

So this piece of legislation, part of the Make It in America agenda, does that extension and gives this certainty to businesses.

We also have the infrastructure bank being reintroduced by our colleagues here on the Democratic side. This is one of about two-dozen bills that the Democrats have introduced for the purposes of moving the economy by bringing the manufacturing back home. We also have the Patriot Corporations of America Act, by Representative SCHAKOWSKY from Chicago, that rewards companies when they bring the jobs back home. Previously and even today, American corporations can take a tax break for shipping jobs offshore. They don't get a tax break when they bring those jobs back home. We want to reverse that.

There is a series of bills. I call the attention of Congress to these bills, the Make It in America agenda, so that we can once again Make It in America, not only make things in America, but Americans can make it—infrastructure, a critical element of this.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. When you look at manufacturing, which the R&D component leads to partnerships with, you have two problems. One is it's year to year, so you can't plan your long term, as you said. But at the same time, the budgets for the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health have been inconsistent as well. Those are things that we need to ramp up. Those aren't huge money items, but those yield a lot of value.

So extend the R&D tax credit; beef up the National Science Foundation; beef up the National Institutes of Health; beef up the research in the Department of Energy. Public-private partnerships. Lay that groundwork for the private sector. Help the private sector.

We had a group of CEOs in last week who were in the semiconductor industry. They talked about the same thing, and they talked about the public-private partnerships and how that's needed for us to maintain our competitiveness here. These are good-paying jobs in upstate New York and other places, and these are the kinds of investments that we need to make. Again, we've got to get out of this mentality that every single thing that the government does is bad. There are some things, and it's the public-private partnerships that are going to ultimately lead the way for us.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Alexander Hamilton and George Washington had it correct: the American Government working with the private sector can make the difference.

When we talk about infrastructure, we have an opportunity this year, Congress and the President, to make a huge impact on American jobs. We are going to rewrite, in this session, the Surface Transportation Act for America.

□ 2000

Mr. RAHALL and I have authored a bill that we hope becomes part of that

Surface Transportation Act, that simply says: as we spend the taxpayers' money—this is money that is collected from the gasoline and the diesel excise tax—that that money be spent on American-made steel, concrete, bridges, buses, trains, whatever.

It can work.

One quick example. In the stimulus bill, there was an opportunity for Amtrak to buy new locomotives, about half a billion dollars to be spent on these new locomotives. In that section of the law, one sentence was added that said, These must be 100 percent American-made. Nobody was making locomotives in America before that, but Siemens, a German corporation, one of the biggest manufacturers in the world, said, Oh, half a billion dollars? We can make locomotives. In America? Sure.

In Sacramento, California, they opened a manufacturing plant. There are probably somewhere between 200 and 300 people working there today manufacturing 100 percent American-made locomotives. And on May 13, 3 years after they began this process, the first 100 percent American-made locomotive in probably more than a century rolls onto the tracks of America.

We can do this.

Mr. RAHALL's bill, H.R. 949, will provide that opportunity, American-made, using American taxpayer money. I also have another bill that does the same for solar and wind projects.

We can do these things; we just need to put our mind to it and get past this business of austerity. We cannot solve this problem of American jobs with an austerity budget. We've seen it fail in Europe, and we see it failing here in the United States as the long-term unemployment continues to harm 4.5 million Americans that have been out of work for more than 6 months and another 3 million that have been out of work for more than a year. We need an investment strategy, a Make It in America strategy, an investment strategy in those things that create long-term economic growth.

Mr. RYAN, I thank you very much for joining us this evening. If you'd like to wrap, and then I'll wrap, and then we'll call it a night.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I'd just add, lastly, that to me it's about exciting the country and getting the country excited about what the future of America is all about. Tax cuts for the top 1 percent of the people and austerity for the rest is not a vision for an exciting America that young people want to come into.

The private sector is going to be a huge part of this, but there are things that we need to start doing here. Whatever the percentage is that the government's role is in investments, I don't know what that number is, but we're not doing it, and there's no aspirational vision to excite young people to say, Man, we're going to the Moon, or we're going to go energy independent, or we're going to have high-speed rail

that's going to connect the entire country.

I think the President has desperately tried to provide that vision, only to be pulled down to the depths by some of the folks here who I think have a completely different agenda, and that agenda doesn't align with the America that was built over the past century or so.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. RYAN, I thank you so very much for joining us this evening.

We're still the strongest, best country in the world. There's no other place like America. And if we begin acting like we can and are a strong, robust, building, growing, dynamic country instead of being weak and pulling ourselves back and saying, Oh, we can't do it; we can't do it—no, we can do it. We can build. We can invest.

Every time we invest a dollar in infrastructure, we put Americans back to work and we give them an opportunity to take care of their family, to stay in their home, to provide for their children's education. When we do that, we create the foundation for future economic growth, whether it's education or research or building the infrastructure and making it in America. As we do these things, this agenda is the American agenda, the one that created this country.

As you so well said when you opened here: It's the American history. It's there before us. We can do it. We must do it. We owe it to the American people.

Mr. RYAN, thank you.

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

MAKING LIFE WORK FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be on the floor tonight for the next few minutes, and I hopefully will have some other colleagues joining me here in a few minutes. Tonight is about making life work for American families.

What are we doing on behalf of the American people here in the House of Representatives to make life a little bit easier for working families, working moms and dads? And let me just say that there are things across the board, whether it's health care issues, energy, reducing the deficit and the debt for Margaret and George, my two kids, and future generations, all of those things add up and matter.

I want to talk for just a few minutes about one proposal that I have in front of the House of Representatives that's going to come up for a vote here after we return from our district workweek. But before I do that, I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, tonight, that we're going to do something a little bit different in

an effort to engage individuals in their interest about making life work for American families.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that if someone wants to know more about what we're talking about tonight, the hash tag on Twitter is #makinglifework. We want to hear from the people that we represent, Mr. Speaker, throughout our time on the floor tonight. So I would just say to you again, Mr. Speaker, that any individual that would like to know more about what we're talking about or would like to engage in a conversation, it's #makinglifework."

