

Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act, which would prohibit abortion on the basis of an unborn baby's gender. Many advanced nations around the world already have laws restricting sex-selection abortions.

The United States of America should not allow abortions to be performed to select an unborn child's sex. Recognizing the importance of all life, I voted in favor of the bill and had high hopes it could be signed into law. Sadly, the measure failed to reach the majority needed for passage.

As unbelievable as it may sound, some Members of Congress were unwilling to vote to restrict abortions based on sex. Aborting a baby based upon its gender undermines one of our Nation's founding principles that all human beings are created equal.

Every Representative, every physician, every American needs to be reminded that at the center of our struggle is the protection of human life. We cannot live in a nation where some human life is valued and other life is not. All life has value, and the casual taking of life is morally wrong.

Let's join together to pray for the protection of the unborn. The intersection of prayer and action can produce amazing results. Through prayer and perseverance we can accomplish our goals and innocent human life can be protected.

MOST PRESSING LEGISLATIVE ITEMS WERE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, some of the most pressing legislative items were nowhere to be found on the floor this week. We had an opportunity to make headway on critical legislation. Unfortunately, the leadership provided no action, not solutions, not action, only obstruction and delay.

First, student loan interest rates will double on July 1 if we do nothing, and we have done nothing.

Secondly, after losing 28,000 construction jobs last month, Congress still has not passed a highway bill, notwithstanding the fact that the Senate passed a bill with 75 percent of its Members in support, half of the Republican Conference in support, but it's nowhere on this floor as construction jobs languish and people look for work.

Speaker BOEHNER is now saying we might have to wait until November, even though it would create thousands of construction jobs. It seems to be "my way or no highway."

Third, we're headed for a fiscal cliff if Congress can't achieve a serious deficit reduction this year, and we've seen appropriations bills this week that break the budget agreement.

This has been another wasted week by a do-nothing Congress, and we're about to begin a weeklong recess once again. Congress could do better. Con-

gress must do better. Americans expect Congress to do better. It ought to take action now, not delay until it's too late.

SYRIA

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we can do better. As we work to ensure the tranquility of this great land and the opportunity for those who desire and deserve jobs, I frankly, think, it is likewise a devastating disaster, a crisis, that the world has not risen to stop the bloodshed in Syria.

I realize that we are not ready to engage in war, and I say that we do not have to. Syrian Americans are just pleading for the world to intervene, for Dr. Assad to step down, for the ceasefire to take place, and for the killing of women and children to stop.

I join with the administration to ask for Dr. Assad to be removed. I ask the Arab League, I ask the surrounding neighbors to stand up against this increasing violence. To the Syrian Americans that I have stood with in Houston, I stand with you until Dr. Assad is removed and the violence is stopped.

The United Nations has moved towards a resolution of peace, and Russia and China must stop standing in the way and watching bloodshed pour. Remember, children are dying.

Dr. Assad in Syria must leave and peace must come.

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S WESTMINSTER ADDRESS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark an important anniversary. Thirty years ago today, President Ronald Reagan delivered one of his most important speeches. He delivered an address to Westminster in which he talked about the imperative of our supporting the notion of self-determination around the world, and he called for the establishment of one of the most important national security items that we have in place today. It's known as the National Endowment for Democracy.

Mr. Speaker, in that speech, President Reagan said:

We must be staunch in our conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few, but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings. The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of a free press, unions, political parties, universities, which allows a people to choose their own way to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means.

Three decades later, the vision that Ronald Reagan put forward in that famous speech is not only alive, but it's

well and thriving all over the world. I would like to congratulate, congratulate all of those who have been part of the effort that was launched by that speech 30 years ago today by Ronald Reagan.

To the people all over the world who want to determine their futures, we stand with them in their quest for self-determination.

STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATES

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, on July 1, student loan interest rates are due to double. We also have seen numerous very short-term transportation bills as an extended longer transportation bill, which could give real certainty to workers and firms, is sitting there in the Senate and is ignored by the House.

Despite the fact that the transportation bill is sitting there, we haven't taken the proper action, and student loan rates are due to rise, you wouldn't know it from being on the House floor. You wouldn't know it because the majority has not taken up these issues that are the most pressing issues to the American people.

I'm not here to say that the Republicans are sabotaging the economy in order to get an advantage in the election. But there are a lot of people who believe that is the case. If the Republican majority wants to make sure that the people of America know that they're operating on their best behalf, I urge them to take action to preserve low interest rates for students to go to college, to pass a transportation bill, and take up the one that the Senate has already passed.

Jobs are the key, but you wouldn't know it from being in this body, based on the action—or inaction—of the majority.

REPUBLICAN INACTION

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, our country continues to recover from the worst recession we've faced in generations. This progress is being made despite the best efforts of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who stated that their singular goal is not creating jobs, but in making President Obama a one-term President. In the 18 months since they took the majority, the Republicans have had one constant, and that's been to obstruct, obstruct when it comes to commonsense legislation to move the country forward.

Having a transportation bill, passing a long-term surface transportation bill would put 2 million people back to work.

They are obstructing in their unwillingness to keep college loans affordable, making sure that on July 1, 7 million students across this country will have their student loan interest rate double.

They have been obstructionist when it comes to the Paycheck Fairness Act, the simple task of making sure that women who do the same job with the same experience are paid the same money.

