

already rejected by the elected representatives of the American people, the House and the Senate, so-called SOPA and PIPA.

These intellectual property restrictions in this agreement, it is rumored, will far exceed those already rejected, yet they would be binding on the United States of America, again going around our elected representatives.

It is also rumored that the U.S. pharmaceutical industry is seeking to roll back previous reforms that even George Bush negotiated in the U.S.-Peru FTA that enhanced access to affordable medicines. The pharmaceutical industry doesn't like inexpensive, affordable, life-saving medicines. That would be rolled back.

Further, it would allow drug companies to challenge the price formularies in Canada. Remember, U.S. citizens can buy drugs made by U.S. companies in the U.S. much more cheaply in Canada than here because the Canadian government negotiates on their behalf. It's rumored that this agreement would force Canada to raise their drug prices.

It is also rumored that it might actually prohibit the United States Government from negotiating or allowing under part D Medicare—pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies are involved but the insurance companies can negotiate under authority of law lower drug prices. It may also prohibit the drug formulary for Medicaid which saves hundreds of millions and billions of dollars a year, and the VA, which provides our veterans with low-cost pharmaceuticals.

All of those things may be preempted by this Trans-Pacific Partnership.

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Now, this is really an extraordinary thing that this is being done in secret and no Member of Congress is allowed to review it.

It has one chapter we know about, which is so egregious that Australia has said they have to have a total exemption. And the U.S. has said, sure, okay. We understand you want to protect your people. We'll let you do that, but we don't want to protect ours.

This is a little provision, similar to NAFTA, which gives corporations the power to challenge in foreign tribunals—not U.S. courts—our domestic laws that protect consumers and the environment. We would now give this authority to corporations, if China accesses to this, that are run by the Communist Government of China because they own many of the corporations in their country. The People's Liberation Army owns those corporations.

This is extraordinary. Six hundred corporations have access to this document, but no Member of Congress has access to this document, and yet this is the trade future. This is the 21st century trade agreement, we're told by this administration.

Further, the chief negotiator for the United States has said it's his greater desire that China become part of this

because then China would be bound by these rules. Oh, yeah, I heard that before. We used to vote annually on China's trade performance and we had a stick called "most-favored-nation status." When we gave up that stick—I voted against it—we gave them permanent most-favored-nation status, then they could join the World Trade Organization. But they said, don't worry, now they'll have to follow the rules. Guess what? They don't. And if they get in this agreement, they won't follow the rules either.

Kiss our economy good-bye if this secret agreement goes through.

FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of this week, we come even closer to the date on which our farm bill will expire, which is on September 30, in just a short period of time.

Yesterday, we had a rally here on the Capitol grounds that hundreds of farmers from across the Nation came together and talked about the importance of doing a farm bill now. That was the driving theme because we recognize the responsibility that farmers across this Nation have to feed our families and to make sure that they have food that they can put on the tables across this world.

Recently, I received a letter from some producers in South Dakota. Myron and Mary are real people, and they live near Wall, South Dakota. I wanted to read this letter for you today. They have a farming and ranching operation that they have had since 1969 near the Badlands of South Dakota. They farm around 750 acres of corn and wheat in South Dakota, and like many producers, they're struggling through this drought that has afflicted our country. I want to read a portion of that letter to you:

Our area was designated extreme drought early July. The corn usually yields 60 bushels per acre; wheat, 50 bushels per acre; safflower, 1,200 pounds per acre; alfalfa, 1 ton per acre. This year, the corn was cut for hay and silage, the safflower yielded half, and the alfalfa was next to nothing. We usually raise enough hay to meet our needs. To date, we have spent \$120,000 to buy hay, and we still need more.

The farm bill is important to our operation in two areas in particular: Number one, crop insurance that is all inclusive (hail, fire, drought); and, number two, disaster assistance as provided in the last farm bill but expired last year. Disaster assistance is desperately needed now due to the drought.

