

that the unintended consequence of all of this is that we've now created a class system in America for health care. We can't overstate this enough. Before, we just had health care in America, and you tried to find the best doctor and you tried to find the best possible care. But now what ObamaCare creates is this: it's a class-based health care system where we segment patients into three different classes.

Here's one. Here's the one that no American wants to be in. It's the Medicaid ghetto. That's where the lowest possible care, where very few doctors will be available to offer this kind of care, the Medicaid ghetto. Then there's going to be the socialized medicine in the exchanges. Then, finally, there's going to be concierge care for those who are going to be at the top of the heap.

So it won't be the same type of medicine that's available for everyone. We will have different class systems in health care. And guess who's going to get hurt the most? You're exactly right—senior citizens, women, and children. I want to explain just briefly how that will be.

You see, 56 percent of the people that are unhealthy today in America are in households that make less than 133 percent of the poverty level. So if you're sick, you're in a lower-income household, and without employer coverage—and employers, as was stated before by Dr. GINGREY, about 7 million people are going to be thrown off their very good coverage they have now. Over half of our unhealthy citizens will be stuck in Medicaid, and that doesn't provide adequate access. I can tell you from my State of Minnesota, people who are on that scale have to go from rural Minnesota, maybe travel a couple hundred miles to the Twin Cities—which they can't—to find anyone who will offer them the care they need.

Here's the other thing: About 2.5 times as many women than men get their coverage through their husband's coverage. For all of these people who are going to lose their employer-sponsored health coverage, it's more likely to have 2½ times more women. If they're unemployed and out of the labor force, they're in trouble; they're up a creek without a paddle. Because the problem here is going to be that women and children are in jeopardy of not having an option. Even if they make 400 percent more than the poverty line—which really sounds like a lot of money—you're not going to have the availability of getting on the health care exchange. You may not even get in the Medicaid ghetto. So, in other words, you have to pay the tax—which they call a fee—you have to pay the big tax as a woman and as a mother of these children, but you're not getting any health insurance for it.

□ 1210

It is a bad deal, and that's why I thank you, Dr. BURGESS, for what you've done.

Mr. BURGESS. Not only are you not getting health insurance, you're fined on top of it. You pay a fine, and you're still uninsured. At the end of the day, you're still uninsured.

Ms. BACHMANN. That's right. So, Mr. Speaker, it's the worst of all worlds. Your husband is having to pay for this very expensive insurance for himself, and the employer may be having a match on that, but you're out in the cold, your kids are out in the cold, and you're paying a tax on top of it to add insult to injury. Women are going to suffer, children are going to suffer, and seniors are going to suffer.

Mr. Speaker, there are going to be people who die because of this. In this body, let it be said today that we don't want to see anyone die or anyone hurt or anyone denied. That's exactly what this bill is going to do, which is why we have to repeal it.

The day after this bill was passed, I introduced a bill to repeal, and every single one of the Republicans in this House has voted to repeal ObamaCare. Now, hopefully, we're going to have another vote again soon because we love people, we care about people, and we want them to have the health care they need.

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the gentlelady for her comments.

Where has the press been on this? Can you imagine if 500,000 children lost their health insurance under a Republican President? That would be the headline. We wouldn't hear anything else out of the press for a week. If people still showed up for the Federal pre-existing program and the President said, "No, no more, we're out of money," if it were a Republican President, that's all we'd hear about: the Republican President has prevented people from signing up to his own pre-existing program that he started.

People need to be aware of what is happening. These things have been insidious. It's been 3 years. There's been a lot of information. It's complicated. I don't understand it anyway. Why do I have to be involved? You have to be involved. As the gentlelady just said, it is going to affect you and your family. Every man, woman, and child in this country for the next three generations is going to be affected by this very bad bill.

It was the worst of processes. This was a bill that came over here from the Senate. The House really never debated this thing. The House passed a bill, H.R. 3590, in July of 2009, but it was a housing bill. H.R. 3590 got over to the Senate. HARRY REID said, I need a bill number for my health care bill. Here's H.R. 3590. What does it do? Oh, housing. Strip all the language out. So he amended it: strike all after the enacting clause and insert. And what was inserted? The rest of the health care law.

The Senate had to digest it and pass it in a few days' time right before Christmas Eve. A big snowstorm was bearing down on Washington. They all voted for it to get out of town—60 votes in the Senate. It passed.

NANCY PELOSI said, What is this thing? It's garbage. I haven't got 100 votes for this over in the House. But over the next 3 months, they twisted enough arms and they broke enough knees that this thing finally got the votes 3 years ago yesterday, and 3 years ago today it was signed into law. It was signed into law to the detriment of the entire country.

