

a battle today. Part of the Republican game plan for 2012 is to make voting difficult or impossible for some of the same groups who have long suffered discrimination, who are now seriously disadvantaged by new voter suppression laws that have been passed by Republicans in States like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida.

Because voter fraud is a Federal offense, with serious legal consequences, even jail time, improperly cast ballots are virtually nonexistent in the United States. There are far more votes that are lost due to malfunctioning voting machines, mistakes and sleight-of-hand by local elected officials who are either inept or cheating than are all the cases that have been documented nationwide.

Texas has another effort to pass aggressive voter ID legislation, but they can find only five documented incidents of voter fraud in 13 million ballots cast in the last two elections.

In Pennsylvania, there have been fewer cases than you can count on your fingers, yet up to a million people may be denied the right to vote because of these legal changes.

Millions of poor, elderly, minority and student voters don't have passports or driver's licenses; some don't even have birth certificates. They may face the modern version of a poll tax, and that's unconscionable.

The media and courts are pushing back on some of the more outrageous behaviors, like Ohio's Secretary of State, John Husted, who was called out and forced to back down after he tried to limit early voting in counties with Democrats in the majority, while expanding them in Republican counties.

Come election day, the problems will still persist. There is a solution: pry partisan fingers off the controls of a varied election process. We shouldn't be treating the precious right to vote as a game where partisan advantage comes at the expense of our civil rights.

Oregon has been involved for 25 years with what is no longer an experiment but a display of a better way: vote by mail. Each registered voter in the Oregon is mailed a ballot to their residence 19 days before the election. They are given well over 400 hours to examine the ballot, make their decision on the issues and individuals, and return it by mail or in person.

Oregonians don't worry about people gaming voting machines, closing precincts early, having long lines for working people at the end of the day, or mysteriously running out of ballots at precincts that are likely to vote against you. In Oregon, there's no problem with illegal voting. Everybody has access to the ballot, and results are processed in a timely fashion.

It's shameful that, after more than two centuries of struggle for the right to vote, we're still playing games with people's opportunity to exercise that hard-won privilege upon which our democratic tradition rests.

I will be championing the Oregon solution of vote by mail to make the process simpler, more reliable, most important, fairer, while saving money in the process. I hope these blatant attempts at manipulation and discrimination backfire so that the next Congress and the administration are positioned to do something about it.

A country that prides itself as the oldest democracy deserves for the democratic process to work.

STILL NO FARM BILL

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

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, this is the second-to-the-last day that we'll be here and be in session before we head home to our districts, and we still do not have a farm bill that gives certainty to our producers and our ranchers across the country. In a little over a week, the 2008 farm bill is going to expire.

While many of these programs will continue into the future for months ahead, we have an opportunity to actually save money and give other producers certainty as they begin planning for the coming years.

Last week, I sat down and I visited with Mike and Lori. They're producers from near the town of Huron, South Dakota. They raise corn, soybeans, and beef cattle. And this year was particularly difficult for them in light of the drought situation that producers in South Dakota were facing.

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Thankfully, they had programs such as crop insurance that helped them manage their risk in such a difficult year. They wrote me a letter on the importance of the farm bill, and I want to read a portion of that letter to you:

We are experiencing a severe drought in our area this year. We put up half the hay that we normally do. Dugouts are starting to dry up, and crop yields will be down significantly. Crop insurance will be extremely important to offset lost crop production and lost revenue due to poor crop conditions. Crop insurance is a vital part of providing stability to our income and allowing us to stay a viable family farm dedicated to growing a safe, affordable food supply for a growing world.

They went on in their letter to describe exactly what this means to their family at home:

We have a 6-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter. We tell them daily how important our jobs are as farmers, how we are truly feeding the world. They are taking true pride and ownership of that, and passing a good farm bill only helps stabilize their dreams, their futures—and ours.

A 5-year farm bill gives us the stability to plan ahead for our operation long term. With the limited time Congress has to pass a farm bill before the current one expires, I would encourage lawmakers to look to rural America and realize how much work we can get done in a week. We know that, if the farm bill is made a priority, there is still enough

time to get one passed. Thank you again for your work, and we urge Congress to pass a farm bill now.

