

CHANGING EFFECTIVE DATE OF CERTAIN FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FORMS

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committees on Oversight & Government Reform and House Administration be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6634) to change the effective date for the Internet publication for certain financial disclosure forms, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6634

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CHANGED EFFECTIVE DATE FOR FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FORMS OF CERTAIN OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES.

Section 1(a) of the Act entitled “An Act to change the effective date for the internet publication of certain information to prevent harm to the national security or endangering the military officers and civilian employees to whom the publication requirement applies, and for other purposes”, approved September 28, 2012 (Public Law 112-178; 5 U.S.C. App. 105 note) is amended by striking “December 8, 2012” and inserting “April 15, 2013”.

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendment made by section 1 shall take effect on December 8, 2012.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1200

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE HONORABLE JACK BROOKS

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

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues, GENE GREEN and SHEILA JACKSON LEE, to ask you to join us in a moment of silence honoring our colleague, the Honorable Jack Brooks, former dean, who passed away yesterday evening at the age of 89. Jack Brooks was a fellow Texan and a good friend who served 42 years in Congress. He was a leader dedicated to bettering our country, and he will be sorely and dearly missed by his family, friends, and this Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members will please rise for a moment of silence.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to yield to my friend, the majority

leader, for his favorite 10 or 15 or 20 minutes of the week to inquire of the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman from Maryland, the Democratic whip, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, no votes are expected in the House. On Tuesday, the House will meet at noon for morning-hour and at 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m. On Wednesday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning-hour and at noon for legislative business. On Thursday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. Last votes of the week are expected no later than 3 p.m. on Thursday. Members are advised that this is a change from the original House calendar.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of bills under suspension of the rules, a complete list of which will be announced by the close of business Friday. Additionally, the House will appoint conferees for the National Defense Authorization Act now that the Senate has completed its work.

As was announced last week, the House has a number of outstanding legislative items that we must resolve, and first amongst them is the so-called “fiscal cliff.” Though the House’s target adjournment set in October of last year was December 14, that is no longer the case. Instead, Members are advised that the House will now be in session the week of December 17. Exact days will be announced next week. Members are further reminded that the House will not adjourn the 112th Congress until a credible solution to the fiscal cliff has been found.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments. I thank him for the early notice on next Friday.

First, Mr. Leader, if I could, we have the ending as next Thursday. I want to clarify for Members so that they know: we will not be in session next Friday. Is that accurate?

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman that is correct.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you for that information.

I also want to congratulate the gentleman for providing for the week of the 17th. I know none of us want to do that, but I appreciate the majority’s focus on the business that has not been done. I also appreciate the gentleman’s focus on the fiscal cliff and for indicating that we need to resolve that prior to leaving the 112th Congress. I think those are both positive announcements. I applaud him for that.

On the fiscal cliff—we discuss this all the time—but I want to inform the majority leader that there are now 175 signatures—we hope to have more, and we would obviously welcome people on your side of the aisle—on the discharge petition for the Walz bill, which mirrors the Senate bill, as the majority leader, I’m sure, knows, to ensure that no individual who makes \$200,000 or less on net taxable income or that a family who makes \$250,000 or less will

see a tax increase on January 1. Hopefully, we will resolve the fiscal cliff and get an agreement.

I again ask my friend: the Walz bill will be compliant with the rules and will not have a blue slip problem, obviously, and hopefully we could move that bill. Again, for the purposes of giving confidence to the 98 percent of our taxpayers who are making less than the sums put forward in the bill—\$200,000 and \$250,000—I understand and anticipate the gentleman’s response that we are all concerned with growing the economy and creating jobs and that we don’t want to dampen that dam; and we understand the gentleman’s concern about small businesses, particularly those 3 percent of small businesses that make more than this and report it on a personal income basis.

I would hope that we could give serious consideration to trying to act sooner than the end of the year and as soon as possible, frankly, on—as we call it—the middle class tax cut, the \$250,000 and under.

