

to fight off several persons, stood his ground for 10 minutes, but indicated that he thought he was going to die as they assaulted him. That's the bad news. The good news is that the law has worked, that this law is bringing new meaning to the notion of justice for all. This law will not allow those who would commit dastardly deeds and be prosecuted in State courts for misdemeanors to go unchecked. They will now face felony charges in our Federal courts. This is the way it should be in the greatest country in the world.

Mr. Speaker, God bless all listening, and God bless the United States of America.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor again to continue to identify and educate you on the various locations where we store high-level nuclear waste around this country and the various positions that our colleagues in the other Chamber have voted either for or against, in hopes that eventually the public will become well informed and that they will take action through their elected officials to do even what the Blue Ribbon Commission suggested, which is decide and locate a long-term geological storage facility.

This is not new. We've been doing it for decades. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act was established in 1982. The amendments were passed through this Chamber and signed into law in 1987, which identified a long-term geological repository at a place called Yucca Mountain in the desert in Nevada.

What I've been attempting to do throughout this past year and a half—I chair a subcommittee that has direct responsibility for this—is identify different locations. So today we go to a place very close to here. In fact, I think it's only 43 miles from the District of Columbia, and that's a place called Calvert Cliffs. I like to compare and contrast it with where our nuclear waste should be stored, not in a decade or two from now, but at this very moment where it should be.

Calvert Cliffs is in Maryland, and at Calvert Cliffs there are 1,300 metric tons of uranium, of spent fuel, onsite versus Yucca Mountain, which is a mountain in a desert where we have no nuclear waste onsite. At Calvert Cliffs, this spent nuclear fuel is stored above the ground in pools and in casks above the ground. If it were stored at Yucca Mountain, it would be 1,000 feet underground. At Calvert Cliffs, the nuclear waste is stored 85 feet above the groundwater, and at Yucca Mountain, it would be 1,000 feet above the water table. Finally, at Yucca Mountain, the nearest body of water is the Colorado River, about 100 miles. As you can see here in this photo, Calvert Cliffs is right next to Chesapeake Bay.

Yucca Mountain is about 90 miles from Las Vegas, maybe 100 miles from Las Vegas. Calvert Cliffs is a straight line of 43 miles from Washington, D.C. The Senators from the surrounding areas, how did they vote? You would think they wouldn't want high-level nuclear waste next to Chesapeake Bay, 43 miles from the capital city. Well, Senator CARPER voted "no" in 2002. Senator COONS, a new Member, we don't know his position. That's part of coming down here. I'm pretty sure that if the majority leader of the Senate would call a vote and this issue was thoroughly debated, it would pass on the floor of the Senate because we have a lot of Senators who have yet to declare their position. Here is Senator CARDIN, a former Member of the House, who voted "yea" in 2002 for Yucca Mountain. Senator MIKULSKI, the same; different Chamber, voted "no."

How does our national tally go? Currently we have 47 U.S. Senators who have a stated position in support of Yucca Mountain. We have over 16 that have never cast a vote or declared their position on what we do with high-level nuclear waste, either spent fuel or nuclear waste, in the processing of nuclear energy or nuclear weapons.

□ 1040

We have 19 who have had a position of "no" at some time in their career. So it's very, very important to continue this debate, Mr. Speaker, to continue to come down on the floor to talk about the Federal law as it is to date.

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act was passed in 1982; the amendment was agreed to in 1987. The amendment identified Yucca Mountain as our long-term geological repository to store high-level nuclear waste. The time is well past since we should be doing this. In fact, we actually pay utilities to hold their nuclear waste since it's our responsibility to take the waste.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN AND BUFFETT RULE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BERKLEY. I'm here to talk about the Buffett bill, but I just cannot allow what Mr. SHIMKUS has just said to go unresponded to because it's such an important issue for the people of the State of Nevada.

The so-called nuclear act that he discussed that was passed in '82 and amended in '87 is known in Nevada as the "screw Nevada bill," and let me tell you what it is. It's a proposal that would ship 77,000 tons of toxic radioactive nuclear waste across 43 States to be buried in a hole in the Nevada desert, which is 90 miles from the major population center of Las Vegas, where we have groundwater issues, seismic activity, and volcanic activity. The EPA cannot come up with any radiation standards that would protect the people of the State of Nevada or anyone else in this country.