I thank the gentlelady for joining me. I thank all the other Members who are here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus to recognize our Special Order hour not only to talk a drop about the budget plans we had this week, but more importantly, this is an hour to honor organized labor in this country and what organized labor has done for the middle class and for so many millions and millions of people across this country.

This week, the Congressional Progressive Caucus put the Back to Work budget before this body. The Back to Work budget is based on a simple concept: the number one problem facing this country is not the deficit, it's the need to improve the economy and create jobs, and the single best way you can address the deficit is to get people back to work. The Back to Work budget did just that. It would have created 7 million jobs, it would have brought unemployment down to 5 percent within 3 years, and it still would have trimmed \$4.4 trillion from the deficit.

What it did is it invested directly in the very things that create jobs—in infrastructure, in police and fire, and in teachers and in other services that are vital to this country—because we've been told by the Congressional Budget Office, the single entity that is a non-partisan agency that both parties rely heavily on, that this year one-half of our deficit is caused by economic weakness, and three-quarters of the deficit in 2014 is caused by economic weakness.

Now, what is economic weakness? That means unemployment and underemployment. If you get the people of this country back to work, you will solve most of our problems in trying to deal with the deficit. So rather than make the end-all goal solving the deficit but completely ignoring the economy—and as the Republican budget, we saw that, on the floor today, actually could cost 2 million jobs in this country in the next year—we need right now to be investing in those jobs so that people are getting back to work

and supporting their families and becoming taxpayers. When they pay, we'll stop that trajectory and the deficit that we have caused by this weakened economy.

So that's the answer. That's what we need to focus on, and that's why the Congressional Progressive Caucus put the Back to Work budget out this week. It really is the premise of what we really want to talk about, which is our support for the working men and women of this country and the support for organized labor. Because when we put our emphasis on jobs, we're recognizing the very hard work that labor has done in this country.

I just want to share a few historical parts that labor has done which are so important in this Nation.

First of all, we have the weekend because of organized labor. In 1870, the average workweek for most Americans was 61 hours. But many workers, including children, put in 10- to 16-hour workdays 7 days a week. Many workers didn't have a single day off for a week or two in a row.

In response, labor unions in the late 19th century and the early 20th century organized massive strikes demanding shorter workweeks. They fought so that Americans could be home with their loved ones instead of constantly toiling for their employers with no leisure time.

By 1937, these labor actions created enough political momentum to pass the Fair Labor Standards Act. The FLSA created a Federal framework for a shorter workweek that included room for leisure time. So the reason we have our weekends, our days off during the week, is because of the effort a century ago by people in organized labor.

Also, unions helped to end the lack of child labor laws that we had in this country. Child labor was prevalent before the growth of the labor movement. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, child laborers were commonplace in factories, shops, and other workplaces across this country. American children as young as 5 years old worked in large numbers in mines, glass factories, textiles, agriculture, canneries, home industries, and as newsboys, messengers, bootblacks, and peddlers. In fact, children were often preferred because factory owners viewed them as more manageable, cheaper, and less likely to strike.

In many factories, children were forced to climb on and crawl into large, dangerous machines because they were the only workers small enough to do so. These dangerous child labor conditions often caused the problem with people losing fingers, arms and legs of children that could easily get caught and mangled in devices.

Beyond the equipment, the environment was a threat to children as well as the factories that put out the fumes and toxins. When children inhaled toxins, they would often suffer from illness, chronic conditions or disease. And harvesting crops in extreme tem-

peratures for long hours was considered normal for children. The labor movement spearheaded the fight against the child labor practices that were going on.

As early as 1836, union members at the National Trades' Union convention made the first formal public proposal recommending that States establish a minimum age for factory work. That year, Massachusetts enacted the first State law restricting child labor for workers under 15. Over the next several decades, the efforts of labor movements successfully achieved minimum age laws in other States. In 1881, the AFL proposed a national law banning all children under 14 from employment.

In 1892, the Democratic Party adopted the AFL's child labor platform and began to push for national child labor laws. Finally, in 1938, Congress included minimum ages of employment and hours of work for children in the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Unions have spearheaded the fight for the Family and Medical Leave Act. Labor unions like the AFL-CIO federation led the fight for the 1993 law which requires State agencies and private employers with more than 50 employees to provide up to 12 weeks per year of protected leave for workers to leave for a newborn, a newly adopted child, a seriously ill family member, or the worker's own illness. Thanks to the labor movement, employers are required by the FMLA to continue group benefits, including dental and optical benefits, during family or medical leave.