I yield to my friend to see whether or not, perhaps, the actions that have been taken this week have any bearing on his thoughts on whether we could schedule that bill.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman that I don’t think it is a good thing right now to bring that bill to the floor because we hope that we can have successful negotiations with the White House.

I think, as the gentleman said earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, that our side actually put on the table, in our letter to the President, some specific proposals that actually deserve a response from the White House. That’s what we’re looking for: Are we going to get a response to our proposal about putting revenues of \$800 billion on the table, of putting out there a framework for spending reduction?

I know, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has agreed with me that we’ve got to do something to address the spending problem because you can’t keep taxing and borrowing without doing the other side, which is to take care of the problem of spending. I think that the letter and the proposal that we sent to the President deserve a response, Mr. Speaker; and if we don’t get a response, then perhaps the President will be willing to meet with us—one or the other—because it doesn’t seem to me to be upholding the obligation to the American people that we’re going to resolve this issue if we just stand still.

□ 1210

We put these specifics out on the table. The President has not responded. We ask the President to respond, Mr. Speaker. And I’d say to the gentleman that I hope that that’s what can happen, either a response from the President—not just a summary rejection but a specific, serious response in the nature of our proposal—or if the President would agree to sit down and talk

about it. That's what we've got to do to fulfill our obligation. I don't think bringing that bill to the floor, Mr. Speaker, is going to further that likelihood.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his observation.

He and I do share the view that we need to address both the revenue side and spending side of our budget. My view is, and I've said this on a regular basis, what we really have is not necessarily a taxing problem or a spending problem; we have a paying for problem. The actions we take, we ought to pay for them. We haven't done that through the years. Frankly, we haven't done it on both sides of the aisle. I don't want to get into that specific argument, but the fact is, if we pay for things, you don't create debt. And if you cut revenues and you cut spending, you don't create debt. If you cut revenues and don't cut spending, you create debt just as surely as if you spend money and buy things and don't pay for them. In either instance, you create debt, and we need to get this country on a fiscally sustainable path.

So I congratulate the gentleman—not the gentleman specifically, but I was pleased, and the gentleman and I would disagree on the specificity of the offer that was included or the suggestion that was included in your letter. For instance, the President has put forward, as you know, in his budget and in his further proposals, an extensive list of reductions in spending that he proposed. In addition, he has put forward very specific proposals vis-a-vis revenues. His most specific proposal, of course, has been widely debated and discussed, and there was a difference of opinion on whether or not we ought to cap the taxes on \$250,000 and under families and \$200,000 and under individuals. There was a very robust debate on that during the campaign. The voters voted, and that's a very specific proposal.

In the \$800 billion that you suggest in the letter that you jointly signed with the Speaker and others, there is a suggestion of \$800 billion in revenues, which I believe is insufficient to get us to where we need to be. But having said that, it is certainly a good start, but it is not a good start if all it is is conceptual.

The President, as I said, has made very specific proposals. He wants taxes on those making over \$250,000 to go up. That produces a certain amount of revenue, somewhere in the neighborhood of the \$800 billion of which you speak. The fact is, though, in your proposal, we don't have the specifics other than to know that you're focused on preferences or loopholes—describe them as you may—which would be a reduction.

The gentleman knows the three large of those is the health care, the mortgage interest, and the pension benefits that can be taken off your taxes. I don't know whether the gentleman suggests reducing those specifically, and I don't ask him to respond to

that now, but I do tell my friend that if we don't have those specifics, as you have very specifically from the President, he also recommended capping deductions at 28 percent, a very specific revenue-generating proposal. He has also, as I said, agreed to very substantial spending cuts which he has outlined in his budget. And, as the gentleman also knows, we've cut a trillion dollars, give or take some billions of dollars, in expenditures pursuant to the debt limit extension of 2011. So we have addressed very substantial reductions in funding for 2011, for 2012, for 2013, and for out-years after that.

