

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting American entrepreneurship, American innovation, and American jobs. Sign on to the Innovation Promotion Act to build America's economic leadership in the world and promote job creation right here at home.

WE HAVE A JOB TO DO

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, traditionally, Members of Congress return to their districts during the month of August to avoid the hottest, muggiest month of the Washington year, but given our current circumstances and the invention of air conditioning, I think we should break that tradition.

Senate Democrats have passed the President's plan to raise taxes. A family of four earning \$50,000 a year will see their taxes increase by more than \$2,000 per year. House Republicans have passed the only plan in Washington to stop the tax hike in its entirety.

A new report finds the tax hike will cost more than 700,000 American jobs. I stand by the House leadership who stated this week that if the Senate takes action to address these threats, the House will be in Washington in August for the purpose of sending solutions to the President's desk.

We have a job to do, and 23 million unemployed Americans are waiting.

GUN SAFETY

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the need for stronger gun safety laws in our country. This Congress has not only failed to address the issue of gun violence in the United States, it has actually weakened gun safety laws.

I am proud that my home State of Massachusetts is a leader in gun violence prevention and has the lowest firearm fatality rate per 100,000 population of any urban industrialized State.

I am proud of the work being done by antigun violence advocates across the Commonwealth, including Boston's mayor, Tom Menino, and John Rosenthal, founder of the organization, Stop Handgun Violence. Today, Stop Handgun Violence is hosting a rally in Boston calling on Congress to pass stronger gun safety legislation. I applaud their work and the efforts of other organizations like the Brady Campaign as they continue to educate and advocate for sensible legislation.

What more will it take for this Congress to bring commonsense gun control measures to the floor? How many more tragedies? Silence is no longer acceptable.

TAXES

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I'm a CPA by trade. I've spent many years in my former life wading through volumes of Tax Code trying to ensure my clients followed every last letter of the law while also trying to ensure they don't get stuck paying more taxes than they owe. But the American people and the people of south Mississippi don't need a CPA to tell them that we need a simpler, fairer, and flatter Tax Code.

Last week, the U.S. Senate sent a strong message when it voted to raise taxes on small businesses and families. In south Mississippi alone, the proposed tax hikes would increase taxes by an average of \$2,200 per family. That's a total of more than \$723 million more that south Mississippians would have to pay.

In addition to that extra tax burden, a recent study from Ernst & Young shows that we could lose as many as 710,000 jobs, and wages could decrease by almost 2 percent.

Now, I'm no rocket scientist, but I'm pretty sure that the American people and the people of south Mississippi don't need a rocket scientist to tell them that these tax hikes are the last thing we need right now. That's why the House stepped forward yesterday and passed legislation to stop the tax hike, and that's why we're committed to continue working on tax reform to make our Tax Code simpler, fairer, and flatter for all Americans.

THANKING ERNIE ALLEN FOR A JOB WELL DONE

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

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay my respects to a tireless crusader in the quest to protect America's children from violence and exploitation.

Ernie Allen recently retired as the president and chief executive officer of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, where his mission was to protect our Nation's children.

Under Ernie's leadership, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children played a crucial role in recovering some 74,000 children. With Ernie at the helm, they saw their recovery rate for missing children climb from 62 percent in 1990 to 94 percent today.

While there's no official record book of what Ernie has accomplished over the years, his record lives on in the lives he has saved and the families he has reunited.

I know I speak for my colleagues in the Congressional Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children's Caucus and for thousands of grateful families all across the Nation in thanking Ernie Allen for a job well done.

□ 0910

LET'S INVEST IN THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, our economic problems are eminently solvable. They just require confidence in the American people. But the American people have lost confidence in Congress, and it's easy to see why.

Exhibit A: the inability to reach a deal on a grand bargain on debt reduction. Last year, the Speaker and the President negotiated a plan to reduce the debt by \$4 trillion through a mix of spending cuts and revenue increases, revenues that would come, not from raising taxes, but closing special deals, institutionalized corruption.

That plan represented a balanced and bipartisan approach. The economy today would be performing much better had that deal been enacted. But the Tea Party-controlled Republican House rejected the deal.

Exhibit B: the refusal to act boldly to create jobs and rebuild the infrastructure of America. We just spent \$89 billion rebuilding the roads of Afghanistan. Last week we passed a bill to spend just \$52 billion a year in rebuilding roads and bridges right here in America. That's a weak plan. In fact, it's pathetically weak. That is why the American people have lost confidence in Congress.

The best tax policy is to invest in America and the American people and to bring lost taxpayers back to work.

OBAMA CARES AND YOU SHOULD, TOO

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Obama cares, and you should, too.

ObamaCare provides access to much-needed contraceptives for women.

First of all, it's my body, not yours. I alone bear the burden, pain, and joy that it brings. Please stop trying to regulate my reproductive organs. They belong to me.

Have you ever had a menstrual period? Have you ever felt unbearable pain in every bone of your body during childbirth?

Will you be there for a mother when she needs prenatal care, formula, diapers? Will you support the Head Start program? Will you focus on creating good public schools again? Will you reform foster care and stop greasing the prison pipeline with unwanted children?

There are grandmothers living in trailer parks and public housing, singlehandedly raising millions of grandchildren. Where are you when Grandmother is trying to feed Jerome, Shaquita, Pedro, Heather, and John?

The only time I see you is on the floor of the House trying to take away

Grandma's Social Security and attacking her Medicare and food stamps.

Grandma doesn't have a car so she has no ID so she can't vote.

