

provide the transparency to applicants so they know where they're at, and address the adverse decisions by a chief of missions so people have a chance to correct the record.

Make no mistake—this is urgent.

Just yesterday, on the front page of *The New York Times*, there was the story about an Afghan interpreter named Sulaiman, who has been working with us in Afghanistan for over a decade in over 300 missions in highly dangerous Special Operations assignment. Over the course of the last few years, the Taliban has attempted to kill Sulaiman three times; but despite his exemplary service and the extreme threat to his life, that visa we created is not functioning for him. After 2 years, he remains in limbo, with no visa and the program set to expire. Only 22 percent of the Iraqi visas and 12 percent of the Afghan visas have been issued. These are ready to go.

Last fall, *The Post* reported that over 5,000 documentarily-complete Afghan applications remained in a backlog. No doubt, the past performance is abysmal, but we have an obligation to extend and reform the programs and to make sure we give the resources necessary to deal with the understandable paperwork involved.

This bipartisan issue offers Members of Congress and the administration the chance to work together to save lives and ensure the safety of our troops currently serving in harm's way and future missions abroad. Otherwise, no one in their right mind is ever going to cooperate with U.S. forces under these circumstances.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S FY14 BUDGET PROPOSAL ON NUCLEAR WASTE

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Department of Energy's budget proposal on nuclear waste. It's a joke—but as a representative of nuclear electricity consumers and taxpayers, I don't find it funny.

DOE Assistant Secretary Peter Lyons says we should "cut our losses and move on" from Yucca Mountain. We've spent \$15 billion on Yucca Mountain, but this administration says we should just give up and go try somewhere else, hoping some other State will be a willing host. The DOE budget proposes spending \$5.6 billion over the next 10 years to start over and maybe, just maybe, have a permanent repository by 2048.

The details provided for this new plan are scant to say the least—14 pages. DOE proposes to abandon \$15 billion and 30 years of work, start over, create a new government entity to be responsible, and find willing States to host two interim storage facilities and a repository—all within 14 pages. I consider it brainstorming, not a plan. It's certainly not something that justifies

\$5.6 billion. In addition, DOE has repeatedly stated the need for Congress to pass legislation, but has yet to propose any. That shows the administration is not trying to solve this problem, just avoid it by pointing the finger at Congress.

Nuclear electricity consumers pay for a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel. What would they get after spending another 10 years and \$5.6 billion? A pilot interim storage facility with limited capacity.

□ 1020

A pilot facility? Dry cask storage, the same technology that will be used at the interim storage facility, is currently used at 65 locations. As for transportation, the U.S. nuclear industry has completed 3,000 shipments of used nuclear fuel over 1.7 million miles of roads and railroads. What's the purpose of having a pilot facility?

The only other pilot facility is the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico. I've been there, and it's an impressive facility. But that pilot project became a permanent facility with a 10,000-year environmental standard. Given that backdrop, does DOE really think some unsuspecting State will actually fall for the idea that a pilot interim storage facility will truly be temporary?

But \$5.6 billion doesn't begin to address the real costs hidden in this proposal. Instead of merely paying for a repository, nuclear electricity consumers will now have to write off the cost of abandoning the Yucca Mountain site where we've spent \$15 billion. DOE's previous estimates for transportation were \$19 billion; so if DOE is now going to have to transport it twice, once to an interim storage and then later to a repository, ratepayers will be on the hook for an extra \$19 billion. All this, plus the \$5.6 billion in the budget, equals \$39.6 billion.

And that's just the bill for nuclear electricity consumers. Taxpayers will continue to pay for the liability costs of DOE's failure to provide disposal. That cost is \$2.6 billion so far and projected to be \$20 billion by 2020. The Government Accountability Office tells us that it's faster to finish Yucca Mountain than to start over with interim storage. Yet this administration prefers to start over, disregarding the cost to the taxpayer.

Electricity consumers and taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for President Obama's campaign promise to HARRY REID, certainly not \$39.6 billion worth. Mr. Speaker, DOE's proposal is a boondoggle at a time when our citizens can least afford it. I, for one, am not laughing.

Mr. Speaker, as we remember the tragic events of yesterday, we are reminded that there is sin and evil in the world. We pray for Boston, our country, and the world, but the business of the Republic must go on.

PROTECTING AMERICA

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to reflect again on yesterday's tragic and obviously painful events. I think it's important for our colleagues, and certainly for those we represent across America, to recognize that our attention on those issues are equal to the pain and the devastation that they represent. It is important to again offer sympathy to those who lost their loved ones, to those who still are under the care of the medical team in Boston, to the city of Boston, the State of Massachusetts, the mayor and Governor, my colleagues from the State of Massachusetts, and certainly the people there. You have our prayers and, again, our commitment to never cease until the perpetrator or perpetrators are brought to justice.

In saying that, I believe it is important that we proceed in a discussion that will also move this country forward, and that is to finally get to a point of passing a budget that eliminates, takes away, never to be seen again, this horrific sequester that the American people do not deserve.

Let me congratulate the President on having a humane budget, a budget that considers the needs of Americans. It is outstanding that he has offered a universal pre-K, having seen the tears of grown men when the sequester came through and their child was eliminated from Head Start, grown men, parents crying at the Head Start center. And everywhere I go in my district, people who are in charge of Head Start literally in pain about those that they have to eliminate from those positions because those families don't have the resources for private child care.