It is the time of year to plant wheat and to wean calves, which we will do. We don't know if it will rain, but if we knew that a farm bill was in place, we could make the decisions whether to maintain our cowherd numbers and if we plant crop. Please pass a farm bill before the end of the year.

I want you to take a look at this picture that's next to me that is a corn-

field in South Dakota. It was taken a while ago. If you would look at this field, traditionally, when this picture was taken, that corn should be lush and green; it would be setting ears, it would be building test weight, and it would be ready for harvest. Instead, these stalks are falling over due to the drought. They weren't able to provide much in growth and are struggling. This corn, more than likely, will be cut for silage—for feed for cattle—instead of returning on the investment for the producers that planted it hoping to get a crop.

We need to give Myron and Mary and producers such as those that own this corn and their families that depend on the food grown in this country the certainty of a farm bill. We cannot wait for the next disaster. We need to do our job. We need to continue to provide for our families across this country that need affordable food policies and depend upon this country and the security that a strong food program can bring them through doing a farm bill now.

POVERTY

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

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as cofounder of the Congressional Out of Poverty Caucus, I rise today to call for an immediate response to the ongoing crisis of poverty in our Nation.

The census numbers released yesterday underscore the urgent need to act boldly and to create jobs in this country, to protect our safety net, and to target resources where they are needed—basically, to communities of color, low-income communities, those communities, rural areas, who were hit hardest by the economic downturn.

It's really beyond shameful that over 45 million Americans, including over 16 million children, are living in poverty in the wealthiest nation in the world. The data also shows a wide racial disparity, with the poverty rates for whites standing at 9.8 percent, while the rates for African Americans and Hispanics remain unacceptably high at 27.6 percent and 25.3 percent, respectively.

In 2005, I founded the Congressional Out of Poverty Caucus because of the rising tide of poverty. Some of us saw this unfortunate day coming. That was beginning under the failed policies of the previous administration.

Of course, we also know the terrible economic impact of the massive financial crisis that they left us on their way out of office. With the swift efforts of President Obama and congressional Democrats, we are finally beginning to dig ourselves out of the hole that was left by the Bush administration and slowly moving the poverty rate in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, we must do more and we can do more.

One of the most critical responsibilities we have as a government is to

promote and enact policies that keep our middle class strong and provide opportunities and a safety net for those striving and fighting to become middle class and to get into the ranks of the middle class, to enhance their quality of life. But far too many Americans are continuing to suffer joblessness and have dropped out of the middle class and into poverty because of this Republican do-nothing Congress.

Republicans in Congress have continually blocked efforts to extend and expand vital safety net programs which safeguard millions of American families and children who face stark realities of unemployment, hunger, and homelessness. Further, their continued blocking of critical Federal support to our States and localities has caused widespread layoffs of dedicated public servants like teachers, police officers, and firefighters in communities all across the country.

This attack on our country's public servants has had a particularly hard impact on communities of color and on women across the country. I just have to tell you, African Americans and women have long found job opportunities in the public sector, in public employment. African Americans, in particular, often found work with the city or the State because of racial bias and barriers and obstacles in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, the American people know that you can't have it both ways. Government spending cannot kill jobs on one hand, when spent on hiring teachers and police officers, and create jobs on the other hand. And those services are desperately needed throughout our country. We need more police officers on the street.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle must begin to accept the reality of history. Federal investments in our Nation's infrastructure, in our schools, and in programs that help struggling families are critical to boosting our economy and spurring our economic recovery.

Tax cuts for millionaires don't pay for themselves; they create massive deficits and weaken our country.

Markets don't regulate themselves. Deregulation allows rampant fraud and creates massive bubbles that inevitably burst and threaten our entire economy.

We need a balanced approach that ensures that every American pays their fair share and is invested in a united and prosperous future for all Americans of every background. We need a balanced approach that ensures that millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share so that we can reignite the American Dream for all.

How this Nation treats the least of these is not just a measure of our Nation's moral priorities, but it will directly impact whether the American Dream survives and thrives for all. Let us not forget that our greatest strength is the freedom and opportunity that our democracy created to allow us to work together to build the

largest and most prosperous middle class the world has ever known.

