

The House Republican leadership won't even bring legislation to the floor to extend critical renewable tax credits for wind and solar energy. Republicans consider it anathema to even suggest that they reconsider special oil and gas company tax breaks in the face of record industry profits. Yet while the extension of renewable energy tax credits would encourage the development of an innovative industry that would support America's energy independence, they allow it to wither. In fact, House Republicans actually attacked the renewable energy sector through a number of different amendments to the Energy and Water appropriations bill earlier this month.

As part of the Recovery Act, Congress and the President extended production and investment tax credits for the production of wind and solar energy. As a result of those investments, wind energy electricity generation has grown by 40,000 megawatts in the last 2 years. Between 2007 and 2010, wind energy represented 35 percent of all new electricity generation in America. Solar energy production in America more than doubled in that time period.

Approximately 173,000 Americans work now in the wind and solar industries, with 70 percent growth in the number of wind energy jobs since 2007. What other industry can we point to that has seen that kind of significant job growth? In fact, the growth in renewable energy jobs has helped offset job losses in the coal industry, which has been declining for many years. As the Nation continues to recover, and as monthly job growth moderates, it is essential to support innovative American industries, such as wind and solar, with extensive growth potential.

Wind and solar electricity generation creates American jobs throughout the supply chain. For example, Micron is a semiconductor manufacturer in my district whose components are used in solar installations. The value of solar installations completed in 2011 was \$8.4 billion. Thanks to Buy American provisions and other domestic manufacturing programs in the Recovery Act, we're increasing the share of wind energy components manufactured in America. Over 470 factories in the United States now build components for wind turbines. But as tax incentives expire, where will that future growth go?

In the global hunt for scarce resources, the renewable energy industry will not just be a job creator, though it will create jobs. It will also help support national security. If America is not at the forefront of this burgeoning field, then we will be left behind as global competitors seize that initiative.

Unfortunately, all of this economic growth is at risk as the Republican House leadership ignores renewable energy tax credit extensions. Failure to extend the production and investment tax credits for renewable energy will mean losing projects across the coun-

try. As our loss of a wind facility in Virginia demonstrates, Mr. Speaker, the failure to extend these tax credits in a timely manner already is hurting what would otherwise continue to be a growth industry.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to my Republican colleagues talk about the Constitution and how a bill becomes a law.

I taught freshman civics. And when a bill passes both Chambers, the bill then goes to the President. The President then signs a bill. It becomes a law. The job of the Chief Executive is to enforce the law, as signed and as passed.

Like the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act, it is the law of the land. The amendments passed in 1987 identified Yucca Mountain as the sole geological repository for nuclear waste in this country. The problem is, it's not being enforced by the President, who is complicit with the majority leader in the Senate, Senator REID, in stopping the project.

So over the past year, I have been coming down to the floor and identifying where we're at on the status of what do we do with high-level nuclear waste. And I have gone through the whole country. I have identified all the Senators and where they stand. We actually have a majority of Senators—55 of them—who support high-level nuclear waste being stored at Yucca Mountain. We have 23 that either have made statements of "no" or 22 that we don't know their position. Can you imagine being a U.S. Senator on a very important position, never having to state your position on what to do with high-level nuclear waste or defense waste, especially if it's in your own State, and never being forced to come to a position.

Over the past year, we've been going around the country identifying all these locations. And now the time for truth has come, to really start narrowing down on individual States and Senators who should at least state their position.

So I return to my next-door neighbor State, the State of Missouri. I live in the St. Louis metropolitan area. I represent parts of 30 counties in southern Illinois. But I am very close to the State of Missouri. In fact, I root for the Cardinals, the Rams, the Blues. And if the University of Missouri's not playing the Fighting Illini, I'll root for the Missouri Tigers.

Missouri has a nuclear power plant called Callaway. And what I did months ago, I came down on the floor—these are old posters—and compared Callaway to Yucca Mountain. Right now, Callaway has 615 metric tons of uranium spent fuel on site; Yucca has none. Waste would be stored 1,000 feet underground; waste is being stored in

pools above ground. Waste would be 1,000 feet from the water table; at Callaway, it's 65 feet above the groundwater. At Yucca, the waste would be 100 miles from the Colorado River; at Callaway, it's only 5 miles from the Missouri River.

