

Month, I rise to pay tribute to the National Hispana Leadership Institute. Later this year, NHLI alumnae will gather in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of this nationally recognized leadership development institute.

A national Latina organization based in Washington, D.C., NHLI was founded in 1987 in response to the U.S. Department of Labor's Glass Ceiling Initiative. This seminal study found that while minorities and women were making substantial gains in entering the workforce, they were not equally represented at mid and senior level management positions in government or corporate sectors. The study also found that Latinas were significantly underrepresented on corporate boards and in nonprofit and political arenas.

Over the past 25 years, NHLI has become a vital resource for Latinas and a key player in cultivating Latina leaders serving America today. In partnership with Harvard University and the Center for Creative Leadership, NHLI graduates have become a formidable cadre of well-educated, highly skilled, and committed Latina leaders. They are a veritable "who's who" in many communities and disciplines, and the impact of their collective leadership is felt throughout the country.

Through various mentoring initiatives and community service projects, NHLI alumnae have directly impacted thousands of Latinas in every State and in Puerto Rico. Its network and leadership projects have helped create new nonprofit organizations and influenced various others, including: The National Latino Children's Institute, Voto Latino, Powerful Latinas, Las Comadres, Positive Directions, Latina Giving Circle, and Poder PAC, to name a few.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the founders of this great organization. This prestigious group includes Maria Elena Torano, the Honorable Maria Antonietta Berriozabal, the Honorable Ramona Martinez, Gloria Rodriguez, the Honorable Raul Yzaguirre, and former Governor Bill Richardson. Through their vision and leadership, NHLI's programs have become the model for Latina empowerment in this country.

Again, my sincere congratulations to the National Hispana Leadership Institute on the celebration of their 25th anniversary.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

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

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to try to lend a little bit of perspective on a strategy that we have seen evolving across our country, and that strategy I think threatens to undermine one of the most basic rights and principles that we have as United States citizens, and that is the right to vote.

Unfortunately, in many States—my State included, in Texas—there's a strategy to pass what is called a voter identification law, seeking to solve a problem that apparently across the country does not exist, and that is people voting that don't have that right, and trying to give the impression that this problem is prevalent throughout our country.

As we look back at our history, I think we should all be proud of the significant strides in increasing and strengthening the electoral process for all. Let's not forget that originally, under our Constitution, only white males over the age of 21 were eligible to vote. It took several amendments to our Constitution to fully extend this right to all minorities—women and young people ages 18 and older.

□ 1210

But it took us even longer, it appears, given the current situation, to live up to these ideals.

As a child growing up in El Paso on a farm, I can remember my father talking to us about that sacred right to participate and to vote.

Here is a poll tax that was charged for that right back in 1955, made out to my dad. Back then it was \$1.75. Today, under the current strategy, that, the equivalent of this poll tax, could be as much as \$20, \$25, or \$30 for an identification card.

So who does that hurt? Who does that impact the most? It's the elderly, it's the young people, and it's minorities.

And while some people may think, well, \$1.75, that wasn't much to pay for the right to vote or, today, \$20, \$25, \$30 isn't that much to exercise the privilege of voting, the fundamental issue here is that that is an inherent right guaranteed by our Constitution.

But even if we wanted to look at it from an economic standpoint, in 2012 dollars, here is what that \$1.75 poll tax bought back in 1955. A gallon of milk was 88 cents; bread, 15 cents; chicken, 44 cents a pound; cheese, 45 cents, and so on so that for a man and his spouse, paying two poll taxes, it would be \$3.50. This is what they would have spent that money on, and often did, rather than paying a poll tax of \$1.75.

Today, the milk is \$1.99; bread is \$1.99; chicken, 99 cents a pound; cheese, \$2.50, to the point to where, for paying one poll tax or one identification card, you could get these comparative amounts of groceries.

So the fundamental question we must ask ourselves when people talk about taking our country back, when people talk about the right to vote, these are the kinds of issues that impact us. These are the kinds of things that throughout our history many of us have fought to protect the rights of all citizens to participate in the electoral process, fundamentally guaranteed under our Constitution.

While I understand the intent of these laws, it is designed to supposedly

prevent voter fraud and impersonation, the result affects individual participation in the inherent right to vote: requiring an ID, and considering the difficulties that citizens face in the process of acquiring those State-issued identification cards, which ultimately undermines the right to vote.

This is a serious issue. All of us who teach our children and our grandchildren that the most fundamental right to participate is protected by our Constitution have to remind them. I know I have talked to my children and have shown them this poll tax to remind them that freedom is not free, that people must understand their obligations as citizens.

THE DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, one of the great football coaches in American history was Vince Lombardi, from Green Bay, Wisconsin, who, again, was very famous for his inspiring speeches to his players and to his staff. And one of his most famous quotes was:

Winners never quit and quitters never win.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, that the Republican leadership in the House would go back and read Mr. Lombardi's words when they made the decision this past Friday to basically quit on the American people and say that we are going to recess this week after conclusion of business on Friday for the next 7 weeks.

This is at a time when not only the eyes of the country are on this Chamber to get much needed critical decisions made; but, frankly, the eyes of the world are watching this Congress to see whether or not, again, financial markets will have any horizon in terms of tax policy, in terms of budget policy, and in terms of a whole host of basic fundamental issues like the farm bill, like the post office functioning that, when on Friday, this place clears out after Mr. BOEHNER's decision to recess, are going to be left hanging for the next 7 weeks.