□ 1220

The law also requires that employees can't be retaliated against for merely taking their federally protected leave; and under the law, when they have completed their family or medical leave, they must be allowed to return to the same or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and working conditions.

Here's another thing that organized labor has done for the American people: they've pushed throughout their career for workplace safety. It's not just for children, but for adult workers.

Efforts by the Federal Government to ensure workplace health and safety were minimal until the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, better known as OSHA. The laws were so lax that in places for some employers, it was cheaper for the employer to replace a worker injured in the workplace than it was to introduce safety measures. There was little recourse or relief for the survivors of dead workers or injured employees. In the early 1900s, labor unions had pressured many States to enact workers compensation laws that discouraged employers from permitting unsafe workplaces.

Prior to OSHA's enforcement, 14,000 workers died each year from workplace hazards and 2 million more were disabled or harmed during those years in

these unsafe workplaces. It wasn't until the 1960s that the movement began for a comprehensive workplace safety law once again backed by the labor movement. That law went into effect on April 28, 1971, declaring Congress' intent "to ensure so far as possible every working man and woman in the Nation safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources."

Those are just some of the benefits that we have seen because of organized labor's efforts over the last century and a half.

They also were instrumental in passing the Social Security Act of 1935. They were instrumental in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. And their support for World War II was unmatched in making sure that we had workers to deal with what we needed to back home while we had so many people fighting for our country overseas.

Those are just some of the efforts, but there's more. Part of being a part of organized labor has meant so much for this country. If you are a union member, let me just offer a few of the things that you're more likely to have because you're part of a union. One, you will earn higher wages. Union Members earn 30 percent more than their nonunion counterparts. So you'll have a better chance at a living wage, the ability to support your family because you are a part of a union.

You'll have more on-the-job training. Union workers are more likely to have access to formal on-the-job training, making employees more skilled and adding to productivity.

And something I should have mentioned from the beginning is I have been a small business owner for 25 years, over half of my lifetime. I opened a small business when I had hair and it was dark. It was a long time ago. But my business has also been a union business. I have a union specialty printing business. I can tell you one of the very important reasons why many of us who choose to have unions in our businesses is because we know the value of what I just talked about, that training.

Many unions have an apprenticeship program where you can get the very best, most qualified and skilled employees to be able to come to your place from day one. One of those other benefits for me as a small business owner is they're more likely to stay in my business so that I don't have the turnover of constantly training new employees. I have the benefit of someone who is going to stay with me for a long time.

Another thing, if you're a member of a union, you have safer working places. Union workers are more likely to be trained on health and safety rules, and union workplaces are more likely to enforce OSHA standards. You're also more likely to receive workers' compensation. Union members get their benefits faster and return to work more quickly. When workers are injured, the union helps workers through

the often complicated process of filing for workers' compensation, and they protect the workers from employer retaliation.

Finally, you have a better chance as a union member to have health insurance. Nearly 80 percent of the unionized workers receive employer provided health insurance compared with 49 percent of nonunion workers. Union members are more likely to have short-term disability and life insurance coverage.

Those are just some of the benefits that you'll see for union workers. Now, specifically, I would like to talk about some of the problems that unions are facing today because there are several very significant issues. Not only is it in the States and in the Halls of Congress that they're having a hard time making sure that we continue to protect workers and the unions that are working to protect those workers, but very specifically within agencies.

I would like to read a story—I believe it's The New York Times—about a situation that just happened this year in the State of New York. I'm just going to read parts of this article, but I think it will be especially significant. This was written in mid-February. So this happened at the end of January of this year. I'll read it from the beginning, and I'll take a few breaks in here.

The article is: "At Cablevision, Norma Rae Has Been Escorted Outside."

Cablevision claims to take pride in its open-door policy for employees. So two weeks ago, a tight-knit band of cable television installers gathered at a company depot in Brooklyn to pick up route shoots and put ladders and tools in their vans when they trooped inside to ask a vice president for a couple of minutes of his time.

Last winter, these workers overcame fierce management opposition and voted to join the Communication Workers of America only to spend 9 months in rancorous contract talks. They wanted to ask the vice president if Cablevision was serious about a contract agreement or if they only wanted to break their union.

They waited for 20 minutes to talk and then 20 more.

La'kesia Johnson, 44, grew restless and walked to the front office. The manager told her to go back inside. Then the vice president walked in and asked essentially, "Who is supposed to be working now?" Every worker, 22 in all, raised a hand. "Ladies and gentlemen," the vice president said, according to multiple accounts, "I am sorry to tell you that you've all been permanently replaced."