So I would urge my friend, when he says he's given specifics, as far as I know, the letter essentially has five lines in it. The letter is longer than that, but five lines of spending and/or tax-cutting proposals, but they are all generic, not specific. And that is, I think, the problem we have in these negotiations, to the extent that they exist. Unfortunately, we're not doing as much as I think we ought to be doing. We don't have specifics, and, therefore, conceptually everybody can say, well, we want to get \$800 billion. The President and, apparently, your letter agree on that. How you get there is the key. And if you don't have specifics—the President has offered specifics on how to get there. I would respectfully suggest you have not offered specifics other than we're going to deal with preference items. But they're very controversial: charitable deductions, very controversial; other deductions, controversial. We have to really get down to the nitty-gritty of, okay, how are you going to do it?

I would urge the gentleman, in furtherance of what he and his party have already done, to perhaps be specific in how we get the \$800 billion. The President has said how we get the \$800 billion. I think that would be very helpful, and I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman. That's what, really, discussions are for; that's what meetings are for. It's to try to get to the specifics. And although he and I differ, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman and I differ about the specifics of our proposal and the President's proposal because, frankly, I know and I think both sides know where each other are on taxes right now. Certainly the President was in a different place back in the summer of 2011 when he had indicated that—what was said was, Give us \$1 trillion in additional revenues which could be accomplished without hiking tax rates is what the President said. Certainly the position he's taking now, that absolutely we have to have rate increases, is different than that. But that's what the President has said this time. So we know where each other is there. It's the specifics on the spending.

The gentleman points out, Mr. Speaker, that the President has submitted budgets in the past. There's been no discussions of specifics whatsoever, even when the Speaker or I have

suggested in meetings that we've had as to where are your specifics. They have just not been forthcoming. So if the President is serious to actually do something about the problem, then I think we do need to come together and say to the American people we're willing to cut the wasteful spending here and, in the gentleman's own words, Mr. Speaker, to pay for what we actually spend, not to just keep spending what we don't have. I think it could really move the ball forward on these negotiations.

So I accept the spirit in which the gentleman suggests we should have more discussions to get the ball moving forward; it's just the White House doesn't seem willing to do so. And instead, we see the President going on a television interview and saying that he summarily rejects our position instead of trying to get down to the specifics of the problem, which is reducing wasteful spending.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

I want to say two things. First of all, I want to clarify, and I think I did clarify, that \$800 billion clearly is in your proposal. When I said the President agrees with that \$800 billion, he agrees to getting to at least \$800 billion. He thinks we need more. I agree with the President; we need more.

When the gentleman says the problem is wasteful spending, I disagree with the gentleman very substantially on that. The problem is not wasteful spending; the problem is spending. Whether it's not wasteful or not, if it's good spending, we need to pay for it.

Now, where the gentleman and I have a very substantial disagreement, I know, is that when the gentleman and his party voted to reduce revenues by over \$2 trillion, they didn't reduce spending by \$2 trillion. As I said at the outset, inevitably, if you reduce revenues by \$2 trillion and you up spending, which is what happened, frankly, as all of us know from 2001 to 2008, and particularly 2001 to 2006, if you up spending and reduce revenues, inevitably you have debt, just as if you buy stuff and don't pay for it, you have debt. So whether you reduce revenues or don't pay for what you buy, the result is exactly the same—debt. So that's why I say paying for is the problem.

The gentleman and I have a very substantive disagreement on whether or not you ought to have to pay for tax cuts. You have to pay for it one way or the other. You're either going to pay for it by having additional debt on which you'll pay substantial interest, or you'll pay for it by reducing programs. It's not wasteful spending. I'd like to get rid of all wasteful spending.

