

in America many would try to get a garden hose, others call 911; but they do something because of the horror of what they're seeing.

Constantly, our media airwaves are being beat with the sounds of gunshots, smoke and devastation and a steadfast refusal of Dr. Assad to step down. His first representation was that these were al Qaeda and terrorists, and we need to listen to him. There is a general respect for the sovereignty of a nation. And I'm not one pushing the immediate attack by the United States. The American people have spoken on their cautiousness—our soldiers and their treasure are precious. But just as I was with a number of our men and women this past Saturday who had been to Iraq or Afghanistan or are prepared to go elsewhere, our soldiers are always prepared to defend the needs of people who cannot help themselves.

But I call upon today the recognition that the United Nations has to fix itself. For as a consensus was coming together for the right approach—possibly U.N. troops to maintain the peace, as was done in places on the continent of Africa—who raises their selfish voices? Two countries, China and Russia, veto the consensus of many to try and help these people who are in need—children and women dying in the streets, not able to live in peace.

So I believe that those who had an idea need to go back to the Security Council. They need to make sure that we know that the U.N. is the entity that it was crafted to be in the late 1940s, the voice of reason, the ability to step in. They need to pressure these two, in essence, outlanders—those who want to stand out of the circle of care just because of selfish reasons of oil—to get out of the way or be part of the team.

I believe it is important as well, as we look at Libya and its quietness now, working quietly to try and restructure. Many people fought against that. I was delighted to be with a number of my colleagues, the first Members of the United States Congress to go stand in front of the Libyan Embassy and say Qadhafi must go. Sometimes you have to step out of the circle of comfort.

I ask Syrian Americans to stand up and be heard. Go to the United Nations; ask that your countrymen be safe. Let us hear your voices. Likewise, I ask for Egyptian Americans—we have been allies with Egypt for a long time, and I am trying to understand the tension or confusion between governments. But my point is, this is a government-to-government issue. Let my people go. Let the Americans go. You can find no basis that they have intently, with intent, done anything that deserves that they are, one, indicted and, two, cannot travel out of the Egyptian boundaries. I call upon Egyptian Americans to rise up and be heard, for our alliance is better than a few Americans.

I take great issue with Republican Presidential politics trying to claim this is the same thing as the hostages

in Iran. Let us make no political statement about this. These are Americans. We want them out; we want them out now. But the idea is that there must be some responsible leadership in Egypt to recognize that spoiling or ending the alliance between Egypt and the United States is not worth this petty action.

So I ask for Syrian Americans, Mr. Speaker, and Egyptian Americans to go to my Web site, SHEILA JACKSON LEE—you can find it. Let me know what you want to do and how you're going to support the efforts of making peace or having peace in Syria and saving our fellow Americans in Egypt. Now is the time. It is no time for languishing in fear.

□ 1130

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR MORE THAN TALK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last month we heard some productive talk from the President during his State of the Union Address. His acknowledgement that we need increased domestic production of oil and natural gas was quite promising. Or, maybe his commitment "to fight obstruction with action." Those types of words are always welcome in this Chamber. Unfortunately, the President's action, or lack thereof, continues to fall short of the rhetoric.

Mr. Speaker, there continues to be a great divide between the words in the speech the President delivers and his actual actions or leadership. Despite a pledged commitment to energy security, this administration has worked to counter attempts at making America's energy future more secure.

The President's denial of the Keystone XL pipeline, which has the potential to create thousands of jobs and add to our energy security, is just the latest example. Between the energy resources that would be provided by a constructed, completed Keystone pipeline and the domestic natural gas fields in the United States that are in production right now, we could shut off the valve of dependency on Middle East oil.

In the House, we've advanced dozens of bills to expand domestic resource production and encourage new job creation, almost all of which have been denied consideration by the Senate.

With any hope, the President will meet his commitment to fight obstruction with action by calling on the Senate to work with the House on these important initiatives. With almost 2 million more Americans out of work since taking office, the American people are looking for more than just talk.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are looking for things that they've not seen in Washington: leadership by the President and action by the Senate.

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 11 o'clock and 32 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

Reverend Dr. David Anderson, Faith Baptist Church, Sarasota, Florida, offered the following prayer:

Our gracious Heavenly Father, we come before You with thanksgiving and praise for Your protection of and blessings on our Nation. We thank You for Your mercy, grace, and forgiveness of our national transgressions, and we trust You to lead us into righteousness.

We ask You to enable the men and women of the House of Representatives to faithfully carry out their duties and the purposes of Your will. Empower them with wisdom, courage, and compassion. Grant them the character to withstand the temptations of power and privilege, and bring them wise counselors and friends to help them do what is right. Give them wisdom and make them true statesmen.

We ask You to bless their families and shelter them from the political fallout of unpopular decisions. Fill their homes with love, hope, and faith.

Restore our Nation's historic faith that we might pray "God bless America" with integrity. We ask these things in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HIGGINS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. DAVID ANDERSON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BUCHANAN) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege this morning to welcome a very good friend to the Halls of Congress.