Before I introduce my colleagues or get engaged in this conversation, I want to very briefly talk about the Working Families Flexibility Act of 2013, which is a bill designed to do just what we're talking about tonight, and that's make life work, make life a little bit easier for working moms and dads.

I'm a working mom, and my husband and I, every week, sit down and figure out what the plan is. We have an almost 8-year-old and a 4-year-old, and we certainly understand the pulls on the American family in balancing the workweek and our home life and supporting our children.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of families out there right now that would like choice in the workplace, hourly-wage employees that would like the choice in the private sector to exercise compensatory time—that's paid time off in lieu of cash wages. Right now, under current law, under the Fair Labor Standards Act, public employers can offer to their employees that option. In 1985, the Fair Labor Standards Act was amended to allow that. Private sector employees can't.

So, again, as a working mom who understands the pulls on family—maybe that T-ball game at 4 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon or the PTA meeting that's at 9 o'clock in the morning when my daughter's class is the one leading the charge on the entertainment for the PTA meeting—if I'm an hourly-wage employee and I want to exchange paid overtime for paid time off, I cannot legally, under the law, do that with my employer.

□ 2010

This amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act allows for the private sector to do what the public sector is already doing. Now, some of the opponents of this bill say that the big bad employer would use this to coerce employees into taking comp time rather than overtime pay. That is unlawful. The same protections that are in place currently under the Fair Labor Standards Act are the same protections that exist under our amendment preventing intimidation, coercion, and discrimination by the employer on the employee. And the most important thing about this bill is that it is voluntary. The employee is the only person who can opt to exercise this option if the employer chooses to offer it.

We know that this is not necessarily an option in every line of work. For example, if there's a manufacturer with 10 employees who actually make a product, if you pull one person off the line, they can't make the product, so it may not be a fit. But for those that want to, this amendment allows for that individual to say to their employer: I would like to enter into a voluntary written agreement with you to use compensatory time, to bank up to 160 hours within a 12-month period of compensatory time because time is more valuable than money to me.

And the greatest protection in this bill is if, in fact, that employee determines at any time that this isn't working, I'm not using my compensatory time or I can't find a time that works with my employer that fits, the time that I want to take off, that employee, Mr. Speaker, that employee can say: I want to cash out my compensatory bank time. So let's say they have 60 hours. They can cash out, and within 30 days their employer has to pay them time-and-a-half overtime for that banked accrual of comp time.

This bill makes sense. This bill is about helping working families. This bill is about allowing that mom and dad that are balancing T-ball games and PTA meetings as well as caring for their elderly parents. This bill is about getting military families ready to have one spouse deploy, to have the flexibility to do what they need to do. This is one example about how we are making life work for American families.

This bill doesn't solve our debt or deficit problem. I'm the first to admit that. But what this bill does is it eases some of the hardships on our moms and dads in the workforce, and I'm really thrilled to be the current author of this bill. It has a long history. I'm excited about taking it to the floor in 2 weeks.

Again, Mr. Speaker, for those who want to know more about tonight's discussion, the hash tag is #makinglifework. We want to hear from all Americans that are affected by any of these issues and look forward to addressing those throughout tonight's hour.

I want to let you know, joining me today I have the gentlelady from Washington, JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER, as well as the gentleman from Colorado, CORY GARDNER, and at this point, to my colleagues, I'd like to open this up.

CORY, I know that you currently serve on the Energy and Commerce Committee, and I know you have a couple of topics that you want to talk about, but let's talk about making life work for American families when it comes to energy.

Mr. GARDNER, I thank you for your leadership on this issue tonight, and I thank you for appealing to the American people so we can hear from them so that we can have conversations with people who are struggling to make ends meet, people who are finding innovations to make our economy work, to find those things that are going to lead

our country forward. It is a great opportunity and privilege to be here with you talking about ideas from the Working Families Flexibility Act that you mentioned that you're working so hard on—I am a proud cosponsor of that bill—but also ways that we are going to find solutions for people across this country who are raising families, trying to pay for college, trying to pay the energy bill for the month, and I think we in Congress have an incredible opportunity to get government out of the way and let America work, to unleash the innovators and the entrepreneurs around this great Nation.

Over the past couple of years, we've held dozens of town meetings, whether they're in southeastern Colorado, northeastern Colorado, the Denver metro area, the new parts of my district, talking to families who are struggling to make ends meet, people who have had to pick up a second job just to try to pay the bills.

As we talk about making life work—and I believe you said the hash tag was #makinglifework—I would love to hear from you, Mr. Speaker, and people around the country on what really does make life work for them and how we can help be a part of these solutions.

So, as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee from a district in eastern Colorado, I have been working on policies like energy to make sure that energy continues to be an affordable option for families, an affordable commodity, whether it's manufacturing, whether it's simply going home after work to turn the heat on during a cold winter.

I drove this morning from Yuma, Colorado, all of the way to Denver. It usually takes about 2 hours. This morning it took about 4 hours thanks to another big snowstorm. Here we are late April, and the heat is on, and what we're doing to make energy affordable so families can afford that, so that families in the middle of summer can afford to run their air conditioner and drive to the family baseball game. It is about creating opportunities for families.

We have an incredible energy renaissance in this country, a revolution, really, when you're talking about energy.

In eastern Colorado, we have seen new technologies that can produce American resources that must and have to be a part of an all-American energy plan, an all-American energy plan that will rely not on somebody thousands of miles away from us, not on somebody overseas, but right in our own backyard—our neighbors, maybe other family members, people in our communities who can produce the energy that we use each and every moment of our lives to better the lives of our families, to create the next product that will ignite an entire economy. But we can't do that unless we have an affordable energy policy. That's why an all-American energy plan is so important, and that's why it's an absolute

and fundamental key to making life work for so many people across this country—what we can do with natural gas, a clean burning fuel developed and extracted right in Colorado, what we can do to use the oil, the wind power, the solar power that we are utilizing in Colorado to make life work for families.