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But this means that we must reduce and we must eliminate poverty. And I hope in the few days that we're left that this Congress will come together and figure out a way to pass the President's American Jobs Act, because in that legislation we have critical investment to rehire our police officers, teachers and firefighters who desperately need their jobs, but also the services are desperately needed in our communities.

COMMEMORATING NEIL ARMSTRONG

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

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I represent Alabama's Fifth Congressional District, home to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, home to the Saturn V rocket that carried American astronauts to the Moon.

Today, the Fifth District's talented scientists, engineers, and others work tirelessly to develop the Space Launch System for manned space flight both to and beyond low Earth orbit.

In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy challenged America to do the impossible, send an astronaut to the Moon and safely return him. As a young boy in the 1960s, I vividly remember the Earth tremble, dishes rattle, and windows pulsate as America tested our Saturn V rocket on nearby Redstone Arsenal. In 1969, America's hard work paid off.

I will never forget watching the grainy, black-and-white footage on TV as American astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped on to the lunar dust. The thrill of that moment, our pride in America, our awe of what Americans could do have belonged to all Americans ever since. Armstrong's walk on the Moon helped define America and changed world history as we left Earth behind and ventured into the mysteries of space.

Neil Armstrong was an accomplished aerospace engineer, Navy pilot, astronaut, and the first man to walk on the Moon. Neil Armstrong will be forever immortalized as a brave and great explorer.

Toward the end of his life, Neil Armstrong spoke frequently and passionately about the future of manned space flight. Neil Armstrong understood that American exceptionalism is in jeopardy and may be lost to future generations.

As a member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, I recently had the privilege to meet Neil Armstrong during a public hearing on NASA's Space Launch System, the Orion Multipurpose Crew Vehicle, and America's role in space. During that hearing, Neil Armstrong expressed concerns about the direction of America's space program.

Neil Armstrong testified, and I quote:

The past year has been frustrating to NASA observers as they tried to understand NASA's plans and progress. NASA leadership enthusiastically assured the American people that the agency was embarking on an exciting new age of discovery in the cosmos. But the realities of the termination of the shuttle program, the cancellation of existing rocket launcher and spacecraft programs, the layoffs of thousands of aerospace workers, and the outlook for American space activity throughout the next decade were difficult to reconcile with the agency assertions.

Neil Armstrong continued, and again I quote:

So, much has been accomplished. But NASA, hobbled by cumbersome limitations, has been unable to articulate a master plan that excites the imagination and provides a semblance of predictability to the aerospace industry.

Neil Armstrong concluded by testifying, and again I quote:

Predicting the future is inherently risky, but the proposed Space Launch System includes many proven and reliable components which suggest that its development could be relatively trouble free. If that proves to be so, it would bode well for exploration.

In the midst of America's current economic malaise and deficit-ridden Federal spending on programs that do nothing or little to advance technology or humanity's condition, I share Neil Armstrong's concern for the future of NASA and whether Washington has the inspirational leadership exhibited by President Kennedy in the 1960s, or "the right stuff" that is essential for space exploration.

Today, American astronauts hitch a ride from Russia. Oh, how far we have fallen. Quite frankly, America and the human condition beg for the White House leadership once shown by President Kennedy, but which now is sorely lacking.

Mr. Speaker, there is a whole universe out there waiting for us to explore. Just as America did in the 1960s, today's Americans can accomplish what is seemingly impossible. All America lacks is the vision needed to help us understand where we should go and the leadership needed to get us there.

Mr. Speaker, America will best honor the memory of Neil Armstrong and his achievements by striving for the American exceptionalism exemplified by Neil Armstrong in continuing his dream of manned space flight and exploration.

TAKE POLITICS OUT OF THE POST OFFICE

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues in this do-nothing Congress to take politics out of the post office.

The post office was explicitly authorized in article I, section 8, clause 7 of the United States Constitution. It