Pastor David Anderson, who gave the morning prayer, is a great spiritual leader in Sarasota, Florida. He has more than 35 years of pastoral experience as a Baptist minister, and for the past two decades, he has served the Faith Baptist Church of Sarasota, located in the heart of my district. That is where my wife, Sandy, and I first met the pastor 5 years ago. He is devoted to his family and to helping other people in our community. He has made himself a beloved member of our community.

I commend Pastor Anderson for his longstanding service to our community and to our Nation. It is my honor today to welcome him here to the House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HOUSE WILL ACT TO REVERSE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTACK ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

Mr. BOEHNER. My colleagues, in recent days, Americans of every faith and political persuasion have mobilized in objection to a rule put forward by the Obama administration that constitutes an unambiguous attack on religious freedom in our country.

This rule would require faith-based employers, including Catholic charities, schools, universities, and hospitals, to provide services they believe are immoral. Those services include sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs and devices, and contraception.

In imposing this requirement, the Federal Government has drifted dangerously beyond its constitutional boundaries, encroaching on religious freedom in a manner that affects millions of Americans and harms some of our Nation's most vital institutions.

If the President does not reverse the Department's attack on religious freedom, then the Congress, acting on behalf of the American people and the Constitution that we are sworn to uphold and defend, must.

The House will approach this matter fairly and deliberately through regular order and appropriate legislative channels. Because it has primary jurisdiction on the issues involved, the Energy and Commerce Committee is taking the lead on the legislative process that will be necessary to enact an effective and appropriate solution. Chairman UPTON convened a hearing late last year and began laying the groundwork

for legislative action when this flawed rule was first proposed, and I welcome his efforts to consider all possible options as his committee proceeds with its efforts.

This attack by the Federal Government on religious freedom in our country must not stand and will not stand.

ASIAN CARP

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, the Great Lakes are the largest source of freshwater in the world, and they support vital shipping and recreation jobs. The fishery alone accounts for \$7 billion in annual economic activity.

But the Great Lakes face a very real threat from the Asian carp, which are progressing from the Mississippi River to the Illinois River and are nearing Lake Michigan. If this invasive species enters the lakes, it could decimate Great Lakes fishing and recreation.

Last month, the Great Lakes Commission released a report recommending the construction of a barrier to separate the Mississippi River from Lake Michigan in order to protect the lakes from the Asian carp. I joined my colleagues from the Great Lakes Task Force in sending a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers asking them to consider this report as they study the best ways of keeping the Asian carp out of the Great Lakes Basin.

Madam Speaker, the Asian carp have not yet entered the lakes, but there are very real reasons for concern, as scientists say that the conditions of Lake Erie are perfect to support this species of fish. It is essential to our economy and our environment that we all work together to protect and restore this underappreciated asset.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTACK ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

Mr. RIGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong objection to the President's decision requiring employers to provide insurance coverage for services which clearly violate their religious convictions. Many American employers are deeply offended and strenuously object to being forced by the administration to pay for contraceptives, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs for their employees.

This is an egregious violation of the First Amendment, which protects religious freedom. Preventing government intrusion into the faith and religious convictions of Americans is precisely why our Founders embedded religious freedom into the First Amendment.

This is not a slight to the Constitution; it is an assault. The White House has said that adequate exemptions have been made, but this is simply not so.

I stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both Houses of Congress in defending the right of conscience, our Constitution, and the right of all Americans to exercise their religious beliefs freely without intrusion from the Federal Government.

I call on the administration to reverse its decision today.

TAXES

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

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, it has been 400 days since the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives, and we still have no bills designed to create jobs in America. Now the Republican political games are bringing us to the brink of yet another crisis.

If Congress does not act by the end of the month, 160 million Americans will see tax increases, millions more will lose their unemployment benefits, and seniors across the Nation will have access to their doctors put at risk by cuts to Medicare payments. The American people deserve better. Families need unemployment benefits and a payroll tax cut to put food on their tables and to keep roofs over their heads.

Let's do the right thing. Let's end tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, and let's work to strengthen the middle class. We can't wait for another last-minute fix. Let's extend the payroll tax cut, unemployment benefits, and the Medicare doc fix today.

□ 1210

FIXING THE FEDERAL DEFICIT

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

Ms. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, this past week, I had the pleasure to visit Fryer Machine Systems in Patterson, New York, in our beautiful Hudson Valley, Congressional District 19. They have spent 30 years in the Hudson Valley making the big machines that make components for manufacturers around the world. A local employer, loads of potential being held back by nearly every aspect of Federal policy. Trade, environment, education, financial services, and health care all are burdening this great local business. But the number one problem that Mr. Fryer would like us to fix here in the Federal Government is the Federal deficit.

So as we approach our work this year, I will bear this vividly in mind. We must have sympathy, respect, and a sense of awe for our hardworking, hard-pressed taxpayers and job creators. They are the true engine—not the Federal Government. They are the true engine of growth and the ultimate purchaser and securer of our liberties.