And how does life work? I think we're all facing that each and every day. I have two kids, struggling to get from place to place, trying to make sure, whether it's our daughter's schoolwork, whether it's our son, trying to teach him how to ride the tricycle. He's young enough, we're trying to teach him that. But we all struggle each and every day, how we are, indeed, going to make life work. And part of it is energy, what we can do to create a policy in this country that will develop a cheap, abundant, affordable policy that allows businesses to grow. It's an exciting future that we face, knowing that we can do that right here in our own backyards.

Mrs. ROBY. Right. I can tell you as the mom of two kids as well, every week when I get on a plane to come back to Washington, there is a lot of planning that goes into it. I put the gas in my car; I go to the grocery store; and when it comes to energy, I can watch energy prices affect the cost of food.

One of the things that I do every week just to ease some of the juggle in our lives is I try on the weekends to cook a few things. I love to cook, and I try to make life a little bit easier by having a few things in the refrigerator already made that I do over the weekend. So usually my grocery store visit is on Saturday and Sunday. I tell folks that sometimes it can amount to a town hall. You get in the produce section and you have great conversations with your constituents.

But I can see what the gentleman from Colorado is saying as the price of milk goes up. If gas prices are increasing, then the cost of food is affected.

□ 2020

I can tell you, and your wife would say the same, thanks for helping us in your role on Energy and Commerce.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. I'm glad you mentioned that because I too believe that we need to be about the business of the American people and helping them make life work, which means helping them in their day-to-day activities, not making it harder for folks to survive.

I'm from southwest Washington; and in our neck of the woods, we have a lot of working-class families who, like CORY mentioned, are struggling to make ends meet. We all know people who have been or are unemployed, where both parents, one or both parents are out of work, or one or both parents are trying to work.

People are working two jobs; and still they're working longer and harder, but not getting paid more for it. So

folks are draining their 401(k)s to make their mortgage payments. This is the climate in which we find ourselves, and that's why it is so, so, so important, like the gentleman from Colorado said, that we employ an all-American energy strategy.

And the irony is we can do it here and now. There's no reason to wait, which is why I also have joined the gentleman. We are on the House Energy Action Team, or the HEAT Team, which is a group of like-minded Members who believe we need that all-American energy approach, and we need it now.

You spoke to some natural gas issues. I'll tell you, in my neck of the woods, in the great Northwest, we get a majority of our energy from clean, renewable hydropower. And the best thing about this clean, renewable hydropower is it's inexpensive compared with most other forms of energy, especially renewable energy. So not only is it carbonless and it's clean, but it's inexpensive, and it is constantly renewed in our backyard.

I wanted to point some of these things out because I don't believe hydropower always gets its due, especially among the renewables, but just as a base load energy source in the Nation.

Hydropower is America's largest source of renewable energy. It's American energy. It's produced in America. The jobs that go into producing it are American jobs, and it's utilized here in America. It makes up 65.9 percent of all renewable energy in the United States, and it provides more than 30 million homes in the U.S. with inexpensive power.

Hydro is clean. It avoids nearly 2 million metric tons of carbon emissions every year. This is a tremendous opportunity for us.

It's not only important for families. It does keep our energy bills low and affordable. But it's important for manufacturing. We have, in southwest Washington, in my area, in Camas, and in Vancouver, a growing tech sector. We've traditionally been known for our forests and our beautiful Doug fir stands, but we are also now becoming known for our silicon forest. We're manufacturing chips.

One of the reasons some of the large chip manufacturers have come to southwest Washington, as opposed to India or China, is because of the inexpensive energy, because of the hydropower. We need to not only protect it, but promote it as part of the all-of-the-above energy approach which, again, is all-American energy.

Another area when we're talking about—I mentioned clean types of renewables, biomass. Woody biomass is a by-product of the timber that we have in the Great Northwest. It's another area where we can produce carbonless or low-form energy. And it's in our backyard. We have an abundant source. It's an American energy source.

Another by-product of timber manufacturing is black liquor. And it's not

liquor that you drink; it's liquor that can go into helping produce energy.

These are the types of ideas and solutions that are going to make energy affordable for the average American family. These are the types of solutions that cause us, rather than to put onerous rules and regulations on—oh, I could name a few that cause our energy to spike up and cause Americans to pay more—these are the types of solutions that actually meet the environmental standards, but also reduce the cost of the average power bill.

I don't know about you—you could probably speak to this, MARTHA—but, man, our energy bills have gone through the roof, and there's no reason when we've got American energy right here in our backyard.

Mrs. ROBY. Sure. And I can reiterate all of the points that the gentlelady from Washington makes. And you're right. These are all things that contribute to making life work for American families.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, as we're having this conversation, I'm getting information from folks that want to make life work. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind all of us in this room that we remain committed to cutting spending and reducing the deficit and getting our debt under control. This conversation really all encompasses just that.

Margaret and George and all of the families represented in this room tonight, they're the ones that we want to get this under control for because, Mr. Speaker, we want this country to be great for them as it has been for all of us.

But, at the same time, there are things that fall under Federal jurisdiction that we can be doing to ease the burden on American working moms and dads; and that's the things that we're talking about tonight, the Working Family and Flexibility Act of 2013, energy solutions that are out there.

We're going to talk about health care and tax reform. We're joined by Mr. YOUNG from Indiana. Thank you for coming. Please join the conversation.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. It's great to be with the gentlelady, and thank you so much for having me.

Does the gentlelady yield here? I know we've got less formal procedures under way.

Mrs. ROBY. We don't have to yield. You can just talk.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Okay. Well, great. This is the great American family room, if you will, where we're sitting around and having a family conversation, the people's conversation, about making life work.

And I would absolutely agree, there are a lot of dimensions to this topic. We've got to get our spending under control. Republicans have put forward a bold budget to make that happen, bring our budget into balance within just 10 years.

We need to stop imposing overly costly, overly burdensome regulations

on American families, American businesses and so on.

