

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.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, while my statement mimics a well-known seasonal classic, it is shared in all seriousness and with a sense of greatest urgency.

'Twas the week before Christmas when all through the House,

A cry echoed much louder than a roaring mouse.

Don't raise our taxes, on us please be fair,

or our middle class will be lost in despair.

The majority was plotting a thought in its head,

We should staunchly oppose what from the President was led.

Millionaires should be spared, not a penny we sap,

But Keystone pipeline we will never ever scrap.

When outside the Chamber there arose such a clatter,

The public was disgusted and shouted: we matter!

Away to offices lawmakers flew in a flash,

A change in this bill or else it will crash.

End of year coming and no jobs plan to show,

They said no regulations was the best way to go.

Then what to our debate should suddenly appear,

But a sentiment from the public those in office should fear.

Come on Congress, be fair and be quick.

Don't be deceiving, and don't be so slick.

More rapid the calls and emails they came,

"No pipeline" said Senator I won't name.

So let's get to work and not be grinch this season,

The economy and middle class are clearly the reason,

We should have a straight vote, not this 400-page show,

And help America's middle class and small business grow.

Let's spring into action and get this bill done.

We have other work; in fact, there's a ton.

Spending bills, doc fix, unemployment and more,

Before the year ends, they must all come to the floor.

We serve our constituents and our Nation first.

For jobs and opportunities, many of us thirst.

Clean air and clean water should not be rolled back.

Deregulatory riders ours bills should well lack.

Thus we go forward to end of the year,

Good tidings and joy this Congress must steer.

Working together with all of our might,

Happy Holidays to all, and for fairness let's fight.

GENOCIDAL SUDANESE GOVERNMENT HIRES LOBBYIST

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I was appalled and outraged to learn yesterday that the genocidal government of Khartoum has hired a lobbyist to represent its interests here in Washington.

On December 10, a publication called "Africa Intelligence" reported that the Sudanese Government has put a lobbyist on retainer with the express purpose of trying "to lift American sanctions against it."

The article further reported that the law office of Bart S. Fisher would be paid \$20,000 a month plus expenses to represent this genocidal government, a government which literally has blood on its hands.

I don't know how Mr. Fisher sleeps at night. Considering the follow: Sudan's president, Omar Hassan Bashir, is an internationally indicted war criminal. Bashir is accused by the International Criminal Court of five counts of crimes against humanity—including murder, rape, torture, and extermination—and two counts of war crimes.

But Khartoum's crimes are not simply a thing of the past. In a recent hearing before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a witness with the NGO Human Rights Watch testified about the situation on the ground in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states in Sudan, saying: "According to witnesses we interviewed and other sources, government forces shelled civilian areas, shot people in the streets and carried out house-to-house searches and arrests based on lists of names of known Sudan People's Liberation Movement supporters in the first weeks of fighting."

My office has received regular, reliable reports from individuals on the ground echoing these claims. We have learned of ongoing aerial bombardments in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states. We have heard of nightmarish accounts of extrajudicial killings, illegal detention, disappearances, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians. Furthermore, evidence gathered through satellite imagery by the Satellite Sentinel Project shows at least eight mass graves found in and around Kadugli, the capital of Southern Kordofan.

Literally thousands have fled the violence, which begs the question, Who is their lobbyist? They are in desperate straits having left behind their entire lives. Who is their lobbyist? They are facing malnutrition and prolonged displacement. Who is their lobbyist?

To put a human face on these questions, consider this picture taken by a Voice of America photographer of a malnourished child with a feeding tube inserted in his nose in an attempt to get him the sustenance he so desperately needs. He is one of roughly 25,000 people in the Yida refugee camp that have fled the fighting in Sudan and crossed the border in South Sudan.

I ask Mr. Fisher, the lobbyist: Where is the child's lobbyist, the lobbyist for this child?

Today I am sending a letter to President Obama, the State Department, the Justice Department, and the Treasury Department seeking immediate clarification on what appears to be an indefensible situation.

According to news report and the Foreign Agents Registration page of the Department of Justice Web site, Mr. Bart Fisher is representing the Government of Sudan. Was he granted a license from the Office of Foreign Assets Control at Treasury, as is required to represent the genocidal country of Sudan given the U.S. sanctions which are in place against it? If not, is his representation a violation of law? If so, why would the Obama administration allow this to move forward?

There are many questions which demand answers. But one thing is clear: it appears that Mr. Fisher's contract with the Government of Sudan went into effect in November. If he has received one penny from the Government of Sudan, he should return it immediately; or better yet, he should donate it to one of the NGOs seeking to serve the suffering Sudanese people in Yida refugee camp who have been brutalized by their own government, i.e., Mr. Fisher's client.

[From the Africa Intelligence, Dec. 10, 2011]

KHARTOUM HIRES A LOBBYIST IN U.S.

The Sudanese government has just taken on a lobbyist in Washington, United States to try to lift American sanctions against it. The Law Office of Bart S. Fisher summarised the contract in a letter to the Sudanese embassy in Washington dated November 1, stating that its work would be carried out within the limits of the Sudanese Sanctions Regulations, for a fee of \$20,000 a month plus expenses. Bart Fisher is a longstanding lobbyist for China and for Chinese companies, combining the legal defence of its clients and lobby activity. In the case of Sudan, he will advise Khartoum on how to obtain the reduction or cessation of U.S. sanctions and the removal of the country from the State Department list of State Sponsors of Terror. It will also aid the Sudanese Embassy in Washington in the requisite legal procedures. Fisher will have work to do, since the contract was signed on 10 November just as military tension is growing on the border with Southern Sudan and a coalition of 66 organisations in the United States, Act for Sudan, recently asked President Barack Obama to impose a no fly zone over Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, to prevent Khartoum from attacking the civilian population.

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PAYROLL TAX CUTS

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, once again we are presented with a false choice today. In the Alice in Wonderland world of the House, Republicans oppose payroll tax cuts unless they can be used as a vehicle to cut unemployment benefits. According