

pay for transit instead of paying for it with your fees out of the highway trust fund, but they're going to pretend that they didn't add more money to the deficit. At the same time, they're going to make Federal employees put 6 percent of their salaries into a trust fund for this illusory offset.

Good work, guys.

□ 1220

ENERGY SECURITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

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

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Speaker, we have within our grasp the opportunity to boldly address two of America's greatest challenges: energy security and unemployment. These two issues are inextricably linked. We can no longer tolerate a stagnant, slow-growth economy that's saddled with historic unemployment rates and a dangerous dependence on foreign oil. A key solution to these problems is energy, specifically, American energy.

The President said in this House that we must have an all-of-the-above strategy to energy independence. I agree. That includes harvesting the energy in every corner of America, including the 3.8 billion barrels of oil and gas off the coast of Virginia.

Last week, I introduced the Mid-Atlantic Energy and Jobs Act of 2012 to free up Virginia's abundant offshore energy. This legislation will help us achieve energy independence and could produce more than 18,000 local jobs, and it requires a significant amount of the royalties produced by the exploration to go toward improving our environment. The time to act is now. This Congress, this President, we're Americans. Let's do this.

AMERICAN JOBS

(Ms. FUDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address the need for jobs in this country. On Wednesday, we will have reached 400 days since the Republicans took control of the House without a jobs bill, even though my colleagues and I have been calling for and demanding action.

The President has set forth a jobs plan that would allow Americans to get to work and for us to invest in this great country by focusing on improving our infrastructure, fixing our roads, schools, and bridges; by providing incentives to hire veterans by giving small businesses the support they need to grow and expand; and by cutting payroll taxes for 160 million workers, leaving more money in the pockets of consumers.

The members of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority are on the Hill this

week to be a voice for the jobless, to ask Congress to do what is in the best interest of Americans still trying to find jobs.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting job growth and investment in this Nation now.

SCHOOL CHOICE

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

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of national school choice because we need to offer our children effective education opportunities. And in Michigan, despite spending just shy of \$10,000 annually to educate each child, we need to look at a couple of facts. One, only 31 percent of eighth-graders are actually considered proficient in math. The other element that is very disheartening to me is the fact that one child drops out of school in America every 26 seconds. We have an obligation to give parents the tools and resources to get their children out of bad educational environments and into better ones.

As a Member of Congress, I support school choice and allowing States to even opt out of the No Child Left Behind program and use educational resources in a way that will best meet their local needs, not the demands of Washington, D.C. It should be up to parents—not governments—to choose what's best for their children. Better traditional schools, public charter schools, private schools, virtual education, and homeschooling. I personally advocated for these opportunities when I sat on the board of a public charter school in Michigan. I served as the director of development at Zeeland Christian Schools, and most importantly, as a parent along with my wife, who homeschooled our children. Those of us in Congress must continue to encourage and champion school reform.

FOUR CHAPLAINS

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible story of the USAT *Dorchester's* four chaplains. The brave "immortal chaplains," a Jewish rabbi, a Catholic priest, and two Protestant ministers, selflessly provided comfort and guidance to their interfaith community aboard the transport ship as it sunk into icy waters on February 3, 1943. These leaders of different faiths gave up their lifejackets and stood strong, singing prayers and hymns, sharing words of healing and peace as the ship went down.

We are so fortunate to have Rabbi Astrachan here with us today to help honor their sacred memory. Rabbi Astrachan currently serves the same congregation in York, Pennsylvania,

where Rabbi Goode, one of the four chaplains, once served, continuing to honor his legacy.

The four chaplains, Reverend George Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Father John Washington, and Reverend Clark Poling, serve as inspirations in their military service and their sacrifice for our country. Their quintessentially American tale of faith and courage now has an ending we can proudly commemorate, as all four of these men are honored and memorialized together on Chaplain's Hill at Arlington National Cemetery.

For nearly 200 years, our Nation's breathtaking military cemetery has been a place to honor all of America's fallen soldiers, providing the sacred and majestic setting fitting to our Nation's heroes. Thanks to the dedication of many of my colleagues, we now have monuments at Chaplain's Hill to each of these faith groups, where we can honor their sacrifice together. This is a testament to the courage and commitment of all who have served our Nation in this way, and I am so honored to share in this observance with chaplains, members of the military, veterans, religious community advocates, family, and friends.

IMMIGRATION

(Mrs. BLACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to talk about my bill, H.R. 3842, a bill that would prohibit the Obama administration from filing lawsuits against Arizona, South Carolina, Alabama, and other States over their immigration enforcement laws. In the last 3 years, eight States have adopted immigration enforcement measures to address the illegal alien populations in their States. And in response, the Department of Justice and Eric Holder have pursued unprecedented lawsuits against these States.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 10 million unauthorized aliens in this country. States must be able to enforce the law if the Federal Government refuses to, and States should not have to live in fear of Federal retribution for trying to keep their citizens safe.

My bill, H.R. 3842, would deny the Obama administration and Eric Holder the funding for these meritless lawsuits. Until the Supreme Court decides the case against Arizona's S.B. 1070, Congress must use our power of the purse to stop these political lawsuits and allow States to uphold the law.

HALFTIME IN AMERICA

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, everybody is talking about Chrysler's Super Bowl commercial "Halftime in America." It featured Clint Eastwood, relating the recovery of the American automobile industry. That inspirational ad

has now gone viral as people share its positive message about our country and our workers.