We, of course, need to take a look at our energy policy and open up this bounty of resources here in this country; and there's a whole variety of different ones. My colleague from Washington, the gentlelady, just spoke to some in her region.

Of course, in my region, coal remains a viable and important resource; but we're finding increasingly that my constituents in Indiana's Ninth District are enjoying the benefits of natural gas, and very affordable natural gas.

We happen to have oil and gas resources in this country, by some reckoning, that are larger than Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia combined. This will make the United States of America a net energy exporter within just 10 years. So that is a blessing that, once again, Republicans are leading with respect to harnessing these resources we have.

Of course, our human resources are another thing that we could touch on. But, really, my point of emphasis, since I'm on the Ways and Means Committee, this evening is going to be tax reform.

We just finished getting through yet another tax day, and I'm sure my colleagues heard from their constituents just how convoluted and complicated and frustrating and unfair this Tax Code can be to working families.

I was struck by—there's this notion of tax freedom day that some of our colleagues and certainly our constituents are aware of. This is when we, as hardworking taxpayers, stop paying the Federal Government and can start working for ourselves. And it fell on April 18 this year; 3½ months into the year is when our taxpayers stop paying the Federal Government and can start working for themselves and their families. That suggests to me that we need to work on all fronts to grow this economy more and also to lighten the burden of taxation wherever possible.

Tax simplification is something I'll get into in a little bit, and that's part of our overall tax reform effort.

But with that, I'll yield to my good friend from Colorado. Perhaps you have other thoughts on taxation or other things that are related to our making-life-work theme tonight.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank the gentleman from Indiana for coming and joining us on the floor tonight.

Mr. Speaker, as we said, there are people across the country who are joining the conversation about making life work. They're sending tweets with #makinglifework. In fact, we're hearing from people who are indeed talking about tax reform on this very issue, talking about what it means to work under a Tax Code that can be pro-job creation, that can actually lift the burden on American families by creating a fairer, flatter system.

And so whether you're a small business who's just getting started, or you're a small business that's been

around for a while, the fact is the more the burden that you pay from the government, whether it's a higher income tax, or you're a subchapter S, and you're paying at the individual level, that's less money that you get to spend investing into job creation, into expanding your employees, the number of people you have working for you, the salaries that you can provide for them, the insurance, the benefits that you can provide.

□ 2030

And so, really, tonight's discussion about making life work is what we're doing to create a fair system that looks out for everyone and that looks out for people who are making minimum wage so that they won't be making minimum wage for long. They'll actually be getting a pay increase because their business is growing, because their salaries are able to go higher, because they're more successful in developing a product and manufacturing. And so a Tax Code that is pro-growth. Pro-growth economics can lead to that. And I know you're in a great position to lead that discussion.

Mrs. ROBY. I want to say to both gentlemen, what we're talking about tonight is kitchen table stuff. Americans all across this country sit down across the table from their loved one and they balance their budgets. Why do we hold the Federal Government to any standard other than that?

We're addicted to spending. We are on an unsustainable path for the next generation. Tax reform, energy, and removing burdens on the working families are all such important concepts to making life work for American families.

We're joined by another colleague. I just want to introduce our newly elected Member of the House of Representatives joining us in the 113th Congress, Mrs. ANN WAGNER, the gentlelady from Missouri. Please join us in this conversation and offer your perspective.

Mrs. WAGNER. I'd be pleased to. Thanks so much for sponsoring this Special Order and talking about making life better and for working Americans across this country.

I'm a proud freshman Member of the 113th Congress, and we were elected to tackle the big problems. There is no bigger problem facing our country right now than getting hardworking Americans back to work with the skills they need during this tough economy.

Today, the Federal Government currently operates more than 50 different job training programs, many of which are duplicative, at a cost of some \$18 billion annually to taxpayers. With nearly 20 million Americans unemployed or underemployed, it's time to cut through the red tape and start training individuals with the skills they need to find high-paying middle class jobs. That's why this House in the 113th Congress passed the SKILLS Act. It streamlines 35 overlapping job training programs, including many that

were identified by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office, and eliminates unnecessary red tape so that State and local resources go directly to help those that are actually seeking jobs.

According to a report released by my home community, St. Louis, by the community colleges there, 76 percent of employers found that workers lacked the proper training to contribute right away. And the most in-demand certificates for job openings, believe it or not, were for registered nurses. I think it's time that we start investing in nurses, medical assistants, manufacturing technicians, and computer support specialist jobs, and stop wasting billions and billions of dollars every year on ineffective government programs that do little to train individuals with the skills they need to succeed.

I believe it is past time for the Senate to take up this SKILLS Act, to do its job and pass commonsense legislation that puts America back to work, #makinglifework.

Mrs. ROBY. That's great. I serve on the Education and Workforce Committee. Of course, that bill was reported out, as well as the Working Families Flexibility Act. Again, kitchen table stuff. We've got to balance our budget. Everybody here tonight voted in favor of a budget that would balance in 10 years. We understand that that's the key.

We're about to enter into a district work week, and I'd love for the gentlelady from Washington to speak on this because you always have great examples of this, too, but we're all about to get on the plane or get in our cars and go home for the week. And we're going to be with our small business owners and with our employees. Quite frankly, the employers, yes, they provide the jobs. The employees, we need to spend a little bit more time talking about those moms and dads sitting at the table, making it work. And they are the ones who are suffering at the hand of these duplicative programs that are sucking up precious taxpayer dollars that—at the end of the day we can be doing a much more efficient job of helping American families and making life work.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Absolutely. Here's the thing that's frustrating to me and frustrating to every American. They look at Congress and they think okay, we're sending, as we all were reminded recently, hundreds of thousands of dollars from each community, millions of dollars from each community, here to Washington, D.C., and they expect us to do something effective with that money or—here's a novel concept—send it back.

The gentlelady from Alabama mentioned the fact that for the first time this House Republican Congress voted on a budget that balances within a decade. It shouldn't be novel, but it is. Every family that's watching us right now is saying, You guys are patting

yourselves on the back for that? We do that every year. Every State legislature does it every year. But it was novel to do it here.