Let me tell you, originally, when they came up with this nonsensical plan, which is purely political, that it has nothing to do with science. They said that we could store the rods, the nuclear waste, in Yucca Mountain with no problem, leave it there. Then we realized that that wouldn't work because of the groundwater. So then we decided that they would put their nuclear waste in canisters. But what do you know, there are no canisters that currently exist that can safely store this stuff. Then they came up with shields that would go around the canisters that don't exist to be put into Yucca Mountain.

Then the last Republican Secretary of Energy talked about an army of robots that would walk down Yucca Mountain and be able to check on the nuclear waste while it's leaking and leaching into the groundwater. It's a ridiculous proposal, and it's time to go to Plan B because Plan A isn't going to happen. Seventy-seven percent of the people of the State of Nevada do not want nuclear waste stored at Yucca Mountain. End of that.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deep disappointment with yesterday's vote in the United States Senate. Once again, Senate Republicans sided with Wall Street millionaires against the interests of struggling middle class families throughout Nevada. The Buffett rule is simple, and it's common sense.

It means if you are a housekeeper, a nurse, a blackjack dealer, or a waitress, or any other middle class professional, you shouldn't pay higher tax rates than multi-millionaires who own yachts and travel in private jets. It means that if you are a Nevadan living paycheck to paycheck, you shouldn't be carrying the burden for Wall Street hedge fund managers and Big Oil company executives.

The Senators who voted against basic tax fairness yesterday need to spend a little more time prioritizing the needs of hardworking Nevadans. They're struggling. These are the people that are struggling to put food on the table, to fill up their cars with gas, and to pay their mortgage or their rent.

The fact that the wealthiest people in this country pay their taxes at a lower tax rate than their secretaries and their chauffeurs doesn't pass the smell test. It stinks, and that's why I'm proud to announce that I'm a co-sponsor of the Buffett rule in the House, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me and let's bring some fundamental tax fairness to the people of the United States of America. Seventy-two percent of the American people agree with me that the Buffett rule should be made into law.

STEM EDUCATION

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, just minutes ago I had an opportunity to be outside

and see the space shuttle flying around the United States Capitol on its way to Dulles, which brought back memories. Certainly those who study history realize that back in the '60s it was President Kennedy who said that the United States will take a man, deliver him to the Moon, and bring him safely back to the Earth. Consequently, the space race took off at that point in time and literally hundreds of thousands of people became more engaged in science and technology, engineering and mathematics, something that I think that we need to rekindle today.

Mr. Speaker, I represent one of the largest manufacturing districts in the United States; and when I tour small businesses throughout the 10th District of Illinois, employers continually tell me that they have got job openings available, yet they can't find people, individuals, workers, able to fill those roles, roles that need to be filled by those who have taken science and technology, engineering and mathematics courses, or the STEM fields.

In the depths of this recession that we have been going through, manufacturing associations have statistics that say 600,000 jobs across our Nation went unfilled. They went unfilled because not enough people were trained in the STEM fields. These are not low-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker. These jobs, on average, pay \$77,000 annually. We must empower our students and job-seekers to pursue STEM education so that they can fill these good high-paying jobs right here at home.

Certainly one of the pillars of my Main Street Jobs Agenda is that of STEM education. If we can prepare our students and those who are looking for work, we can help empower these people to find good-paying jobs and keep our manufacturing and innovation right here at home.

The College of Lake County, a college in my district, has teamed up with local manufacturers to help provide education, education that is necessary in the STEM fields for those who are unemployed or wanting to pursue a manufacturing career.

I am pleased to say that one of the local manufacturers actually went to the College of Lake County and said we're actually pulling students from Iowa and Ohio, is there any way you might be able to offer courses here at the College of Lake County so that we could start hiring people locally to fill these jobs. They were all too happy to oblige.

I recently held a STEM field trip where I took interested students from high schools all across the 10th District to different high-tech organizations in the region. These students learn how they can apply their education firsthand and pursue advanced careers in this field.

Just last week, I hosted the first-ever Manufacturing and Education Summit to bridge the gap between educators and manufacturers. We had folks from high schools and colleges. We had man-

ufacturers there trying to say what it was that they needed, what were they looking for in students who were going to be graduating from either high school or college. This is exactly what we need to be doing right now.