Trust me, Mr. Speaker, in America's heartland, we know about hard times. Our people have been through a lot these last few years. But that commercial has it right: We took a punch, but we're still standing. President Obama made a bet on America's workers and companies, and it saved thousands of jobs. It saved our industry. "This country can't be knocked out with one punch," Clint Eastwood says. "We get right back up again. And when we do, the world is going to hear the roar of our engines."

You can already hear that roar in Toledo. We're building Jeeps day and night. You can hear it in Lorain too, and in Sandusky, Avon Lake, Brook Park, and Parma. We're going to win this competition. We're going to win it with teamwork. And we're going to win it because we want it more. Gentlemen and gentleladies, start your engines.

SMALL BUSINESS MENTOR-PROTEGE PROGRAM

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. I hear over and over from small businesses that the one thing they need in these tough times is customers. And who is the biggest customer? The Federal Government. Each year, the government spends \$500 billion on Federal contracts, but only 20 percent is going to small firms. Small businesses create two out of every three new jobs. So for us to grow the economy, we have to give small businesses a bigger slice of the Federal contracting pie.

Today I am introducing the Building Better Business Partnerships Act. This bill will help small firms break into Federal contracting by making it easier for them to join mentor-protege programs. These programs partner small businesses with companies already contracting with government. It gives small firms a foot in the door so they can navigate the Federal process, get experience on a contract, and eventually win a Federal job of their own. And that means more work and a new customer for small businesses everywhere.

□ 1230

SHARED FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the middle class workers in Wisconsin and across the country who have unfairly been paying a higher tax rate than millionaires and billionaires.

Middle class Americans deserve to know that our tax system has not been rigged against them. Powerful special

interests have manipulated our Tax Code to ensure that the wealthiest Americans don't have to pay their fair share. These loopholes and special provisions have made it so that billionaire Warren Buffett's secretary pays a higher tax rate than he does. In fact, approximately a quarter of all millionaires pay lower effective tax rates than middle class families.

Yesterday, I introduced Paying a Fair Share Act, H.R. 3903, which would make the "Buffett rule" law and ensure that middle class workers do not pay higher tax rates than those earning more than \$1 million a year. I invite my colleagues to join me in taking this commonsense first step to strengthen middle class families and rebuild our economy with a commitment to shared responsibility.

H.R. 25, THE FAIR TAX

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, it's the Tax Code that brings me down to the House floor today. You know, if you care about special interest tax breaks in this town, there is only one bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that eliminates every single special interest tax break in the United States Code—every break, every exception, every exemption, every favor—and that's H.R. 25, the FAIR Tax, Mr. Speaker.

You know about the FAIR Tax. It's the most widely cosponsored, fundamental tax reform proposal in the entire U.S. House of Representatives. It's the most widely cosponsored, fundamental tax reform proposal in the entire United States Senate. And it is the only bill in Congress that solves every single special interest break. The only one. And it brings American manufacturing jobs back to America; puts the American manufacturing community on a level playing field with our foreign competitors, the only bill in Congress that gets that done.

Mr. Speaker, if you want to see more about it, you know you can see it at www.thomas.gov. You can see it at www.fairtax.org. It's H.R. 25, and it will save this American economy.

PAYROLL TAX HOLIDAY

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, the party line from Republican leaders is that Republicans agree on a payroll tax cut holiday; they just need to find a way to pay for it. But Republican Members speak a different language. Georgia Republican PAUL BROWN told the press: "The payroll tax holiday is just a gimmick to get Obama re-elected."

That would be news to the average American family who will see its taxes increase by \$1,000 on March 1 without a payroll tax agreement.

The press reports a serious Republican split with only a 50/50 chance that Republicans can get their Members to agree on a payroll tax deal. Line that 50/50 Republican split up against their near-unanimous opposition to having wealthy and corporate taxpayers contribute one dime to deficit reduction.

I'll leave it to the Republican leadership to reconcile these issues and their caucus. Meanwhile, the clock ticks louder each day. Republicans have 22 days to make up their minds on whether every worker who draws a paycheck deserves a tax cut.

WELCOMING DELTA SORORITY TO CAPITOL HILL

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today Members of Congress and others will see a thousand women of color visiting all of our offices. They call themselves the Delta Sorority. Here the leadership is provided by Judge FUDGE as they come close to celebrating their 100th anniversary.

They have a legislative agenda, a community agenda, a civic agenda; and one of the things that they like to point out is that today we recognize the terrible epidemic of AIDS and HIV problems we have with blood. We hope that we learn to educate more people about the danger of AIDS, that we provide better treatment, and even better than that, that we avoid it by having preventive measures so it doesn't happen at all.

Also on their agenda is making certain that the payroll deductions for working poor people are extended, as is unemployment compensation, which is not only fiscally, but morally, the right thing to do, and that we pay our debts, pay the doctors who serve the aged.

DEMOCRATS READY TO WORK FOR ALL AMERICANS

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my Democratic colleagues ready to work for all Americans. Unfortunately, this no-show Tea Party Republican Congress, which worked only 6 days during the entire month of January, is once again refusing to do its job. You see, at the end of February, taxes will increase for 160 million middle class Americans unless the Mitt Romney Tea Party Republicans drop their incessant demands to cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires. I ask my Tea Party colleagues to stop holding the payroll tax cut hostage. We must protect unemployment insurance and fix the Medicare payment schedule so that seniors can see the doctor of their choice.

It's time for this Tea Party brinksmanship to come to an end, for