"What?" Ms. Johnson said, "Replaced? You just fired us? You don't even know what we want." Ms. Johnson said the vice president looked at her and stated, "I don't care what you want."

The article goes on to talk about unions:

Unions win just 50 percent of elections when they successfully negotiate an initial contract just half of the time. The National Labor Relations Board is a dog missing teeth. If workers engage in an illegal strike, the board legally must seek a court injunction. If a company illegally fires workers, the board takes months to investigate and cannot levy any fines.

It goes on further:

I asked Charles R. Schueler, a company spokesperson, about the firings. He said that "22 employees refused to go to work after multiple requests to do so." The workers, I noted, all said they intended to work that day. He repeated his original statement. He also said that Cablevision negotiated in good faith. He then said, "That leaves us with the issue of your conflict. Are you ready?" The reporter said. Sure. You, he said, are a vice chairman of the Communication Workers of America union.

He's got me, sort of. Like most reporters of The New York Times, I'm a member of the Newspaper Guild, which is a part of the Communication Workers of America, which has about 140,000 members in the Northeast. I receive no union pay, and I have no duties. I'm also a Knicks season ticket holder and a Cablevision cable customer. I pay far more to Mr. Dolan's companies than I pay to my union in dues.

Ms. Johnson feels guilty. She's persuaded her colleagues to risk being fired. She speaks of waking in the middle of the night and of bills piling up. Her husband is a freelancer. They depend on her health benefits. "It's stressful. The air in our house is very thick," she says. "Sometimes I break down." Ms. Johnson said, and asks herself if she's been selfish. "But my husband reminds me: 'You have a home family and a work family. You must be loyal to both.'"

What's so significant about this case is the anti-worker attitude that Cablevision brought forth to its workers who voted by law to form a union. It was on January 30, over a year after 282 cable television technicians voted overwhelmingly to be represented by the CWA, that they illegally locked out and fired 22 technicians who were engaged in legally protected legal union activity.

After waiting more than 40 minutes, as the article explained, they were told that they were permanently replaced. Since then, five have been called back to work.

"Permanently replaced" usually refers to workers who are on strike, but none of these workers were on strike. In fact, some of the workers that were fired were already in the field on their jobs. This is a violation of Federal labor law which follows a year of management's delays and refusal to bargain in good faith with the elected union.

□ 1230

They illegally gave raises to every Cablevision technician except those in Brooklyn who voted to form a union in an attempt to blunt the Communications Workers of America's union-organizing drive that they were having in the Bronx. They left Brooklyn consumers behind with slower Internet speeds, and they publicly stated that they would disinvest in Brooklyn because of the unionization vote. They refused in negotiations to agree to even the most basic union contract demands, such as the union security clause and just cause for discharge and discipline.

Rather than negotiate a fair contract, Cablevision spent millions on anti-union lawyers to fight the union, and that's more than it would have cost to settle the contract. All Cable-

vision employees want is to be able to organize and be treated with respect and fairness, and all Cablevision seems to want to do is spend millions of dollars to take away those very rights. That's just one problem that we've seen with attempts to bust unions.

The reason we've seen that is due to a provision that has also happened just recently with this Senate in its blocking appointments to the National Labor Relations Board, which is the board that oversees what's going on. We've heard the case of the Brooklyn Cablevision story, but here is why it is especially significant. The reason Cablevision had that confidence in treating its workers so poorly is that it was part of a strategy of illegal firings and a lockout of the workers that stems from larger, recent judicial rulings in Washington, D.C., as part of a larger anti-worker strategy.

On January 25 of this year, in the Noel Canning ruling, a three-judge panel of Republican appointees to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit overturned a National Labor Relations Board unfair labor practice decision because the court deemed that three NLRB members who helped to decide the matter ascended to their positions due to unlawful recess appointments by President Obama in January of 2012. The ruling went on and destroyed the NLRB's ability to enforce U.S. labor law. As a result, Cablevision's firings were executed without fear of reprisal. Cablevision is merely the first company to recognize and to act on the fact that that ruling can be exploited by anti-worker corporations.

The real problem we have is that we can't get the appointments to the NLRB that the President has tried to make because the Senate has refused to place the people. They have taken advantage of the quorum of Senate-confirmed members, and they've made it exceedingly difficult to appoint these because of the 60-vote rule that they have in the Senate. Due to the GOP's unprecedented obstruction and use of the filibuster and secret hold, they essentially have made it impossible for people to be appointed to the NLRB so as to actually enforce the labor laws that are the law of the land in this country.