So the State of Missouri needs an answer by their elected Members of what should they do, how should we handle the nuclear waste at Callaway? Well, Senator BLUNT has already stated his position that he supports moving nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain. In fact, in a floor vote just 2 weeks ago, eight of the nine Members of Congress—a bipartisan majority—said nuclear waste should be in Yucca Mountain, or at least we should finish the scientific study to see if it's feasible versus keeping it in Missouri. The Members of the House who voted in support of the Shimkus amendment were Representative AKIN, Representative CLAY, Representative CLEAVER, Representative EMERSON, Representative GRAVES, Representative HARTZLER, Representative LONG, and Representative LUTKEMEYER. Of course we know Senator BLUNT supports it.

Now we focus on Senator MCCASKILL. This is no surprise to her—I've talked to her personally about this—that there would be a time when eventually she needs to state, does she support high-level nuclear waste being stored in Missouri? Does she support a long-term geological storage underneath a mountain in a desert in Nevada?

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If she would make a statement, we could then move her from the undecided to either a nay or a yea. And if a yea, that would bring us to 56. We're actually trying to see if we can get 60 United States Senators to say, Yeah, we support moving forward. We've only spent \$15 billion, going back to 1982, to prepare, locate the site.

Yucca Mountain is not just a mountain on its own but it's at the nuclear test site. It's bigger than the State of Rhode Island, the Federal grounds. It's Federal property. And so we come down on the floor—and we'll be doing this in the following weeks—highlighting individual Senators who are either undecided, no commitment, no position on what should be the disposition of high-level nuclear waste in their State, where it should go, and at least get them on the record as far as this issue.

Again, this law was passed in 1982. The amendment passed identifying Yucca Mountain as the long-term geological repository was then signed in 1987. We would just ask the administration to follow the law.

2,000 DEATHS IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, while the House was out of session last week, the Nation suffered its 2,000th fatality in the conflict known as Operation Enduring Freedom, the overwhelming number of those deaths coming in Afghanistan. For more than 10 years now, we've been losing young, courageous servicemembers on a mission that isn't bolstering our national security, isn't supported by the American people, but is costing us billions of dollars every month. What a disaster and what a tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, from this Chamber, I regularly hear Members of the majority invoking morality in support of efforts to cut effective programs that help the most vulnerable members of our society. So where is their moral outrage and where is their budget axe when it comes to the most expensive government program imaginable that has killed 2,000 of our troops?

Two of those 2,000 come from my part of the country, the Sixth Congressional District of California. Army Specialist Christopher Gathercole and Army Sergeant Ryan Connolly, both of Santa Rosa, California, were killed less than a month apart in the year 2008.

We had others who were killed during the nearly 9 years that our troops were in Iraq, but 2,000 deaths doesn't even begin to tell the story of the human cost of this war. More than 15,000 Americans have come home wounded, many in ways that will alter their lives forever. Even those who returned with their bodies intact often suffer from devastating posttraumatic stress that may never go away. Postdeployment suicide has reached epidemic levels.

Nearly 2.5 million men and women have served in Afghanistan and Iraq, and I actually can't say that I trust that the veterans health care system is prepared or will be prepared to deal with the huge demand that will be placed on the services in the coming years.

A recent report prepared by VA doctors outlines the unique and varied health care needs of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. In addition to traumatic brain injuries, depression, and substance abuse, there's chronic muscle pain, sleep disturbances, hypertension, and complications from environmental exposures. Many of our returning heroes have difficulty readjusting to civilian life, integrating once again into their families, their workplaces, and their communities.

We had better be willing as a Nation to write that check for their care as we were for the war that damaged them in the first place.

And it's critical, Mr. Speaker, that we remember the human cost is not just here in the United States. Two thousand Americans have died in nearly 11 years of war. Well, 3,000 Afghan civilians, many of them children, were killed last year alone for the cause of their so-called liberation.