□ 1220

But I suggest to the gentleman, and he knows the figures as well as I do because we've been through a lot of meetings together on this, the issue is not wasteful spending. The issue is we've decided to buy things, a lot of which I think we ought to be buying, including

Social Security, including Medicare, including investment in education, including investment in infrastructure, including investment in innovation to grow our economy, which, in turn, will help our deficit situation as the economy grows, without raising any taxes.

But the fact of the matter is, I know the gentleman has historically not felt that tax cuts ought to be paid for, either by cutting spending, which didn't occur, or by offsetting revenues.

So I want to make it clear the President does not agree with the \$800 billion level because he doesn't think the math works. I share the President's view. The math doesn't work.

And ultimately, in my opinion, the most useful effort will be if we all agree on the objective, whether it's \$4 trillion, whether it's 70 percent debt to GDP ratio, which most economists, or a little less than that, say is sustainable and will have us on a sustainable path.

If we all agreed on the objective and then, Mr. Majority Leader, simply made the math work to get there in a way that we could agree on, I think America would be advantaged, I think the economy would be advantaged, and we would see a renaissance of job creation in this country as we did in the 2000s.

I'll be glad to yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. I accept the gentleman's good intentions, and I know that he doesn't think that we ought to be imposing additional obligations on the American people to pay more of their money into Washington if the money is not going to be spent in a way that is something that they would like.

So if it's wasteful spending, or if it's spending just to aggravate the deficit situation, and that's from the perspective that we come, fix the problem. If the obsession is to raise taxes, you know we don't agree with that, but fix the problem.

So if you're asking for somebody to give more of their money to Washington, then at least be able to tell them that we are going to manage down the debt. That's what we're about here, which is why the focus is on spending, and how we have to ratchet down the spending in this town.

That's where we've heard no specifics or willingness on the part of the President to engage in discussions about specifics on spending.

As far as the math is concerned, again, it was a very different President in the summer of 2011 when he said \$1.2 trillion in additional revenues could be accomplished without hiking tax rates. That's what he said. So, again, all of a sudden that math doesn't work, but it worked for 1.2 before.

Regardless, we sort of understand now, at least this round, where everyone is on taxes. Let's get to the problem, and maybe then we can resolve the taxes question.

Mr. HOYER. Well, we have a fundamental disagreement because the gentleman continues to want to focus on

spending. I think that's right that we focus on spending. But again, debt is not caused by spending; it is caused by buying things that you don't pay for, or it's caused by cutting revenues that you don't offset either by cuts in spending, by cutting revenues. That's what causes debt. It's not buying things that causes debt. It's not paying for things.

The discipline, I will tell my friend, in the system for the American public is, if they want things, for us having the honesty to say, okay, if you want a tax cut or you want a strong defense, it costs money, both of them cost money. And if you're willing to pay for it, we will do that. If you're not willing to pay for it, we ought not to do it.

That's not been our practice, unfortunately, and we dropped the PAYGO requirement, as the gentleman knows, in 2001, actually 2003 legally. De facto, we dropped it in 2001, because we had substantial tax cuts without paying for them. We waived that requirement, and I think that, frankly, got us into the problem we have on either side of the aisle, whether it's spending or revenue reductions.

I don't think the President's changed his position. I think the positions have changed. Mr. Bowles indicated that. Others have indicated that. The situation has changed its dynamic in the sense that it's not the situation we were confronting in 2011.

But this is an important discussion because it really requires us to come to make a commonsense, math decision, not an ideological decision driven by debate about spending or taxes, but on how we have a budget that is a sustainable budget for our kids and for our grandkids and for our country over the long term. And I think that's what this discussion ought to be about. And if it is, I think we can get this challenge resolved, and Americans and America will say finally, finally, those representatives we've sent to Washington have sat down together with one another and made sense.

Again, I want to say to the gentleman, I can't read it either, and you certainly can't read it from there. But you can see that, perhaps, the five lines here, and then the very long lines the President has proposed in terms of cuts and revenues.

I think if you're expecting the President to come and say, well, we can get your \$800 billion this way, that way and the other way, he's not going to do that because he's not going to negotiate with himself.

