

YUCCA MOUNTAIN NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL SITE

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, before I talk about Yucca Mountain, let me just respond to my colleague from Virginia.

Since 2002, food stamps have increased 267 percent, and this reconciliation bill will cut, I think, about 3 percent. Again, since 2002, food stamps have increased 267 percent.

The Senate has not passed a budget in 3 years, so it's very difficult to admonish the House on the budget process when the Senate still has yet to pass a budget.

And what we're really concerned about is the hollowing out of our military force. If the sequestration goes on as planned, we'll have the smallest Air Force in the history of this country that we've ever seen before the Air Force was enacted, the smallest Navy since, I believe, 1915, and a huge decrease in our standing force. That's what the debate is about, and I look forward to having that chance on the floor.

As the chairman of the Environment and the Economy Subcommittee, one of my jurisdictional responsibilities is high-level nuclear waste. I've come to the floor numerous times to explain to you, Mr. Speaker, the various locations that we store high-level nuclear waste and compare it to where, by law, we should.

By law, we should, based upon the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act and an amendment in 1987, we should be storing it underneath a mountain in a desert. So let's compare that location to a place in Perry, Ohio.

Perry, Ohio, has 452 metric tons of uranium of spent fuel on-site versus zero at Yucca Mountain. The waste is stored aboveground in pools and casks. The waste would be stored in Yucca Mountain 1,000 feet underground.

The waste at Perry would be 12 feet above the groundwater. At Yucca Mountain, it would be 1,000 feet above the water table. And at Perry, it is located on Lake Erie, 35 miles from Cleveland, where Yucca Mountain, the waste is 100 miles from the Colorado River and probably 100-or-so-odd miles from Las Vegas, Nevada.

Clearly, in a comparison and contrast, if you want a safe and secure location—of course we also own the land around Yucca Mountain—clearly, it's easy to determine that Yucca Mountain is a much safer place than on one of our Great Lakes.

So then I talk about, well, have the Senators addressed this in their past? Because the reason why we're not moving forward on Yucca Mountain is Majority Leader REID has stopped it, along with President Obama.

Well, Senator BROWN, when he was a House Member, voted for Yucca Mountain in 2002. So did Senator PORTMAN. Both are Senators from the State of Ohio right now.

Senator MITCH MCCONNELL has stated, and so he supports Yucca Mountain:

When it comes to nuclear energy, we have seen this administration abandon plans and millions in taxpayer dollars before without much consideration of the consequences. Take, for example, its unwillingness to follow through on the nuclear storage site, Yucca.

We've already spent about \$15 billion at Yucca Mountain, and Leader MCCONNELL is addressing that issue.

Senator PAUL, so far, has been silent. We hope that he comes out with a stated position.

So what does that do to our tally of where Senators are? And we've reached over the 50-vote mark, based upon our analysis of past statements and past votes. With 51 Senators who would vote "yes," that would be a simple majority if the Senate moved by majority standards. Nineteen are undecided—Senator PAUL is our recent add—and 20 who identify, based on their past statements, having voted "no" or have made statements in opposition to Yucca Mountain.

Why is this important? It's important because we've spent over almost three decades now trying to find a safe, secure location to store high-level nuclear waste. With the Japanese event of last year, Fukushima Daiichi, and the debate on containment vessels and high-level nuclear waste, it is time now to move public policy, or the other body needs to impress upon Leader REID that it is imperative for this country to have a centralized location.

□ 1020

With these 51 and, hopefully, more that we will identify in the next couple of weeks, we will have close to a 60-seat identification to say it can stop a filibuster, it can stop the majority leader, and it can move to do what we all know is in our best interest: to finally gather up in one centralized location our high-level nuclear waste.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Allow me to say happy Teachers' Day to every teacher and also to say that it is an honor and privilege to offer a resolution recognizing National Nurses Week, which is May 6 through 12. This year's theme is "Nurses: Caring, Leading, Advocating." Since 1994, National Nurses Week has served as an opportunity to recognize nurses for their hard work, patience, and service, as well as for their contributions to improving our Nation's health care system.