Now, it's not just the communication workers who have this story. I have a union in my State of Wisconsin, the Operating Engineers, who had a very similar story; and this is repeated across the country. These are workers with Local 139, with Proppant Specialists, which is a company in Wisconsin that has had a 3-year fight of trying to form a union in violation of U.S. law. The company has stopped them from being able to proceed.

They started back in October of 2010. They filed for a petition for election in April of 2011. They had an election in June of 2011 and voted to form the union, at which time people filed objections to some of the votes. That went

on for a period of time until the board decision on April 3, 2012. They certified the election on the 9th of April of last year and said that, indeed, the election after a year was a fair election. There are supposed to have been immediate timelines to have started negotiations for a contract with the union. It's the law of the land. Instead, the company refused to. They sent a letter to the union, declining the union's request for bargaining late in that month of April. The union then filed a complaint against the employer in May, and the investigation by the labor board had started at that point.

The problem is without the teeth of the NLRB, to this day, 3 years after starting this process, the workers who voted to form a union still don't have that right to the union that they have by the law of the land in this country because of what has happened with the NLRB.

Simply, we have to do something to fix this. We have to make sure that the President can appoint the people he has to appoint to the NLRB and make sure that those appointments are confirmed so that they can do their valid, prescribed-by-law jobs to ensure that workers have that right to unions when they vote on that.

Now, we know, if you had the Employee Free Choice Act in place in this country, you wouldn't have to worry about this because it would be very clear that they would be able to negotiate that contract and get that done. The problem is if that were the law of the land, despite support from a bipartisan majority of the House and a strong majority in the Senate, those same 60-vote filibuster rules would hold up the ability for us to pass an Employee Free Choice Act in this country.

So what has happened?

We have this toothless law which now is going to allow for more and more abuse that we're going to see. This isn't the only law that we've seen like this that has been abused. We've also seen an abuse in the State of Wisconsin, my State.

I was in the State legislature for 14 years before coming this year to be a Member of Congress. Two years ago, we had what we refer to in Wisconsin as the "uprising." Newly elected Governor Scott Walker at the time had a provision to fix the budget. We were slightly in deficit. We were not prescribed by law to fix it, but were close to that point. He decided to have a budget fix; but within that budget fix, he went way farther and attacked the middle class and the workers of the State of Wisconsin. He proceeded to, in that budget fix, put in a provision—one that, I think, the employees have said since they would have agreed to—for them to pay more for their pensions and health care, although that normally would happen through the bargaining process. Then he went as far as to take away their rights to collectively bargain for public employees, and he took away their ability in how they paid their dues to their unions.

What does paying your dues to a union have to do with a shortfall in the State budget of Wisconsin? Absolutely nothing—but Governor Walker abused his job in order to go after the public unions.

We have had collective bargaining laws in Wisconsin for over a half a century—and guess what? We've had labor peace for over a half a century in the State of Wisconsin, only until Governor Walker 2 years ago decided to take that attack on those public workers and their ability to bargain for the most basic rights. When you're talking collective bargaining rights, you're not just talking their wages, their health benefits, their pensions. You're talking their right to bargain for their workplace safety conditions.

I have visited many prisons in the State of Wisconsin, and I used to serve on the corrections committee. Those correctional officers work and put their lives on the line every day for the safety of my family and everyone else's in the State of Wisconsin. When they see a blind spot and when there's not a camera and when there's a security risk, they have to have that right to be able to negotiate for those safety concerns; but that was taken away. That's collective bargaining. It's simply someone's right to bargain for the most basic concerns, like worker safety.

So in Wisconsin, Governor Walker did that. We had the uprising. We call it the "uprising" because, within days of his announcement, we had 10,000, 20,000, 40,000 people come each day to protest the Governor's decisions. On one Saturday, we had 100,000. On another weekend, they estimated it could have been as high as 180,000 people who showed up around the State capitol and in the State capitol in order to protest losing their rights as employees to bargain for their laws.

What's interesting is that we knew when this fight happened that it was going to be a long and hard battle, but even more so, the Governor tried to be very strategic. He did this against all public employees, but he excluded police officers and firefighters because—let's face it—after 9/11, politically, those are two organizations that are viewed very respectfully by the public. So he tried to basically divide and conquer, but to the police and firefighters of Wisconsin, to their credit, they stood with every other worker and said, An attack on one of us is an attack on each and every one of us. Because they stood with us, it was a stronger, more cohesive effort. You had schoolteachers and State workers and correctional officers and people who worked for the DNR—the Department of Natural Resources—and every State agency standing with police and firefighters and families across the State.