On the other hand, if you come to us and say specifically this is how we're going to get the \$800 billion, we're going to eliminate the charitable deduction. This is how we're going to get the \$800 billion, we're going to eliminate the mortgage deduction, that's something we can discuss. But if we don't have specifics on what you're going to do, but just a conclusionary "we're going to get 800 billion," then it's hard to negotiate because we don't

know what the negotiation parameters are.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. I'd just say, the gentleman is really saying there is a need for discussions, and that's what I'm saying today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOYER. We agree.

Mr. CANTOR. We need to sit down and discuss. We do agree on that. Obviously, the White House doesn't agree on that, and we're trying to urge some real serious commitment to resolving this on the part of the White House.

Mr. HOYER. The gentleman has indicated there is other business that needs to be done. Let me briefly address those.

The farm bill, obviously, continues to be not resolved, not addressed. The Senate passed a bill, as the gentleman so well knows, 64-35, two-thirds of the Senate voting for it. We would be hopeful that that Senate bill could be put on the floor. I've talked to Chairwoman STABENOW. She and her ranking member worked very hard on that. I know our committee's reported out a bill 35-11, but that has not come to the floor. That was passed out almost 6 months ago, 5 months ago.

So I would hope that the farm bill could be moved. I know I'm going to be talking to some of my ag community today. They're very hopeful that a—not a stopgap but a farm bill of a sufficient length—and I think they would opt—I don't want to speak for them before I meet with them—but for the Senate bill, we need to pass that. Milk prices, as you know, will spike dramatically on January 1 if we don't pass the farm bill.

Also, on the Violence Against Women Act, I know last week we had the sponsor in the chair. I didn't know that. I thank the gentleman for reminding me.

But the Violence Against Women Act has been passed by this House and by the Senate. I would urge the majority to get us to conference on that. Rather than go through why I think the Senate bill's a good bill and you think the House bill's a good bill, the way to resolve that is to go to conference. I would urge the gentleman to go to conference on the Violence Against Women Act.

I believe the President is going to come down in very short order with some preliminary numbers on the supplemental. I think I'm going to New York tomorrow to spend time with some of our Members there and see the devastation that has occurred. The gentleman, I know, is very aware of that as well. We need to do a supplemental, so we need to have time to do that.

And lastly, although we haven't discussed it very often—it's not a very sexy issue, postal reform, again, is another issue that we're talking about balancing. The postal department has not been able to balance its budget, as we know. Part of it is dealing with the retirement programs that they're funding.

But I'm wondering if the gentleman has any thoughts on any one of those four bills.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I'll try and be brief. On the farm bill, the gentleman is correct. We're going to face some very dire consequences if we don't act on the issue prior to leaving here. And part of what I had indicated last week is that is something we are focused on and know we've got to deal with the issue prior to the end of the year.

On the issue of VAWA, as the gentleman and I have discussed many times on the floor, he knows that we can't go to conference with the Senate bill. The Senate bill has a blue slip problem.

I am speaking with the Vice President and his office and trying to resolve the issue of the differences surrounding the VAWA bill. This week I've actually been encouraged to see that we could very well see agreement on VAWA, and I'm very hopeful that that comes about. But I am encouraged about the discussions that my office is having with the Vice President's office right now, that bill being a high priority of Vice President BIDEN.

□ 1230

On the issue of the supplemental, I imagine, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has seen the press reports that I have that the White House is anticipating sending up a \$60 billion supplemental request for damages related to Sandy, and I think tomorrow would be that day, at least according to press reports. As the gentleman may know, the FEMA Director testified to the House yesterday that the agency can meet its needs associated with the disaster through the spring. Approximately \$2 billion has been delivered, with about \$5 billion remaining in the disaster relief fund.

