bowles Commission, touted by the President and touted by others.

Well, it's time for action. We want to make sure that we move forward with this. We want to make sure that businesses can open their doors and create a level playing field. At the end of the day, it's about finding that common ground. It's about having government get out of the way and enabling the private sector to move forward so that we can all see America get back to work.

'Twas THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS

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