For some reason, you care about a baby right up until the minute it is born into the world, and then you disappear and desert the children you claim to protect and love. Shame on you.

Stop the cradle-to-grave neglect and abuse. Let's create jobs, jobs, jobs for the American people. Obama cares, and so should you.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to heed the gavel.

IN THE MATTER OF REPRESENTATIVE LAURA RICHARDSON OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Ethics, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

IN THE MATTER OF REPRESENTATIVE LAURA RICHARDSON OF CALIFORNIA

H. RES. 755

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 2, 2012

Resolved, That the House adopt the Report of the Committee on Ethics dated August 1, 2012, In the Matter of Representative Laura Richardson.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an equal amount of time in this debate to a lady with whom I am honored to serve, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SÁNCHEZ), the ranking member of the Committee on Ethics, for purposes of debate only, and I ask unanimous consent that she be permitted to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As chairman of the Committee on Ethics, I rise in support of a resolution before us today which calls for a reprimand for Representative LAURA RICHARDSON of California.

Article I of the Constitution gives Congress the responsibility for punishing Members of our body for disorderly behavior. And in the House, it is the Committee on Ethics, the only evenly divided committee, made up of five Democrats and five Republicans, and served by a completely nonpartisan, professional staff, that has been entrusted with the responsibility to enforce the rules of the House and recommend actions such as that before us today, when a Member or staff acts in a manner that violates the spirit of public trust.

The obligation, therefore, falls to this committee to review those allega-

tions that a Member has violated ethical standards that the American people expect and deserve from those of us who are privileged enough to work for them, men and women who wear the title of Representative of this great Nation.

This unfortunate story begins in October of 2010 when the committee, during the 111th Congress, first began to receive complaints from several members of Representative RICHARDSON's staff, both in the Washington, D.C., and Long Beach, California, offices, that Representative RICHARDSON required her staff to perform campaign work.

The committee began an initial inquiry based on these complaints, as well as from media reports consistent with those complaints.

On November 3, 2011, the committee, now in the 112th Congress, empanelled an investigative subcommittee and appointed Representative CHARLES DENT of Pennsylvania and Representative JOHN YARMUTH of Kentucky to lead this bipartisan subcommittee in reviewing the allegations against Representative RICHARDSON. Joining Mr. DENT and Mr. YARMUTH were two Members pulled from a pool of Members who assist the committee when needed. In this case, they are Representative ROB BISHOP of Utah and Representative BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.

These four Members, two Democrats and two Republicans, served on the investigative subcommittee and, over the past 9 months, led an extensive investigation, supported by the committee's dedicated, nonpartisan, professional staff, delving deep into this matter.

In a minute, Mr. DENT, who served as chairman of the investigative subcommittee, will detail the volume of work that the investigative team undertook during this period.

Ultimately, the subcommittee unanimously agreed to a Statement of Alleged Violation against Representative RICHARDSON.

Mr. Speaker, while the full committee report, the investigative subcommittee report, Representative RICHARDSON's responsive views, and all exhibits were filed by the ranking member and me yesterday morning, and have been available to the House and to the American people since that time, here now, in summary, are the seven counts of violation:

First, Representative RICHARDSON violated the Purpose Law, title 31, section 1301, United States Code, by using official resources of the House for campaign, political, personal, and other nonofficial purposes.

Second, Representative RICHARDSON violated House rule XXIII by retaining a full-time employee in her district office who did not perform duties commensurate with their compensation.

Third, Representative RICHARDSON violated House rule XXIII by behaving in a manner that did not reflect credibly upon this House when she unlawfully used House resources for non-official purposes.

Fourth, Representative RICHARDSON violated House rule XXIII by behaving in a manner that did not reflect credibly upon the House when she improperly compelled members of her official staff to do campaign work by threatening, attempting to intimidate, directing or otherwise pressuring them to do such work.

Fifth, Representative RICHARDSON violated House rule XXIII by behaving in a manner that did not reflect credibly upon the House when she obstructed and attempted to obstruct the investigation of this committee into these allegations.

Sixth, Representative RICHARDSON violated clause 2 of the Code of Ethics for Government Service by failing to uphold the laws and legal regulations discussed above and being a party to their evasion.

□ 0920

Seventh, Representative RICHARDSON violated House rule XXIII by failing to abide by the letter and spirit of House and committee rules.

The record should note that anytime a Member is confronted with a Statement of Alleged Violation, he or she has the option of challenging those allegations with a public hearing of an adjudicatory subcommittee or, in the case of Representative RICHARDSON, negotiating a resolution with the investigative subcommittee.

In this instance, Representative RICHARDSON negotiated a resolution in which she admitted to all seven counts in the Statement of Alleged Violation and has waived her rights to any additional process in this matter, including waiving her right to an adjudicatory hearing. Representative RICHARDSON has also agreed to accept a reprimand by the House as well as a \$10,000 fine to be paid out of personal funds to the U.S. Treasury no later than December 1, 2012.

In the history of our country, five Members have been expelled from Congress; 23 Members have been censured; and eight Members have been reprimanded. Representative RICHARDSON negotiated—and we recommend—the sanction of reprimand.

The investigative subcommittee unanimously adopted a report recommending a resolution including these terms to the full committee, and on July 31, 2012, the full committee adopted the recommendations of the subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to reserve the balance of my time so the distinguished ranking member of the Ethics Committee, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ), may make any comments she may have.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the chairman for his work in this matter. He has addressed in his opening comments some important aspects of this particular matter.