One of the success stories of bridging the gap between education and manufacturing is that of Wheeling High School principal Dr. Laz Lopez. He has worked with local businesses to find out what the actual needs are in the community and offering students options in pursuing a STEM education.

Today, Dr. Lopez has been recognized as starting one of the most successful STEM high schools in our country. Just this last Friday, I joined him and other STEM students from various high schools around the area while they competed in a STEM competition, focusing on nanotechnology and high-powered computing. These are extraordinarily bright students who are better prepared for the 21st-century workforce.

STEM education is and should be a bipartisan idea. I believe that this is an area of common ground and that we should be promoting local efforts all across our Nation to help manufacturers fill open jobs and better prepare our emerging workforce for 21st-century careers. We must not stand idly by and hope that this happens. Rather, we must be proactive and work to spur our local economy by demonstrating the success of STEM education.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is one way we can help spur our economy to get our country back to work. I would encourage my colleagues to get involved in their local schools and communities, local colleges, to find out more on how they can better prepare students for a career in the 21st century through STEM education.

It was not too long ago that John Kennedy gave us a charge to bring a man to the Moon and safely back to this Earth, spurring on STEM education. We have to do it again today. We have to make sure that we have that pipeline of students to be able to make jobs right here at home.

□ 1050

ISSUES FACING THIS CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I join my colleague that just spoke on the vitality and the importance of STEM education. As a 12-year member of the Science Committee, I also had a sense of emotion as Discovery flew many times over this great democratic institution. That emotion compels me to continue to fight for a place for one of the shuttles in the hometown where it was born, the place where John F. Kennedy spoke at the Rice Hotel and inspired us to go into space, and that is Houston, Texas, NASA-Johnson. I look

forward to that continued bipartisan effort to have an appropriate representation of the four shuttles back in Houston, where they belong.

I rise today as well to speak about a number of things. I believe it's important for my colleagues to sort of look at a series of issues. I support the Buffett Rule, not because I believe in any kind of class warfare. I celebrate capitalism and applaud Mr. Buffett and others. But it is a good way to raise revenue and bring down the deficit.

We, of course, will be dealing with a bill proposed by my Republican friends on the other side of the aisle. The only thing that they will do is enhance the pocket money of people who don't need it. There is an unfairness in the Tax Code. I would join in a bipartisan way to look at it. In making the Tax Code fair, I would hope that we would be able to bring down the deficit. But the bill that we will see, as I said, will increase the pocket change of millionaires. It will be a job killer. And, of course, it will cut the Medicare guarantees of those who have worked hard for their children and grandchildren. I cannot support legislation that isn't fair and balanced. I would plead to my colleagues to find the middle ground—a fair Tax Code, bringing down the deficit.

I would encourage them to look at H.R. 3710, an energy bill. I have practiced oil and gas law for 15 years. It addresses the question of the wetlands, it uses exploration dollars to bring down the deficit, and it allows expanded exploration in the gulf region, a process that has been vetted by many energy organizations, energy companies, and they believe that is a bipartisan approach. H.R. 3710 is ready for the combined work of all of us.

I also believe it's important to speak about the value of education in several ways. And I'm here today to join in H.R. 3826, proudly so, that stands with students who now carry the bulk of the debt in America—credit debt. These are students who are simply trying to, as my colleague just said, study science, technology, engineering, and math. In about 74 days, the interest rates on Stafford loans will triple to 6.8 percent. You may have borrowed at 2 percent, and here we are talking about it going up to 6.8 percent. I, with every fiber in my body, stand against that. I'm going to stand with the students and parents who have children in school. We can win this thing. We must have a legislative action to stop that stealing of money from our children, who are simply trying to be in the best colleges, the State colleges, and to be educated.

Parents, wake up. In 74 days, the interest rate on your children's loans is going up to 6.8 percent. Call our offices, get on our Web sites, and beg us to pass H.R. 3826 by my good friend Mr. COURTNEY from Connecticut. Please, I beg of you. And I will be there with you. From Texas Southern University to the University of Houston to Houston Baptist to the Houston Community College, we're going to work on this.