Throughout my career as a registered nurse, I've had no greater privilege than to provide health care to those who have courageously served our

country. As a former chief psychiatric nurse at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Dallas, I know firsthand the importance of providing quality care to those coming home from war. Through Joining Forces, which is a health care and treatment program for military personnel that was recently launched by the Obama administration, more than 500 nursing schools and 150 nursing organizations will work together to "meet the unique health care needs of servicemen and -women, veterans, and their families."

Nurses provide an invaluable service on a daily basis in settings such as hospitals, clinics, schools, workplaces, correctional facilities, and through their service in the military and during natural disasters. With over 3 million strong, nurses comprise the largest sector of the health care workforce, and year after year, nurses are voted the most trusted of all professionals. For the 12th time in 13 years, in a Gallup survey, nursing ranked first for honesty and ethical standards in 2011.

While our country shifts toward a nationwide focus on prevention and promotion, I believe it is the nurses who should stand at the forefront of this reformation. Mr. Speaker, nurses save lives, provide critical care, and advocate on behalf of their patients 52 weeks a year. They deserve more than 1 week of recognition for their tireless work within health care.

I want to thank my many congressional colleagues who cosponsor this bill in honoring nurses. My colleagues Congresswoman LOIS CAPPS and Congresswoman CAROLYN MCCARTHY are also nurses. They have worked with me to promote this resolution, and they are champions of the nursing profession.

This week, remember to thank nurses for the admirable and selfless contributions they make to our community.

HOW ABOUT WE STOP BEING STUPID?

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States traveled to Afghanistan last week to sign the Strategic Partnership Agreement with President Karzai, and while this agreement is intended to signal the beginning of the end of the Afghanistan war, instead it actually looks like it could lock the United States into a military commitment for years to come.

The agreement calls for our Armed Forces to be involved beyond 2014 in the "training, equipping, advising, and sustaining" of Afghan security forces so that Afghanistan can combat terrorism and "secure and defend itself against internal and external threats."

The irony in that statement, Mr. Speaker, is rich. When are we going to realize that the internal threats facing

Afghanistan gather more strength with every day that American boots are on the ground? Insurgents are energized and animated. They bolster their recruitment and increase their numbers because of their resentment over a U.S. military occupation that is now in its 11th year—11th year. We will not bring stability to Afghanistan until we fundamentally alter our bilateral relationship to emphasize peaceful, civil engagement over military engagement. The good thing about this Strategic Partnership Agreement, however, is that it does include provisions relating to democracy promotion, economic development, and assisting in the reforming of the Afghans' governing institutions. These programs need to be the centerpiece of our Afghan strategy, along with major investments in development aid across the board.

The war won't truly wind down until the White House commits—I mean commits—to spending more on diplomacy and more on development and reconstruction than they're spending on the military occupation. We need a dramatic shift in resources—more to rebuild Afghan infrastructure, more to fight poverty, more to reduce infant and maternal mortality, more to send children, especially girls, to school. As long as we maintain a military presence in Afghanistan, as long as fighting is the focal point of our relationship, we will be preventing and undermining the important humanitarian work that needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, investing in the Afghan people is not just the right thing to do because of our common humanity, it is the smart thing to do from the standpoint of our national security objectives. That's why I call my plan SMART Security. It needs to be implemented not just in Afghanistan, but in other unstable parts of the world where terrorism poses a grave threat.

Thomas Friedman of The New York Times is on board with the principles behind SMART Security. In a column last week, he talked about how a \$13 million scholarship program for Lebanese students is doing a lot more to advance our values in that country than \$1.3 billion in military aid to Egypt. He quotes a schoolteacher in Jordan who talks about how the former is for "making people" and how the latter is for "killing people."