Yet it wasn't having the rallies with 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 people that mattered; it was having the 800 people in Bayfield, Wisconsin. Now, if you haven't heard of Bayfield, Wisconsin, don't feel bad. We sometimes say this

is a map of Wisconsin. At the very tippy top of the State of Wisconsin, almost in Canada, is a town called Bayfield, but they had 800 people in this small community rally to show their support for workers.

□ 1240

So that is what is so important.

We saw the other consequences of this law. It was the private unions that also saw this problem because they knew what would happen. Just like the problem happening right now to the communication workers in New York, they knew this would happen in Wisconsin.

If first you take away the collective bargaining rights of the public employees, what kind of a signal is that to those companies that have negotiated in good faith with their workers to form private sector unions? Well, sure enough, we know exactly what happened. Within months, we saw unions, private sector unions across the State, start to start a fight with their union. In one particular case, we had a crane company, Manitou Crane, where they had one division, one of the unions that negotiates a contract with them in dispute, and they were going to stop production and do unpaid leave for members of other unions. Now, you can't do that. You shouldn't do that. But they went ahead to try to force that on the other workers in order to try to bust that union.

Mr. Speaker, those are the problems that we're seeing right now in this country.

There's another really strong example that we are seeing right now in this very body on a very regular basis, and this is the fight we're having on behalf of our United States Postal Service. There has been no question that there has been an attack on the Postal Service. And what happened essentially is a number of years back under the Bush administration, they had this idea to take the Postal Service, the Postal Service alone and no other agency in the Federal Government, and make them prepay their retirement system 75 years into the future.

Let me give you an example what that means. That means they're prepaying the pension of someone who is not born today for their retirement a half a century down the road. No other agency, no private company would do that; but we are requiring the Postal Service. So when you hear the Postal Service is losing money, almost every single dollar of those losses is due to the prepayment of this unusual requirement that only the Postal Service has to pay.

So what happens, the response, clearly I think this is an attempt to try to privatize the system. This is to completely take away a system that I think so many people have relied on for so many years in this country. But this is what we see happening.

Recently, we saw there was a move to go from 6-day delivery to 5-day delivery. When you start to cut back on

delivery, it has real ramifications on people, on what they're going to receive and the timeliness of what they're going to receive.

As a small business leader, again for 25 years of my life, many small businesses, especially in rural communities, count on the United States Postal Service to help them conduct their businesses so that they can hire the workers who work for them.

Here's an example. There's a place in Wisconsin called Brooklyn, Wisconsin. It's just outside Madison, Wisconsin, maybe half an hour. The people of Brooklyn, Wisconsin, need a post office even more than the people of Brooklyn, New York, because in Brooklyn, New York, there may be other alternatives. There may be stores that provide similar types of services, not necessarily mail delivery, but other types of delivery that they can go to. But in Brooklyn, Wisconsin, they don't have that luxury. That post office means everything. That small business operating out of Brooklyn, Wisconsin, having that means they can be in business and be able to hire the people in Brooklyn, Wisconsin. And that's Brooklyn. If you go to other rural parts of my district in Lafayette County, in Lafayette County, I guarantee, they have a problem with broadband so they can't necessarily even do an Internet-based business, so that post office means everything to them.

So when we see some of the attacks that are caused by this absolutely ridiculous requirement to pre-fund pensions into the future, 75 years into the future, that's why they are having financial difficulties. So there is a bill that I'm on, and others, called the Postal Service Protection Act of 2013. That act would not only maintain the 6-day delivery service we currently have, but it would also give the United States Postal Service the ability to reform its funding structure for their employee pensions. It also would direct them to use revenue to create innovative postal and non-postal products and services to generate new revenue sources.

Let's face it, we know things keep changing in how we are able to communicate and get information out to potential consumers for businesses, and to get out to your neighbors and friends. But allow them the ability to do that because if they can, they can make up for those shortfalls. But this absolutely unfair requirement they have puts more than 1,700 United States Postal Service workers in my Second Congressional District of Wisconsin—it puts their jobs in jeopardy. And for seniors and small businesses and those who live in rural areas, and those who rely on the Postal Service, it means a lot to have that post office, that 6-day delivery, and to have a service that's strong and affordable like it is in this country.

So, the Postal Service is yet one more of these attacks that we've seen.

The bottom line is thanks to organized labor—they have fought so much

for the people of this country, for the middle class—one might argue the reason we have a middle class is because of exactly what they've been able to do. Fighting for the very things that we talked about, things like a smaller work week, giving us that weekend, as I discussed at the beginning of this Special Order time that I've had to talk about labor, has been absolutely crucial.

We have seen the child labor laws that at one time put children as young as 5 years old in this country, their lives and limbs, at risk. In large part it has been corrected because of the labor movement over the years.