And here's the interesting thing. When members of our caucus got to sit down with the President a month or so ago and ask him about his budget that he released to the American people, his budget doesn't balance. Ever. And we know why this is important. It's because balancing the budget will help us grow jobs. Balancing the budget will help American families grow and thrive and prosper. It's going to help businesses in southwest Washington and throughout this country grow and hire more people.

We know that a bloated government that then keeps coming back to everybody's back pocket and says, I want a little bit more of this, you're my piggy bank—we know that that kills jobs, which is why it's pretty simple. We need to do what every family is doing, every kitchen table conversation: balance our budgets so more jobs can grow and America can thrive.

Mr. GARDNER. I think making life work boils down to what you're talking about, which is the issue of fairness. What's happening to our families, our businesses, our neighbors as the debt grows, as taxes grow. The fact is it is absolutely unfair to pass on so many unanswered problems to the next generation, to pass on \$52,000 worth of debt to our kids and our 18-month-old son or a 9-year-old daughter. It's unfair to them and to future generations.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Unfair. As Republicans, we do often look at posterity. We're talking about the next generation. And we should. But I will argue that it's actually unfair to today's generation, to the 67-year-old who just retired with the private-sector job and has a 401(k). The inflation that's coming from this debt is going to hit him and his wife, who were savers. It's unfair to the teacher in a public school classroom when the Federal Government makes promises it cannot keep. It overspends, overspends, and then it's going to cut her hours, add to her class sizes.

All we have to do is look at Greece or Cyprus. It can happen—and it will happen—if we don't get this under control now.

Mrs. ROBY. Let's talk about one other thing, and I'm sorry to open another door, but I think it's important because of what you heard on airplanes today, about the sequester and what's going on in defense spending. Can we talk just a minute about our military families?

You're talking about making life work. The people that we have a direct charge to make life work for are those who sacrifice on behalf of all of our freedoms and their families—our military men and women.

I'm going to circle back to the bill, the Working Families Flexibility Act of 2013. Think about that military mom or dad that's getting ready to deploy

and they're an hourly wage employee, and they don't have, under the current law, the option to exercise compensatory time. Yet their spouse is about to leave for a 1-year deployment to Afghanistan, and they've got to get their house in order. They've got to have flexibility to handle life outside of their job, whether it's their children or their aging parents, while their spouse is deployed.

Let's talk about making sure that those men and women, as they're deployed, have everything that they need to accomplish the mission that we've given them. And yet through the sequester we know that we are going to have a smaller force. And our commanders say not less capable but we're going to have to make some really tough decisions about where we are in the world and what we can do with our capabilities.

And I'll just tell you, all you have to do is go to the military installation closest to your home and look into the eyes of that spouse whose family member is currently deployed in harm's way, and it will change our outlook, as it should.

□ 2040

Making life work for military families, making life work for Margaret and George, my kids, and yours, that's what we're talking about tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just remind that we are, throughout this discussion, looking on Twitter, #makinglifework, taking input, Mr. Speaker, from our constituents as we have this conversation.

I yield to the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Well, you said so many things that really strike a chord with me. And I know, based on my consultations and visits with my constituents, they certainly do. One is the importance of funding the essential functions of government. I mean, we are the party of smart government. We've put forward specific proposals in order to rationalize different departments, make things run more efficiently, ensure we get more bang for our buck in every department of government, and avoid the duplication and wastefulness that so alienates so many of our constituents.

There's nothing we can do that would more undermine the credibility of government as an institution—and the Federal Government in particular—than to waste money and to spend it in areas where our constituents don't want us to spend it. So our national defense is essential. That benefits working families on a daily basis. It certainly benefits our military families, but really benefits all of us. That's something we have to be very careful with as we approach these different fiscal challenges. So I applaud my colleague for her leadership in this area.

Mrs. ROBY. All you have to do is pull out your copy of the Constitution, and what does it say? Our charge as Mem-

bers of Congress is to provide for a strong national defense. If we're not taking care of those men and women in uniform who have fought and died for the very freedoms that allow for us to stand in this room today and talk about making life work, if we don't have enough respect for that, to do our job in Congress and set priorities when it comes to wasteful spending on behalf of them, then we all need to take a long, hard look at ourselves in the mirror.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. You know, my constituents, and yours too, they don't mind paying taxes if they get the sense that we're spending those taxes on the essential functions of government and we're spending absolutely no more than required. They also wouldn't mind paying their fair share of taxes if in fact complying with the Tax Code were a simple exercise and one that seemed by most Americans to be a fair exercise.

Having just passed tax day here, I'll share a couple of semi-humorous comments about what the American family could do instead of filing taxes, if they had taken all those 13 hours on average per American family and instead been able to use that for themselves.

An average American family, instead of filling out their Tax Code, could have watched the entire "Harry Potter" movie series twice, and they'd still have time for two "Hunger Games" movies. Or they could have watched all six "Star Wars" movies three times. Or they could have lost weight if that's where they want to spend their time. If the time was spent in a spinning class, the average American, we're told, could lose 14 pounds per man and 11.8 pounds per woman, respectively. They could fly between Hong Kong and New York three times. This just illustrates how darn painful complying with this convoluted, complicated, and unfair Tax Code can be.

I like to say that our Tax Code in a way makes those who sit down at the kitchen table and actually do their own taxes—most people actually have to hire a tax preparer or buy tax software these days—but it makes the average American feel like either a crook on one hand or a sucker on the other.

So consider the case of John and Jane. John and Jane are neighbors; they make the exact same amount in personal income. But John decides he's going to itemize his deductions and he takes several credits—he's sort of aggressive when he's filing his taxes. Jane, on the other hand, she takes a standard deduction and fairly limited credits. Now, John is left feeling like a crook. He might feel like he's run afoul of the law. He did his best to follow it, but he might be left to feel like a crook as a result of the whole tax exercise. Jane, on the other hand, knows that John ends up paying far less in taxes even though he makes the same amount, so Jane feels kind of like a sucker. What sort of code makes you feel like either a crook or a sucker?