What is the point of our engagement, Mr. Speaker, with the rest of the world—to make people or to kill people? That's a very important question for us to answer. As Friedman puts it:

So how about we stop being stupid? How about we stop sending planes and tanks to a country where half the women and a quarter of the men can't read, and start sending scholarships instead?

How about we stop being stupid, Mr. Speaker? How about we make the shift to a SMART Security approach? How about we make that shift now and begin that shift with bringing our troops home?

PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH SUFFOCATED BY HIGH TAXES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. I rise today to highlight an example of how private sector businesses grow and contribute to our society when they're not suffocated by unnecessarily high taxes, and I rise to dispel a myth that our colleagues continue to perpetuate about energy taxes.

On April 24, The Wall Street Journal ran an article calling Apple Incorporated "the most valuable company" in the world. Am I happy about that? Am I happy about Apple's success? You bet I am, and so are most people in the United States. Later that week, on April 28, The New York Times wrote a similar article that reported on Apple's creative but legal tax strategy that saves them billions in tax payments each year. The Times article reported "the company paid cash taxes of \$3.3 billion around the world on its reported profits of \$34.2 billion last year, a tax rate of 9.8 percent." Comparatively, Wal-Mart paid a tax rate of 24 percent.

□ 1030

When Apple was asked for comments on their exceptionally low tax rate, they responded:

By focusing on innovation, we've created entirely new products and industries, and more than 500,000 jobs for U.S. workers—from the people who create components for our products to the people who deliver them to our customers.

They also mentioned:

In the first half of fiscal year 2012, our U.S. operations have generated almost \$5 billion in Federal and State income taxes.

Mr. Speaker, Apple's experiences are instructive to us. First, the Federal Tax Code is too complicated. It allows only the largest companies who can afford to hire Tax Code interpreters to benefit from lower taxes. We should simplify the Tax Code by closing the loopholes and lower rates across the board to boost American competitiveness for all companies large and small.

Both history and Apple's experience underscore how increasing taxes without accompanying comprehensive reform has never and will never represent a sustainable, long-term strategy to any budgetary problems. On the contrary, cutting taxes does create economic growth, which fuels Federal revenue windfalls for reducing the deficit. These lessons should be applied to the entire Tax Code. Instead of increasing taxes on American energy producers, we should focus on simplifying the Federal code to encourage the development of domestic energy resources which, in turn, bolsters employment opportunities here at home.

Again, am I pleased about Apple's success? Absolutely. But we never hear from our Democrat friends about the low tax rates paid by companies like Apple. However, they attack domestic energy producers and ignore the simple

truth that it is the American people who actually own these companies and benefit from the respective profits that they make. According to the American Petroleum Institute, mutual funds and other firms hold almost 30 percent of oil stocks; pension funds hold 27 percent; individual investors hold 23 percent; 14 percent is held in individual retirement accounts; other institutional investments hold 5 percent; and corporate management holds just 1.5 percent.

Despite what liberal Democrats would have you believe, increasing domestic energy production not only helps lower prices and produce jobs; it also helps boost stocks, mutual funds, IRAs, and pension funds owned by millions of Americans.

Democrats constantly talk about subsidies to oil and energy companies. Our energy companies don't receive any subsidies. That is a myth that they perpetuate. Solyndra got a subsidy—lots of these new energy types get subsidies—but not the traditional energy companies. It's time that we as government officials get out of the way. Instead of increasing the bureaucracy and red tape, we need to focus on creating an environment for American private sector businesses to better compete in the global marketplace and give back to local communities in the form of jobs rather than sending more money to the Federal Government.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We thank You once again that we, Your creatures, can come before You and ask guidance for the men and women of this assembly.

Send Your spirit of wisdom as they enter into a difficult week and consider the appropriations needed for so many agencies charged with administering the various functions of government serving the citizens of the United States.

Please keep all the Members of this Congress and all who work for the people's House in good health, that they might faithfully fulfill the great responsibility given them by the people of this great Nation.