This past week, I was traveling through the middle of our State, in an area that has been hit particularly hard by the drought. I stopped at a truck stop and visited with many producers who were there filling up with fuel and getting supplies to head back out to the field. You see, right now in South Dakota, producers are planting a winter wheat crop, and they're having to make the decision: Do they put that crop into dry ground, or do they wait and see if they get a farm bill and crop insurance into the future so that they have the certainty to make sure that their risk is managed?

Many of those producers were electing not to plant. They were waiting to see if they could get rain and get a program that would actually keep their families in business. Some were putting it in the ground, showing that they truly are brave producers who have little faith that the skies will open up and that next year will be different.

I tell you that they and Mike and Lori and other producers across the State of South Dakota and across this country who have been particularly hit in these tough times are looking to us here in Congress to provide them certainty during this drought. The farm bill is one of the reasons that our family farmers are able to stay in business during tough years. Many other programs in the farm bill give them the stability and certainty, which, in turn, gives every American the certainty in having a reliable, affordable food supply.

I ran for Congress to bring more common sense to this place and to be an efficient and effective leader for South Dakota. We have an opportunity to get a farm bill done this year that provides a safety net and real reforms for our producers and cost savings for the taxpayers. While the clock hasn't run out yet, I think it is important that we get our work done on time, and I am disappointed that it hasn't been scheduled for a vote.

SEPT. 11, 2012.

Hon. KRISTI NOEM,
Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. NOEM: Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you during our trip to Washington, D.C., to talk about passing the farm bill. My husband, Mike, and I are both third-generation farmers. We have a diversified crop and beef cattle operation 25 miles southwest of Huron, S.D., where we raise corn, soybeans and 250 head of cattle.

We are experiencing a severe drought in our area this year. We put up half the hay that we normally do, dugouts are starting to dry up and crop yields will be down significantly. Crop insurance will be extremely important to offset lost crop production and lost revenue due to poor crop conditions. Crop insurance is a vital part of providing stability to our income and allowing us to stay a viable family farm dedicated to growing a safe, affordable food supply for a growing world. We were fortunate to have utilized the EQIP Program to install two water

sources in two pastures to provide drinking water for our cattle which has been vital during this drought. We were also able to participate in the Stewardship Program through NRCS. Those conservation practices helped retain subsoil moisture which has been critical in the drought conditions we've faced.

We have a 6-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter. We tell them daily how important our jobs are as farmers, how we are truly feeding the world. They are taking true pride and ownership of that and passing a good farm bill only helps stabilize their dreams and ours.

A five-year farm bill gives us the stability to plan ahead for our operation long term. With the limited time Congress has to pass a farm bill before the current one expires, I would encourage lawmakers to look to rural America and realize how much work we can get done in a week. We know that if the farm bill is made a priority, there is enough time to get this bill passed. Thank you again for your work and we urge Congress to pass a farm bill now.

Sincerely,

MIKE AND LORI PESKEY,
Iroquois, S.D.

CREATE A STEM VISA PROGRAM

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today we will vote on a Republican proposal to provide green cards to certain immigrants and to cut the same number of green cards available to other legal immigrants.

How do we determine who gets more green cards and who gets fewer?

For my Republican friends, that's easy. They will provide more green cards to a very narrow number of immigrants they can tolerate—smart immigrants who have been educated in U.S. colleges and universities. They will make other legal immigrants—ones they can't tolerate—pay for that increase.

Meanwhile, Democrats have introduced bills that would also provide green cards to the immigrants who have been educated in U.S. colleges and universities. Our Democratic proposal, however, does not take green cards away from other deserving immigrants who want to come legally and contribute to this country.

On our side of the aisle, we respect all immigrants. Our bill recognizes the value of all of them to our economy and, indeed, to our future. We should not educate some of the world's most talented people in the STEM fields—that's science, technology, engineering, and math—and then send them away to work in foreign lands to compete against us.