Obstruction, obstruction, obstruction. They could have done their part to make things happen for the American people, but they haven't done that.

Mr. Speaker, the actions of this Congress will speak louder than words. It's time for the Republicans to show their concern for the American people and not just with partisanship.

Stop the obstruction. Let's create jobs for the American people.

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STARTUP JOBS ACT 2.0

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOLD. This week, I joined with some of my colleagues to introduce the bipartisan Startup Jobs Act 2.0.

Mr. Speaker, students come to America from all over the world. They earn advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Then, upon graduating, they're forced to leave our country—forced to go back home and, in essence, compete against us. With them goes their knowledge, their ideas, and their aspirations to change the world. Many of these students want to stay here in America to make something of themselves here because America is still the best place for ideas to become realities. These ideas become solutions, which turn into job-creating companies.

According to a study by the National Foundation for American Policy, immigrants founded or cofounded almost half of the top 50 venture-backed companies in the United States. Since our Nation's founding, immigrants have flourished right along with our economy. America becomes a richer and more dynamic society by encouraging the best and the brightest from all over the world to set up shop here on our soil. That is why I'm honored to be an original cosponsor of the bipartisan, bicameral Startup Jobs Act 2.0 that will help America get back to work.

THE GOP'S ORPHANS

(Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, if Congress were a musical, then House Republicans would be Little Orphan Annie, singing, "The sun

will surely come out tomorrow," because with the urgent challenges facing this Nation, with Americans staring at an impending fiscal cliff and economic calamity, the GOP has simply said, "Maybe we'll get to it tomorrow."

Let's revisit the little orphans the GOP has left behind:

Needed transportation and jobs bill.

The Medicare doc payment fix.

The debt ceiling extension.

The student loan interest rate hike.

The sequester's arbitrary, indiscriminate cuts.

The farm bill.

Postal reform.

The expiration of the Bush tax cuts, the AMT taxes, and the payroll tax cut which would collectively cost families \$4,000 more next year.

The impact to our economy and these poor little orphans is a staggering \$7 trillion. The nonpartisan CBO has said failure to act on these will send America back into a recession.

The Republicans need to recognize that every orphan deserves a home and work with us on responsible bipartisan solutions, or it's going to be "a hard knock life for us."

PASS THE TRANSPORTATION BILL AND PUT AMERICANS BACK TO WORK

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Much emphasis has been put on the deficit and that we do need to deal with the deficit. But at the same time, one way to deal with it is to stimulate the economy. There's no better way to stimulate the economy than a transportation bill that repairs our infrastructure, puts people to work here in America, and improves the ability of industry to move its product and for consumers to get product. Yet the transportation bill that's been passed in the House and passed in the Senate—differing bills—is stuck in a conference committee.

We need to pass a transportation bill and put America back to work with American-made products by American workers. My city of Memphis is a transportation center. We know highways and runways move product and move people and make sense. So I urge our leaders to see that the conference committee comes back, doesn't have extraneous provisions, and does what is necessary to put America back to work and passes the highway bill.

AMERICAN JOBS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MULVANEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We all like to think about "what if"—what if I had actually gotten an A rather than an F

in that high school class? What if I had hit that home run instead of struck out? The what-if game is part of our life. But I want to take that up today in a very, very serious way. This is about what if this Congress, led by our Republican colleagues, had taken up and passed President Barack Obama's American Jobs Act.

Last September, the President made a very bold proposal to put Americans back to work, a comprehensive piece of legislation that covered many, many different parts of the American economy. It's called the American Jobs Act. Fully paid for, not increasing the deficit at all, but paid for with the elimination of unnecessary tax breaks for Big Oil, unnecessary tax cuts for the extraordinarily wealthy 1 percent of Americans, a fully paid-for American Jobs Act proposed by the President last September.

What if? What if this House under our Republican leadership had taken up the elements of the American Jobs Act, modified them, as is our nature and our responsibility, but nonetheless passed those very significant proposals that would, according to economists, create somewhere between 1.3 and 1.9 million jobs immediately? Not some day in the future, but now. What if we had done that last September? What if our Republican leadership had allowed those measures to come before the committees and on this floor to be signed by the President? Then 1.3 million Americans or maybe even 1.9 million Americans would have a job today.

We're going to talk today about the most tragic what-if this Nation is pondering at this moment. What if the American Jobs Act had been implemented?

Let's talk about what it is. What are the elements of the American Jobs Act? Bear with me, if you will, as we go through these. I'll go through them rather quickly, and then we'll come back and touch on them as we go on.

If you've been watching here in the gallery or if you are watching C-SPAN, you would have heard my Democratic colleagues talk about the transportation bill. The President said last fall, We need to have a transportation bill, and we need it now. We need to put men and women back to work in the construction industry repairing our bridges, building our highways, paving our airports, building the infrastructure that this Nation needs.

The student aid bill. We know that if America is going to compete, we have to have the best educated workforce in the world. And so the President proposed a student aid bill, legislation that would provide additional sources of funding so students can go to school in community colleges, in 4-year schools, and in the master and doctorate programs.

The President took up one of the great conundrums and problems that this Nation faces from our competitors. Yes, China. China manipulates its currency, and the President said that has