So, again, no one is here saying that we don't want to deliver the necessary aid to the victims, because that is a priority. But we're looking forward to receiving that request and taking a look at the numbers and the need to make sure we can move forward on that as well.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, postal reform. The gentleman and I have, yes, talked about this a lot and know that the issue has to do with the obligations of the Postal Service and how we can address those to create a more balanced prospect for the future to allow for its continuance, so we're looking at that as well. And the gentleman knows there's a lot of discussions, both bipartisan and bicameral, on that issue as well.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Obviously, we are coming here to meet and we're focused on the fiscal cliff, but there are other things that we could be, hopefully, resolving in the time that we have available to us between now and the end of the year, and I would hope that we would do that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT TO FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2012

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. on Friday, December 7, 2012, and further when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at noon on Tuesday, December 11, 2012, for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERG). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

CONGRATULATING RYAN DEVLIN ON RECEIVING 2013 PENNSYLVANIA TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ryan Devlin of Brockway, Pennsylvania, on receiving the 2013 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Award. Ryan is the youngest educator to receive this esteemed award. His recognition also marks the 2nd consecutive year in which the recipient is from the Fifth District of Pennsylvania, which I'm proud to represent.

In 2009, Ryan completed his master's degree in education at California University of Pennsylvania. The following year he was hired by the English Department at Brockway Area School District. Today, he teaches British literature, creative writing, digital media, and computer science, and also serves as the adviser to the senior high gifted program.

Ryan is a teacher that goes above and beyond, a characteristic he has demonstrated year after year. For example, he's played an active role in introducing new technology to both students and staff and has worked to develop 21st century learning skills in a classroom environment that fosters creativity, innovation, and critical thinking. Most importantly, Ryan works tirelessly to help his students achieve success in the classroom.

Ryan Devlin, thank you for your commitment to the teaching profession. Congratulations.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN JACK BROOKS

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as announced earlier by Congressman RALPH HALL, we lost a memorable Texas legislator, Congressman Jack Brooks, who proudly served his

southeast Texas district for 42 years after he was first elected in 1952, ultimately serving as dean of this House of Representatives and dean of our congressional delegation.

I knew Jack Brooks from my days in the State legislature, and he was one of my mentors when I first came to the House of Representatives. Representative Brooks was known for his tough persona and for chewing on his cigar while commanding a room. But he had a heart of gold. I remember sitting down with him when I first came to the House of Representatives. When he asked me what committee I wanted to serve on, I thought, well, I'll get what I need. I told him I wanted Energy and Commerce. He chewed on his cigar and said, You'll get Ed and Labor and like it.

But Jack was a great leader and a role model. He supported civil rights bills, refused to sign the segregationist Southern Manifesto in 1956, and helped write the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 that banned racial segregation.

May we always remember Congressman Jack Brooks. He was a great man, political figure, U.S. Marines veteran, and a friend that I'll never forget.

PULSE OF TEXAS: GLENN FROM SPRING, TEXAS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Glenn from Spring, Texas, wrote me this:

Starting at the age of 15, I worked any job I could to help support myself through college—manually dug ditches, construction work, plant work. After college, I found an entry-level position in the field I studied. With hard work, I have been constantly employed for 36 years and now nearing retirement. I have never requested or received any Federal financial assistance. I enjoy contributing to my community and church. This is my American Dream.

Now the administration wants to increase the taxes I pay for being successful. As my grandmother would say, "If you can work, do so, and never let your pride or laziness get in your way to earn an honest living, and you will be rewarded in life."

Mr. Speaker, this administration wants to punish those who have lived the American Dream. During a recession, no one's taxes should be increased. This administration cannot tax and spend America into prosperity.

And that's just the way it is.

THREE YEARS OF CAPTIVITY FOR CUBAN HOSTAGE ALAN GROSS

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

Mr. RIVERA. This week marked the 3-year anniversary that a United States citizen, Alan Gross, has been held hostage in Cuba. He was arrested on December 3, 2009, for engaging in humanitarian activities to help the oppressed Cuban people.