The fight for family medical leave, which is so important to families now. If you have a child, you adopt a child, you have a family member who is seriously ill and you want to spend that final time with that loved one, the reason we have that law in place is because of the efforts of organized labor and others.

The fact that we have work place safety through the OSHA laws, which is so important, that you can go to work and not have to expect because of that work to have less of a lifetime, that's been created because of labor's efforts, and so much more.

Now, I'm a proud member of the Painters and Allied Trades, the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. I'm a business owner and I'm a union member because I'm proud of the workers that I have. When people are paid a fair wage, you get much more of a result for your business. I know that I have long-term employees because, instead of trying to nickel and dime them and not treat them right, by paying a living wage, I get more than that back in return.

And one of the other challenges that unions have faced is this current economy, which is exactly why the Congressional Progressive Caucus introduced the back-to-work budget. Until we get people back to work, we have all of the other economic woes that are surrounded by that. The Painters and Allied Trades are part of the building trades within the union. There are public employee unions, there are private sector unions. But the building trades are the folks who are the bricklayers and the laborers and the operating engineers and the painters and the electrical workers and the carpenters. I could go on and on, and I apologize for the ones that I'm not listing, but those people who work every day in construction, which is one of the markets that's been the hardest hit through this economy, when the economy is good, people who work in the trades are working and they're doing well. But when the economy gets the sniffles, people in construction get a cold. And when the economy gets a cold, people in construction get pneumonia.

It's simply that much of a direct effect from how our economy is doing, which is exactly why we should here in this body not only support the labor

laws that we need to and appoint the people to the NLRB so we can enforce the laws we have in place and expand the protections for workers that we need to do in this very body, but we need to get the economy going so that more people are working. Because the more people who are working, that is going to strengthen and support the economy.

I've listened to people on the other side of the aisle, the Republican side, with their budget presentation this week. I know that they are very serious about wanting to address the issues that they address, from deficit reduction to some of the other issues. The problem is that they are going about it in completely the wrong way. You can reduce the deficit best by getting people back to work. In the Progressive Caucus budget, the back-to-work budget, we do just that. We invest in infrastructure. We invest in putting police and fire back to work. We invest in putting teachers back in the schools. We invest in infrastructure so that those people in the construction industry who are hit with double the unemployment that everyone else is right now can get back to work.

□ 1250

And I can tell you, from firsthand experience, why that investment means something. When Congress, several years ago, passed the Recovery Act and passed the dollars that came to communities to invest in communities, we saw the benefit in the State of Wisconsin.

I was the cochair of the Joint Committee on Finance, the committee that writes the State budget for the State of Wisconsin, and we had to approve every single dollar that came through Wisconsin to make sure it went efficiently to build roads, repair schools, and the other services that that funding helped provide.

And when we did that, we had a report from the road-building industry and the vertical construction industry—not exactly your most progressive or liberal organizations—that said 54,000 jobs were saved or created in the State of Wisconsin because of the recovery dollars and our State budget that year, but it was predominantly the recovery dollars.

So I was surprised when I sat in this room for my first-ever State of the Union Speech, and heard President Obama talk about the need for more investment in infrastructure, just like the budget the Democrats proposed, just like the budget the Progressive Caucus proposed.

When you talk about that investment, I saw a press release from our Speaker of this House who said that no jobs were created in this country from the last recovery dollars. Well, fortunately, the very next week, in the Budget Committee, which I serve on, we had Dr. Elmendorf, the head of the Congressional Budget Office, who is our official, nonpartisan, number-crunching agency, and I asked that question.

Is this true? Is this true that no jobs were created because of those recovery dollars?

And he said, according to their statistics, up to 3.3 million jobs were saved or created in this country because of that investment. So it wasn't just the 54,000 jobs in the road-building industry back home, much less the other industries. It is the nearly 3.3 million jobs that were helped because of our influx of cash because, at that time, face it, the economy was down.

If people aren't working, they're not spending money. If they're not spending money, businesses can't grow. If businesses can't grow, they can't hire workers. In fact, just the opposite, they were laying off workers, and it has a cumulative spiral effect down.

But because of those recovery dollars we were able to hold off how deep we fell and, since then, under this President, we have had consecutive job creation happening to try to make up for those very deep losses that we had at the end of the Bush administration.

But we still need to grow even faster, and that's why we need to continue to work this. When we continue to work hard on creating jobs, we are helping people to be able to help pay taxes and to bring the revenue in so that we can solve our deficit. That is the single best way to solve the deficit.