We have to stop this nonsense, simplify the Code, and reduce the rates in the process to make us more competitive vis a vis our international competitors. That's what we're doing in the Ways and Means Committee, and I invite our Democrat colleagues to help. I actually see a lot of room for common ground here, and I hope that they will join us in this exercise.

Mrs. ROBY. To the gentleman from Indiana, we appreciate the hard work that you're doing on the Ways and Means Committee. All of us here look forward to helping making life work for American families through a simpler, flatter, fairer Tax Code that does just that.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. And not making them feel like crooks and suckers, right? I mean, that's part of what we're here to talk about tonight. I think the gentlelady may have some comments on that.

Mrs. WAGNER. Absolutely. We're all reminded, with tax day having just passed, that we do need a Tax Code that is fairer, that is simpler, that we don't have to hire accountants and lawyers and go through thousands of pages of code in order to comply with the law.

We must remain competitive in society. We must cut through the red tape. Whether it's lowering tax rates for hardworking Americans and businesses and job creators or whether it has to do with cutting through overregulation—which is running rampant through our government—we've got to do things that cut waste and not workers. That's why making life work for Americans is so very important.

Balancing our budget, living within our means, I will tell you every family, every hardworking middle class family in the Second District is working hard to figure out how to make those tennis shoes last another 6 months. The dishwasher may be broken; but you know what, they'll wash them in the sink until they've got the money to pay for it.

There are private sector job creators, there are working families everywhere, there are State governments that are living within their budget, living within their means. It's time that the Federal Government balances their budget and lives within their means. Only the House budget balances within a 10-year period of time and cuts the kind of waste that needs to be cut instead of cutting workers and making sure that the American Dream is available for all Americans.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. I think this is one of the challenges we're facing is all Americans are looking at Congress saying why is it that we're sending all this money to Washington, D.C. Why are we having to live within our means and the Federal Government doesn't. In fact, what they see is the Federal Government cutting direct services, whether it's to military families, whether it's services in airports, whether it's security at parks. They're not cutting fat.

See, this is what's frustrating to me; the IRS operates a 24/7 satellite TV studio in their building. Across the street from the IRS, the EPA operates its own 24/7 satellite studio to the tune of \$4 million a year. Rather than maybe combine those two or share that one studio and save the taxpayer dollars, it seems like the administration is cutting those services that Americans expect and have already paid for. It's really time that the Federal Government learn to live within its means because it's going to help us grow jobs.

Mrs. ROBY. I just want to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that tonight we are grateful to be on the floor talking about making life work. Mr. Speaker, one of the ways that we're doing that tonight is engaging our constituents through #makinglifework. We want to hear, as we continue through this discussion, from the people from Missouri's Second District or Alabama's Second District or the other districts represented in this room, Mr. Speaker. We want to hear from those folks as we continue this conversation tonight about how to make life work on behalf of Americans.

As I've talked about on several occasions tonight, the Working Families Flexibility Act, which will be on the floor for a vote in 2 weeks, is about a voluntary agreement between an employer and an employee, only at the option of the employee, in the private sector—which is currently not legal, and the private sector removing this regulation so that employee has the opportunity to say, you know what, time is more precious than money. As a working mother with two small kids, I get that. I get that and I can relate to that.

This bill is about allowing in the private sector that employer and that employee to come to an agreement and that employee exercising their right to say I'd rather have comp time, paid time off, than overtime payments and cash payments.

□ 2050

So we're talking about not just through tax reform or energy or health care—all of these things that have been discussed tonight—we're talking about how do we make life just a little bit easier for hardworking tax-paying Americans? They sit around their kitchen tables, balance their budgets, live within their means, and the Federal Government, quite frankly, doesn't do that, and we should be held to that same standard.

Mr. GARDNER. One of the things that I hear constantly from people around my district and around the country about Making Life Work is, what we are doing to get credit to businesses who are hoping to expand and the challenges that they may face. I just, in fact, heard this through some comments on #makinglifework, people responding to the conversation that we were having, worried about credit issues, worried about what's happened to their small businesses.

I've introduced legislation that would create a small business savings account to make sure that we can incentivize people to save money and to put it directly into job creation so that they will be able to save and have some benefit for that savings by actually not paying a tax on the gain when they invest it into a savings account or some other kind of savings or investment vehicle. But it's a way to save money and put it directly into job creation.

Other people have contacted us about regulations. You mentioned regulations. And I think it goes back again to that very issue of fairness, of what we are doing to look out for people who don't have a voice and to look out—

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Sorry for interrupting there, but you struck a chord when you said "regulations."

We know what the American people want. They want fewer hassles, fewer burdens, fewer mandates from on high. They want more flexibility, more walking around cash, they want more choices, they want more hope for themselves and their children and grandchildren.

With respect to regulatory reform, this impacts daily lives in a very big way. We typically hear about it in the context of how it's going to hurt your corporations or sometimes your small businesses. I happen to represent a district with a lot of rural areas in it. Not a week goes by that I don't hear a farmer complaining about some of the regulations in the pipe.

We've had recent attempts by our Federal Government to try and regulate milk spills like oil spills, and to regulate the dust that comes across fields in rural areas.

Mrs. ROBY. My farmers in Alabama are very, very familiar with all those regulations. We've worked hard through the Committee on Agriculture to do all that we can to remove that heavy hand of the Federal Government. Our farmers just want to farm.

Let me tell you, when we talk about national security, the day that our farmers in the United States of America can't feed, not just the world, but can't feed America, do you want to talk about a national security interest? Those are great examples of how we can remove those regulatory burdens.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. And how we can make life work for our regular American families, our American workers, and even our companies, because, after all, this is where most of my constituents are employed—sometimes large companies, sometimes small companies.