So I congratulate the President on his astuteness in recognizing the importance of that and recognizing to not stray away from the necessities of job creation and putting in place major transportation jobs and infrastructure jobs: passenger rail, which I am so passionate about; surface transportation; and a most important one, rebuilding your neighborhoods and communities and cities where jobs are in short demand and where the infrastructure and the city is crumbling.

I want to congratulate the President for his saving of Medicaid and ensuring that seniors who are in nursing homes will be protected. But, more importantly, that those without health insurance will have the ability under the Affordable Care Act to ensure that they will have that.

But I serve as well on the Homeland Security Committee, and I think it is important to say and be honest that the sequester is devastating to America's homeland security. It is good to have a budget that respects those needs, but it is important to tell the truth. We are desperate when it comes to recognizing the needs of our Border Patrol agents and the numbers, even at

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21,000, that we may need to increase, that there are Border Patrol agents being removed from the front lines in order to process those individuals who have come across the border. When they do that, they remove the coverage from the front lines on the border dealing with those who are in those detention centers.

We have to recognize that transportation security, as much as one might say how many officers they have, in the sequester, we will be standing in long lines, and it is about to come. That is the front lines of securing this Nation, along with the Coast Guard and many, many other facets of the Department of Homeland Security.

We are asked a question about the securing of the homeland. We are feeling the pain along with our colleagues of the tragedies that have occurred, the attempted Times Square bombing, the successful bombing in Boston. We cannot take this anymore, and I believe it is time, with the President's budget, the Senate's budget, the House budget, that the Speaker of the House needs to immediately appoint budget conferees to move us forward to conference and to get rid of the sequester, which is not the fault of the American people.

Our deficit is going down. We need to determine what revenue we can increase in order to pay our bills and provide for the basic necessities of this Nation. Not only is the tragedy in Boston one of human life, but it is a disaster that requires Federal Emergency Management aid, just as our continued friends in the Southeast and Northeast are still suffering from Hurricane Sandy and the atrocity of this House not providing them with resources for 65 days.

So I believe it is time for the American people to know that we do care. In order to care, you need to have budget conferees go through the budget process and begin to pass elements of the President's budget that speaks to the heart and mind of the needs of the American people.

I conclude by offering my deepest sympathy and my promise to those who suffer that America and its Congress must stand up to respond to your needs. I'm ready to do so, as my colleagues are, and we should do it now.

NATIONAL OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE WEEK

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

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to announce that this week, April 14 through April 20, is National Osteopathic Medicine Week. This week celebrates the contributions of more than 100,000 osteopathic physicians and medical students in the United States to the health of our communities.

There are many doctors in the House of Representatives, but as the lone osteopathic physician in Congress, I feel

it incumbent upon me to mark this week by raising awareness of the importance of osteopathic medicine.

The practice of osteopathic medicine was founded by Dr. Andrew Taylor Still in 1874, and over the past 139 years, osteopathic physicians have made significant contributions to the United States health care system. Osteopathic doctors have treated Presidents and Olympic athletes, contributed to the fight against AIDS, and continue to be involved on the front lines of our health care systems today. In fact, Dr. Martin Levine, immediate past president of the American Osteopathic Association, was part of the medical team at the Boston Marathon and was pressed into service, providing immediate care in the wake of yesterday's tragedy.

As osteopathic physicians, we take a holistic approach to medicine that focuses on the health of the whole person, and we are committed to improving the health of the communities we serve through education and awareness, as well as delivering quality health care services.

In light of the contributions made by osteopathic physicians to the health of our Nation, and this being their national week of recognition, I have introduced House Resolution 159, which calls on the House to support the designation of National Osteopathic Medicine Week.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the field of osteopathic medicine and supporting the designation of National Osteopathic Medicine Week.

□ 1030

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING'S "LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL"

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

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to join so many Americans across this Nation and this world in celebrating the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

After being arrested on April 12, 1963, Dr. King came across an article in The Birmingham News entitled "White Clergymen Urge Local Negroes to Withdraw From Demonstrations."

The eight White clergymen who authored that article were very critical of Dr. King and the others who demonstrated. They called the demonstrations "untimely and unwise."

These criticisms inspired Dr. King to pen a letter that was published upon his release on April 16, 1963. The letter became one of the most preeminent documents of the civil rights era. So today I join the voices around the world as I read in part from this beautifully written, masterful document, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticisms of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything else . . . But since I feel that you are men of genuine goodwill, and that your criticisms are sincere and heartfelt, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be a patient and reasonable term.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view that I am somehow an outsider coming in. I am in Birmingham because injustice is here.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interdependency of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what's happening in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives in the United States of America can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was not "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now, I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see with one another what one jurist said, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro.

The Negro has had many pent up frustrations and resentments and must release them. So let him march; let him make a prayerful pilgrimage to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides and try to understand why he must do so; let him release his frustration in a nonviolent way . . .

But though I was initially disappointed at being criticized as an extremist by you, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love?

Was not Amos an extremist for justice? "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel? "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice?

Perhaps the South, the Nation, and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I hope this letter finds you in strong faith. Let us all hope that the dark cloud of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will lift from our fear-drenched communities, and in some time not so distant, that the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great Nation in all of their succulent beauty.

Yours for the cause of peace and brotherhood.