And again, that same Congressional Budget Office that we all go to, on both sides of the aisle, to get our facts and figures that we work off of, they're the ones who said three-quarters of the deficit we'll have in fiscal year 2014, that we just voted on a budget in this House today on, is caused by economic weakness. In other words, unemployment and underemployment. You fix that, you solve the deficit.

So we don't need to take away the Affordable Care Act and take away all of the benefits that you're going to have from the Affordable Care Act; the fact that an adult child at 26 can still be on a parent's policy, that if you have a preexisting condition, you still have access to health care in this country.

You don't need to repeal that in order to solve the deficit. In fact, just the opposite. We have savings in there that will help reduce the rising cost of health care, because that's a challenge.

I think everyone in this room would agree that we have a challenge of rising health care costs, but we can address that very primarily by keeping that law in place.

But the Republicans have taken that away. In fact, the Republican budget, it's been estimated, would cost 2 million jobs next year if it were to become law. We need a very, very different process and a very, very different place for this country to be.

As a small business owner, I have been an advocate in this House of saying, you can be pro-business, you can be pro-labor. I have a union business. And you can be a progressive. None of those are incompatible.

Again, to me, one of the smartest things that I was ever able to do, as a small business owner, was to have a union shop, because it allowed me to hire some of the best and most talented people, to offer them a fair wage so they can support their families, offer them good benefits so they have health care and are in a better place for their families. And it's a mutual respect that we have that allows it to continue.

It's so important that we have that respect for the people who work in this country, for the middle class, and for those who are aspiring to be in the middle class. That is the backbone of the country we have to fight on.

So when the Republican version of the budget, instead, is going to take trillions of dollars and put it on the backs of the middle class, it's the reason why the Democrats, instead, were looking at getting rid of some of the loopholes that are out there, whether it be the subsidies to Big Oil that we still do, the corporate jet loophole, that they still fund tax breaks for corporate jets, the fact that we give tax breaks to companies that send jobs overseas, none of that makes sense.

So the Democrats are working hard to try to take care of that, because we know that the backbone, again, is people getting to work in America, and part of the strength of that is the union movement that we have.

So I would hope that people would really realize that it is because of the labor movement that we have been able to benefit so very much from what has been able to support the middle class in this country.

There is so much more that unions are facing across the country, whether it be collective bargaining laws, the right to work less for less laws that we just saw happen in Michigan and other places. It's those sort of laws that sound good on the surface but really hurt the American worker. When you hurt the American worker, that's a serious problem.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, again, on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, we are so proud to have spent a little time to talk about the middle class and the American labor movement and what it's done for America.

We salute our brothers and sisters in organized labor, thank them for their efforts, and vow to continue to fight on behalf of the middle class, and to make sure that they all have protections and standards by following our laws and passing more laws that give workers a voice.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LABOR, LABOR LAW AND THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MASSIE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, again it's my privilege to address you

here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, this great deliberative body. And I listened to the presentation in the previous segment, it brought a number of things to mind that I expect I'll address because there certainly is a different viewpoint, as we all know.

But before I get into the breadth and depth of the topic matter, I'd be very pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION ADDRESSING SECURITY CONCERNS

Mr. PERRY. I thank the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to call attention to legislation addressing security concerns that were drawn out in the aftermath of the September 2012 attack on our consulate in Benghazi, Libya. As you know, terrorist attacks carried out that year took the lives, needlessly, of four brave Americans.

In December, the Accountability Review Board released its findings and recommendations. This Board found that, prior to the Benghazi attack, some senior State Department officials demonstrated, as they coin it, a serious lack of management and leadership ability that contributed to the inadequate security posture at the consulate.

Now, while this Board can recommend disciplinary action against State Department employees who are found to breach a duty, they also concluded that poor performance in the course of one's employment does not amount to such a breach of duty, which I find fascinating and completely unacceptable. As completely unacceptable as that is, it also requires legislation to change that.

So, while I disagree that it should require legislation, it does. And with that in mind, I have drafted a bill, with the help of the honorable gentlelady from New York (Ms. MENG) that adjoints these criteria.

With this legislation, if the Board finds that a State Department employee's unsatisfactory performance or misconduct has significantly contributed to a security incident, the Board can recommend that the employee be disciplined appropriately. I would ask, at this time, that all our colleagues join us in supporting this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his presentation here. And as I listened to his presentation, the Benghazi incident comes to mind. And whether this is relevant or not is a question that I'm not necessarily prepared to answer, Mr. Speaker.

But I do want to make a statement on Benghazi. And I would remind people that we lost an Ambassador, we lost other brave Americans. We had multiple injuries and casualties there that perhaps, they run in numbers that might be counted in the dozens.