It's not enough to acknowledge the casualties of this war, to memorialize

the dead and pay tribute to their service. What we need is an immediate change of policy. To extend the war through 2014 is to sentence hundreds more servicemembers to their deaths, all for a policy that isn't achieving its stated objectives while strengthening the very terrorists and extremists that we're trying to defeat.

There's only one solution, Mr. Speaker. There's only one choice that will finally keep the death toll from climbing. That choice is bring our troops home. Bring them home now.

WHEN WILL WE ATTACK SYRIA?

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

Mr. PAUL. Plans, rumors, and war propaganda for attacking Syria and deposing Assad have been around for many months. This past week, however, it was reported that the Pentagon indeed was finalizing plans to do just that.

In my opinion, all the evidence to justify this attack is bogus. It is no more credible than the pretext given for the 2003 invasion of Iraq or for the 2011 attack on Libya.

The total waste of those wars should cause us to pause before this all-out effort at occupation and regime change is initiated against Syria. There are no national security concerns that require such a foolish escalation of violence in the Middle East. There should be no doubt that our security interests are best served by completely staying out of the internal strife now raging in Syria. We are already too much involved in supporting the forces within Syria anxious to overthrow their current government. Without outside interference, the strife, now characterized as a civil war, would likely be non-existent.

Whether or not we attack yet another country, occupying it and setting up another regime that we hope we can control, poses a serious constitutional question: From where does a President get such authority?

Since World War II, the proper authority to go to war has been ignored. It has been replaced by international entities like the United Nations and NATO, or the President, himself, while ignoring the Congress. And sadly, the people don't object.

Our recent Presidents explicitly maintain that the authority to go to war is not the U.S. Congress'. This has been the case since the 1950s, when we were first taken into war in Korea under a UN resolution and without congressional approval. Once again, we are about to engage in military action against Syria, and at the same time irresponsibly reactivating the Cold War with Russia. We're now engaged in a game of "chicken" with Russia, which presents a much greater threat to our security than does Syria.

Would we tolerate Russia in Mexico demanding a humanitarian solution to

the violence on the U.S.-Mexican border? We would consider that a legitimate concern for us. But for us to be engaged in Syria, where the Russians have a legal naval base, is equivalent to the Russians being in our backyard in Mexico.

We are hypocritical when we condemn Russia for protecting its neighborhood interests, as we claim we are doing the same ourselves thousands of miles from our shore. There's no benefit for us to be picking sides, secretly providing assistance and encouraging civil strife in an effort to effect regime change in Syria. Falsely charging the Russians with supplying military helicopters to Assad is an unnecessary provocation. Falsely blaming the Assad government for a so-called massacre perpetrated by a violent warring rebel faction is nothing more than war propaganda.

Most knowledgeable people now recognize that to plan war against Syria is merely the next step to take on the Iranian Government, something the neoconservatives openly admit. Controlling Iranian oil, just as we have done in Saudi Arabia and are attempting to do in Iraq, is the real goal of the neoconservatives who have been in charge of our foreign policy for the past couple of decades.

War is inevitable without a significant change in our foreign policy—and soon. Disagreements between our two political parties are minor.

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Both agree that sequestration of any war funds must be canceled. Neither side wants to abandon our aggressive and growing presence in the Middle East and South Asia.

This crisis building can easily get out of control and become a much bigger war than just another routine occupation and regime change that the American people have grown to accept or ignore.

It's time the United States tried a policy of diplomacy, seeking peace, trade, and friendship. We must abandon our military effort to promote and secure an American empire.

Besides, we're broke. We can't afford it. And worst of all, we're fulfilling the strategy laid out by Osama bin Laden, whose goal had always been to bog us down in the Middle East and bring on our bankruptcy here at home.

It's time to bring our troops home and establish a noninterventionist foreign policy, which is the only road to peace and prosperity.

This week I'm introducing legislation to prohibit the administration, absent a declaration of war by Congress, from supporting—directly or indirectly—any military or paramilitary operations in Syria. I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort.

MOURNING 2,000TH DEATH OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from