With respect to regulations, we have tried a Whack-A-Mole approach going back a number of years here, where we do our best with respect to oversight. Sometimes we do better than others. And we try to prevent certain executive departments from actually implementing a given regulation, or we change the law so that the regulation can't move forward. That's hard to do.

But I think we need to be thinking ambitiously here about changing the entire regulatory system. I introduced earlier this year a bill that was originally authored by Geoff Davis, a Republican from Kentucky, called the REINS Act. What the REINS Act does is it establishes a \$100 million threshold. So every time, say, the EPA or OSHA puts forward a rule or regulation that is determined will have \$100 million or more in economic impact on our multitrillion-dollar economy, that rule or regulation has to go before Congress for an up-or-down vote.

Now, what effect would this have? Of course, this would slow down the regulatory process, which is good. Washington needs to deliberate before it acts, right? We can still regulate. There's a role for smart regulation, but we need to deliberate before we act.

But, perhaps, most importantly, in the end, if we pass the REINS Act, this would allow our constituents to blame us for these painful and costly regulations, rather than unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats. We want to be accountable.

Mrs. WAGNER. Absolutely. And I will tell you, it puts the job back in the people's House—we, the people. This is not governance by fiat. We were sent here by our districts across the country to pass commonsense legislation and to get the government off the backs and out of the way of hard-working Americans across this country. And, truthfully, the overregulation, the overburden, on business and industry is passed along to everyone across America. Every worker, every family is paying the cost of this overregulatory burden. Whether it's the debt and deficit, whether it's tax reform, whether it's flexibility for families, whether it's living within our means, I'm finished with mortgaging our children's future.

And I agree with the gentlewoman from Washington. I'm tired of mortgaging today. It's not just about the future, it's about mortgaging what's happening right now.

Mr. GARDNER. I'm hearing from people who just want more independence, they want more say over their own lives. This isn't a top-down government approach, this is a bottom-up people approach, what we can do with technology to make sure that we're allowing innovation to occur and economies to grow.

Mrs. ROBY. We've sat on this floor for the past couple of years, and glad to have our new colleague join us tonight, but we've all given examples, and one of my favorite examples, although it's not funny, it's real, is the owner of a construction company that came to one of my NFIB roundtable discussions back in my district during a district workweek. Let me just give you this as an example. He said, The regulator drives by my job site and there was a ladder propped up against the eave. Let's say the guy stood to make an \$800 profit off of this construction job. His

workers have been going up and down the ladder all day safely. And the regulator on his way home from his job slows down, because it happened to be on his street, and he says, That ladder does not meet regulation. This guy gets slapped with like an \$8,000 fine on a job that he only stood to make an \$800 profit on. That is not making life work.

This administration and our colleagues in the Senate have got to wake up to what we're doing strangling small businesses. But, again, it's not just about the employer. I think we've got to remember and remind ourselves that it's not just about the employer that creates the jobs. We get that and we applaud that. We want to make it as easy for people to create jobs as we can in this country because that's innovation and that's what this country is about, but it's also about that hard-working employee. And we've got to remember that clearing this regulatory environment, it helps that American family, it helps that American family when they're sitting around their dinner table and they're trying to make life work.

Again, real quick, we've got a few more minutes, I just want to remind, Mr. Speaker, tonight, we are hoping to receive input from our constituents at #makinglifework. Throughout our conversation tonight we've been hearing from folks that have been reminding us of issues that are important to them. And I think this is, Mr. Speaker, a very unique opportunity to have this conversation.

Mrs. WAGNER. We thank the gentlelady from Alabama for putting the Special Order together, for really caring about all Americans and about what's important to them, as you said, sitting around the kitchen table. It's about making life work. And at the end of the day, that's what government ought to be doing—getting out of the way, off their backs, working for the people, not against them.

Mr. GARDNER. And I hope that tonight's conversation will continue; that it's not just an hour before the House of Representatives. But this is a conversation that people will be able to talk about and continue. And that the feedback that they provide through #makinglifework will continue to come to us to talk about ways and ideas that we can truly move this country forward.

And so, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to do this as we talk about these ideas. We've mentioned several of them here as feedback has rolled in from around the country.

Mrs. ROBY. One of the things we haven't really spent time on—and the gentlelady from Washington wants to talk about—is health care and things that we are doing to make sure that American families have the access. I think we can all agree that we want health care to be more affordable and more accessible by all Americans, but as we move closer and closer to the full

implementation of ObamaCare in 2014, we're finding that that doesn't work.

□ 2100

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. We're starting to hear from some of the folks we serve in our districts and in our States that folks with serious preexisting conditions are being turned away from a high-risk pool that was promised.

Mrs. ROBY. Didn't the President, himself, promise that those individuals would receive that care?

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. It was the promise. I mean, that was part of the big promotion of the health care bill that the President passed: that, if we do this, no one will ever be turned away with a preexisting condition. Yet today, right now, people with serious preexisting conditions are being told, basically, by the Obama administration, sorry, we didn't plan for you.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. I understand that the money that Republicans would propose to spend to address this issue within the Obama structure is money the administration would instead like to spend for advertising—advertising the exchanges, advertising how the Affordable Care Act is actually going to work.

Mrs. WAGNER. And this is key. This is about the Helping Sick Americans Now Act.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. That's right.

Mrs. WAGNER. There are tens of thousands of Americans who have been turned away who are suffering and sick and ill with preexisting conditions, and I hope we're going to address this tomorrow.

Do you know what we're going to do?

We are going to defund this preventative care act—this slush fund in the Affordable Care Act—that has been going for everything from paths and bike paths and advertising campaigns and spaying and neutering dogs. Instead, we're going to defund it. We're going to pay down about \$8 billion on the deficit, and we're going to move money into these high-risk pools, which are run by the States, that are going to actually take care of sick Americans.

Mrs. ROBY. We look forward to that debate in the next 2 days.

We are closing in on the end of our hour, but we have just been joined by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. GRIFFIN). As you know, tonight, we are talking about this #makinglifework for American families.