Again, this is not a problem for the House in terms of inaction by the Senate. The Senate passed a farm bill. They passed a bipartisan farm bill last June; and today we stand here with farmers who are getting up in the morning and going out and milking cows or picking crops, and they have programs which literally are expiring every minute. The Dairy Price Support programs expired on August 30, so dairy farmers up in eastern Connecticut, where I come from, whose feed costs are out of sight and whose fuel costs are out of sight, again, have absolutely no structure and no basic understanding of how they are going to continue to survive, because this place won't move forward on a farm bill with the dairy support structure, the Dairy

Security Act, which was built in by the Senate with the bill that they passed.

Again, the Senate has acted; the Senate passed a bill. They have a bill which extends crop insurance for 5 years. So for all those farmers out in the Midwest who have seen their corn crops literally burn up in a historic drought, the fact of the matter is they have absolutely no idea about what the future holds because this Chamber will not take up a farm bill and do its constitutional duty and get its work done.

Again, the post office, which fell into not just technical but actual real bankruptcy a month ago because of the structure of its pension costs, the Senate has passed a postal reform bill which adjusts the finances of that system, again, with bipartisan support and will allow the postal service to have some confidence that its operations and its post offices around the country can have some modicum of a future. This Chamber will not take up a postal reform bill between now and this Friday or for the following 7 weeks.

These are just two basic, sort of fundamental, programs which, in the past, Congress has done on a bipartisan basis without any of the drama and stress that the Speaker's decision to quit, to use Coach Lombardi's phraseology, is now creating. There are much larger issues, of course, which everyone is waiting for this Congress to act on.

Sequestration: I have shipyard workers in Groton, Connecticut, who get up every morning to build nuclear submarines. They don't know whether or not on January 1, whether the chain saw set up in the sequestration mechanism is going to go through the defense budget.

We have a fiscal cliff whereby middle class families don't know what their tax rates are going to be after January. We have physician fees under the Medicare program which, again, fall off a cliff on January 1.

With all of these issues hanging out there, we still, though, have a Republican leadership in the House which has made the decision to go home on Friday for the next 7 weeks.

Again, Coach Lombardi had it right: winners never quit and quitters never win. This leadership is quitting, not only on the Members that are prepared to roll up their sleeves and compromise and do hard work to get measures like the farm bill and the postal bill and budget policy settled once and for all. They are quitting on the American people. That is unacceptable leadership for the trust, the public trust with which they have been given.

This morning's New York Times has a story: "Congress Nearing the End of a Session Where Partisan Input Impeded Output," and they show the numbers that this is the least productive Congress in a century.

Back when Harry Truman was President, he campaigned against the do-nothing Congress. That Congress enacted 906 bills in the 2 years during

which it was convened. As of this week, this Congress has enacted 173, a quarter of the do-nothing Congress which Harry Truman made infamous and famous in American history.

We can do better as a Nation. We can get a farm bill passed. We can pass a postal reform bill which will keep that system alive. We can do budget policy. We can create a horizon for this country, which the American people sent us here to do, not go home and campaign.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We pray this day, O Lord, for peace in our world, that freedom will flourish and righteousness will be done.

The attention of our Nation is drawn toward an impending election, but there is work yet to be done.

Send Your spirit upon the Members of this people's House that they might judiciously balance seemingly irreconcilable interests. Help them to execute their consciences and judgments with clarity and purity of heart so that all might stand before You honestly and trust that You can bring forth righteous fruits from their labors.

Bless this day and every day, and may all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

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 Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KUCINICH 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME IN 2013

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, today I had the privilege and honor to visit Walter Reed Hospital to say thank you to our wounded from Afghanistan and Iraq, and I saw those who have lost both arms and legs. It's just so sad to go there.

That brings me today to the floor to thank the chairman of the Armed Services Appropriations Committee, C.W. "Bill" Young, who has come out and said it's time to bring our troops home from Afghanistan, and I quote:

I think we should remove ourselves from Afghanistan as quickly as we can.

Mr. Speaker, that brings me to a couple of comments. I called a former commandant of the Marine Corps 3 years ago and asked him to advise me on Afghanistan, and he has, and he has been very loyal. I want to read his comments:

I am more convinced than ever that we need to get out of Afghanistan. When our "friends" turn out to be our "enemy," it is time to pull the plug. We are now nothing more than a recruiting poster for every malcontent in the Middle East. We need to wake up.

I would say to the Speaker, I would say to the leadership of the Republican Party, join us in bringing our troops home in the year 2013. No more should die for a lost cause like Afghanistan.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in 1992, the Food and Drug Administration decided that genetically modified organisms were the functional equivalent of conventional foods.

They arrived at this decision without testing GMOs for allergenicity, toxicity, antibiotic resistance, and functional characteristics. As a result, hundreds of millions of acres of GMO crops were planted in America without the knowledge or consent of the American people, no safety testing, no long-term health studies.

The FDA has received over a million comments from citizens demanding labeling of GMOs. Ninety percent of Americans agree.

Why no labeling? I'll give you one reason. The influence and the corruption of the political process by Monsanto. Monsanto has been a prime mover in GMO technology, a multi-million dollar GMO lobby here and a major political contributor. There is a chance that Monsanto's grip will be