Democrats strongly support providing these visas as a way of helping the U.S. economy and creating jobs, not just for the immigrants but for the U.S. workers they will employ and the economic activity they will generate. Democrats want progress. We want visas for STEM graduates. We will work in a bipartisan manner with Republicans to get it done. It's a smart

policy, and it's a just policy. Let me be clear. There is no economic reason—no budget reason, no jobs reason—to punish other immigrants because we give out STEM visas. Absolutely none. Let me try to make it simple.

Let's pretend we're not talking about immigrants, because any time some of my Republican friends hear the word "immigrants," they immediately want to punish someone. So let's say, instead of immigrants, we're talking about a family of three children, of three honest and hardworking children. One child wants to go to college to become an industrial engineer, and another wants to go to college to become a math professor. The third—a diligent, industrious child—doesn't want to go to college. Let's say he wants to start a landscaping business. He wants to work with the land and get his hands dirty.

The Republican plan is simple—to help the kids going to college and to cut the other kid off. He's out. Tough luck. He's not smart enough for this family. The Democratic plan is just as simple. We need scientists, engineers and mathematicians, but we need other workers, too—construction workers, machinists, chefs, entrepreneurs. We need immigrants from all over the world—from every continent, including Africa. Everyone who works hard helps our economy, so let's be helpful to everyone. That's the Democratic belief, but that's not the Republican plan today.

Maybe we shouldn't be surprised. After all, this proposal comes from a party whose Presidential nominee doesn't care about 47 percent of America. Call it the Mitt Romney deadbeat doctrine in which half of all Americans are freeloaders. Maybe that's all we need to know about this Republican plan. I suppose, in the Republican world, STEM visas are for the half of America that works, and the other visas are for the deadbeats that Mitt Romney doesn't care about—you know, the freeloaders like your parents on Social Security or your son or daughter with that student loan or the Pell Grant—or like my parents, who came from Puerto Rico with only an elementary school education, but who worked hard every day and put two kids through college and one of them in the Congress of the United States. Yes, those deadbeats. If my parents had needed visas to come to this country today under this new plan, they would never have gotten a chance.

We are changing the rules about who can—and more importantly—about who cannot come to America. So unless you view the world through Mitt Romney's "us versus them" vision of America, there is no reason to cut visas today. None. I want to stand up for the ZOE LOFGREN provision of immigration—the Democratic vision of immigration. We're not divided into a country where people who gather at a fancy country club and write \$50,000 checks to political candidates are good

and where the people who stand to run and serve them the food are bad. America is not half deadbeats. We are one America, and we have a chance to prove it today.

Democrats are offering a sensible plan that doesn't divide us. It values all work from all immigrants. It achieves our common goal of creating a STEM visa program, keeping more scientists and engineers right here in America, making us stronger. In Mitt Romney's world, if you help one person, you have to punish another. I think that's wrong. I urge my colleagues to pass a fair and sensible plan to create a STEM visa program, and let's do it without punishing a single person.

IN HONOR OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHRISTOPHER RAIBLE, A FALLEN SOLDIER

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. This morning, I rise with a heavy heart, but on behalf of a grateful Nation, to honor a soldier born and raised in southwestern Pennsylvania, who gave his life on September 14 in service to our country.

This week, he returned to his home, the United States, where he will be laid to rest. Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Raible, commanding officer of Marine Attack Squadron 211, died in the assault on Camp Bastion, which is connected to the American-run base Camp Leatherneck, in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. It was a despicable attack by the Taliban that not only took the life of this dedicated, respected, and brave marine but that also resulted in the worst loss of U.S. military aircraft since the Vietnam war.

But this morning, I rise so my colleagues, my constituents at home in Westmoreland County, and the entire Nation will know more about this courageous marine known as "Otis," who commanded a Marine Harrier jet squadron.

After graduating at the top of his class from Norwin High School, where he was a starting defensive back for the Knights, Lieutenant Colonel Raible earned his degree in civil engineering from Pittsburgh's prestigious Carnegie Mellon University. Following his college graduation, Raible joined the United States Marine Corps, and by 1998 had become a naval aviator. A natural leader, Raible rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel last summer, having received numerous military honors along the way, including a Meritorious Service Medal, 10 Strike-Flight awards, and a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, to name just a few.

In support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Raible deployed many times to serve our Nation. Colonel Raible commanded the only Marine Harrier squadron in