So I want you to jump in, but we do have, just as a reminder, about 2 minutes tops.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. This looks like a welcome addition. Before he steps to the microphone there, he's going to tell us where all the money is going, how bad our debt is, and maybe how that's crowding out future investment in our children and grandchildren.

Is that right, TIM?

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. I appreciate that transition. Thank you very much.

What I'm concerned about is because we haven't gotten our fiscal house in order, we are not able to invest in a lot of things, like medical research and roads and education, the way we need to in order to be prepared for the future. I've got a 3-year-old and a 5-year-old, and I want their America to be as good as the one that I grew up in. To do that, we have to invest in these things.

So I call this the "PAC-MAN problem" because nearly two-thirds of our Federal budget is on autopilot. It's mandatory spending. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and interest make up that mandatory spending; and this is money that's basically spent without congressional approval because it's written into the law. Unless we save and strengthen those programs represented by the yellow here, then they're going to go bankrupt; and they're going to crowd out the investments that we need to make that will help families and help grow our economy. Basically, PAC-MAN eventually will swallow all the investments up; and when it does, all the spending for medical research, scientific development, and all of these other things will go away. So we've got to get that under control for our families.

Mrs. ROBY. We do. I thank the gentleman from Arkansas. I know you ran over here to join us tonight. I thank all of those States and districts that are represented here tonight.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1549, HELPING SICK AMERICANS NOW ACT

Mr. BURGESS (during the Special Order of Mrs. ROBY), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-46) on the resolution (H. Res. 175) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1549) to amend Public Law 111-148 to transfer fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2016 funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund to carry out the temporary high risk health insurance pool program for individuals with pre-existing conditions, and to extend access to such program to such individuals who have had creditable coverage during the 6 months prior to application for coverage through such program, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

RADICAL ISLAM AND THE "T" WORD

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I must say how proud I am of the Members of Congress from the class that came in 2 years ago and of those

who are coming in now. It's an honor to serve with folks who care so much about the country and where we're going; but to know where we're going, it's important to know where we've been.

Of course, over the last week or so, we have endured terrible heartache because it wasn't just Boston that was attacked, and it wasn't just the little town of West, Texas, that lost so many people. *E pluribus unum*—"out of many, one." When tragedy strikes, we come together as one people to mourn. That has been true in the past. That's why it's so heartbreaking when Americans note that some gloat when other Americans are killed. Thank goodness it's such a rare thing. But with the tragedies in Boston and with the horror of the explosion and fire down in West, down in BILL FLORES' district, we will continue to pray for those who are enduring such suffering, for those who have lost loved ones. There is no easy way to lose a loved one. Everyone in America has either lost a loved one or will; and when it happens, it allows you to empathize and sympathize so much more easily with those who have lost loved ones. So we grieve; we mourn.

An important after-tragedy aspect for those who are in government is to make sure that we figure out exactly what went wrong so that Americans are spared this tragedy in the future. A former Secretary of State once asked in the aftermath of a tragedy, which she was overseeing in the department, what difference does it make? Having had Embassies attacked before—and yet this consulate in Benghazi was not adequately protected—it raises very serious issues, and the answer should be very clear when the question is: What difference does it make?

It makes a difference in not having to console those who have lost and mourned with those who have lost and consoled and help those who are trying to heal. It means all of that suffering doesn't happen if we find the mistakes and make sure they are not replicated in the future.

It was difficult—and it continues to be difficult—to get information out of the State Department, out of Homeland Security in having questioned the Secretary of Homeland Security myself and finding that she couldn't even answer how many members of the Muslim Brotherhood were part of her closest advisory council, the Homeland Security Advisory Council, or what backgrounds people had that would indicate ties to the Muslim Brotherhood within her Countering Violent Extremism Working Group. It's called the Countering Violent Extremism Working Group because, heaven forbid, we should offend anyone who is trying to kill us and wants to destroy our way of life.

It's also interesting as we dig into the situation—I mean, I've been hammered in the last week and accused of being an intolerant racist simply because people did not know the facts

when they leveled such allegations, but I don't expect any apologies as they find out the truth that, yes, there have been radical Islamists who have been known to have changed their Islamic surnames to Hispanic-sounding names and to have falsified their identification documents so they would appear to be Hispanic and then make their way across our southern border.

□ 2110

There is nothing racist in that. In fact, it actually can be construed as a compliment because these people knew that radical Islamists were not wanted in this country and that in this country most of us are greatly appreciative of the heritage that Hispanics bring.

As I've said many times, I think something that has been a foundational part of making America great has been, generally speaking—with a hat tipped to atheists and all the other religions in America—traditionally there was a faith in God, there was a devotion to family and there was a hard work ethic. And generally speaking, that's what I see more than any other things in the Hispanic culture. I'm hoping that culture will help revive those aspects in our American culture. So it's certainly not intended as a snub, and, in fact, it is just stating a fact. This is something that's occurred. But it's always apparently a fun game for liberals to preach about tolerance and then be the most intolerant people in the country when it comes to conservatives or conservative Christians.

Jesus told us 2,000 years ago, You'll suffer for my sake. I didn't suffer as a Christian growing up, but some are all too willing to oblige nowadays to make sure that Christians do suffer, that they are persecuted, that they are condemned for their religious beliefs; and they go after Christians in a way that they would never seek to condemn even radical Islamists.

But I hope that out of the disaster and the heartbreak and the harm and damage that came not just to Boston, Massachusetts, but to a central heartbeat of America and Boston, which is such an important and integral part of America—we all got hit on 9/11. We got hit as Americans when our consulate was hit and four Americans were killed in Libya. We got hit when rebels took the weapons that this administration helped provide and killed Americans in Algeria.

We all take a hit when there are mistakes in judgment, mistakes in judgment like helping bomb Qadhafi, even though this administration had agreements with him. He was providing intel on radical Islamic terrorists. Well, that source is gone now. And this administration, despite being warned by many of us that, Look, we know there are al Qaeda that are actually embedded in the revolutionaries; don't help until we know who we're helping, but this administration made clear it didn't need congressional approval and it did not