

Today, U.S. railroads transport 2.5 trillion metric tons a year. As we expand into new technology and high-speed rail, locomotive engineers will continue to propel the American economy forward.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen now counts 55,000 active and retired members among its ranks. These are the men and women who work around the clock to literally make the trains run on time.

In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Brotherhood, I ask my colleagues to join me in passing a resolution to honor them for their contributions in growing this great Nation.

WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

(Mrs. WAGNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make life work a little easier for moms and dads in the St. Louis region. I rise today on behalf of every parent who wished they had more time to spend with their children or more time to care for a parent or a loved one. I rise today to level the playing field for all private sector employees so they receive the same flexibility public sector employees have enjoyed for nearly 30 years.

That is why I cosponsored the Working Families Flexibility Act of 2013, which allows employees the choice, voluntary choice, of paid time off or comp time in lieu of cash wages for overtime. The Working Families Flexibility Act is commonsense legislation that will help balance the needs of family life and the workplace, and I urge my colleagues to support this measure and make life work a little easier for all Americans.

REPEAL SEQUESTRATION

(Ms. HANABUSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, we've heard the words "sequestration" and "sequester" so often they've now become household terms. But when the Budget Control Act of 2011 became law, no one intended that sequestration would take place. In fact, everyone thought it would be so devastating that neither political party would let it stand. Well, Mr. Speaker, it stands.

At every opportunity to repeal sequestration, it has not happened. Yet we know Congress can act to address the impacts if it hits the front page of the paper. Our Republican colleagues did so for the FAA. But it is now time for us to ask: What about the children's Head Start program? What about FEMA for the victims of Hurricane Sandy? What about nutrition for women and children, also called WIC?

We need to compromise on these and other major programs, just like for the

FAA. We need Republicans to come to the table for the benefit of the people.

Wouldn't it be great if we could finally repeal sequestration?

GROWING JOBS IN AMERICA

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, just a few hours ago we had an opportunity to welcome the President of South Korea to this great body to listen to her words about how America, through not only our foreign policy but also with our United States military, helped South Korea to overcome the forces of Communism from the north and from China.

We heard the President speak about the economic growth and vitality of her people, of the Korean people who want more and better friendship with America. But the underlying theme was economic freedom—freedom for her people, freedom for people to make their own decisions. This is consistent with the message that we heard from the last head of a foreign government speaker we had, from Mexico, who spoke about how Mexico is going to aim for GDP growth of 6 percent.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we here in America catch on to what our allies are doing all across the globe, and that is seeking economic freedom, economic growth, and jobs for all of their people. We should be doing the same thing in this country. Mr. Speaker, that's why the Republican Party is trying to grow jobs and make sure life is better for Americans now.

STUDENT AID EXPANSION ACT

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

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the last 4 months, I have been proud to work towards building out what I have called the Infrastructure of Opportunity for our Nation. Recently, I had the opportunity to file legislation to reinforce one of the major cornerstones of that infrastructure: access to colleges and universities.

A few weeks ago, I filed the Student Aid Expansion Act of 2013 that will provide higher education students increased access to affordable financial aid. As we've all witnessed across our districts, the cost of tuition continues to rise. In Texas, for example, tuition and fees at public institutions have increased over 90 percent since 2003.

Meanwhile, students and families are left looking for ways to keep their higher education affordable. Over the last 10 years, we have seen students rely more heavily on loans to finance their education. Fifty-two percent of direct student aid now comes in the form of loans.

The Student Aid Expansion Act of 2013 would remove barriers that are

currently preventing our institutions of higher education from promoting affordable, State-based alternatives. These types of loans are zero interest and can be fully forgiven if a student does well in school. Importantly, this legislation will not cost Federal, State, or local governments a single dime.

SUPPORT UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, it has now been more than 2 months since mindless sequestration across-the-board cuts were enacted, crippling so many important services and benefits that Americans rely on, such as Social Security processing at Social Security offices around this country.

Well, there's another very important earned benefit that's being cut—unemployment benefits. Republicans keep rewarding the super-rich while cutting unemployment benefits. When you cut benefits, you not only hurt men and women who are looking for work, you actually hurt economic recovery.

Fact: unemployment checks pump money back into local communities, helping the economy to recover. Where does the money go? Groceries, gasoline, school clothing, rent payments, basics.

The U.S. Department of Labor, during the Bush administration, found that every dollar spent on unemployment benefits pumped \$2 back in to the local economy. It's a good deal. Therefore, sequestration cuts in unemployment compensation inflict pain not only on jobless families, but also harms economic growth in a major way.

I call on my Republican colleagues to come to the table, compromise, reverse the mindless sequester that is cutting unemployment benefits. Let's celebrate Mother's Day by paying workers their full earned benefits, not imposing more worry on the unemployed among America's working families.

□ 1240

WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT

(Mr. GALLEG0 asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak against H.R. 1406, misnamed the Working Families Flexibility Act.

Feeding a family, paying our bills, and making sure that our kids have what they need, for most of us, those are the core things that we worry about each month, and they all involve money.

However, H.R. 1406, which would be more appropriately named the Working Families Get Less Act, does nothing for those working families who are

struggling to make ends meet. The bill fails to recognize that people usually work overtime because they need the money.

The legislation essentially ends overtime pay by allowing an employer to give time off instead. Supporters say it gives working mothers more flexibility because they would have the option of spending their time at home—that's the flexibility.

But no matter how you slice it, you cannot feed a family with time off. Every hour of work matters to a family's bottom line. It's a factor in food and clothing and keeping a roof over your head.

So I urge a "no" vote on this bill that takes the money out of the pockets of working women and families in Texas and across the country.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 807, FULL FAITH AND CREDIT ACT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 202 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 202

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 807) to require that the Government prioritize all obligations on the debt held by the public in the event that the debt limit is reached. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; (2) the further amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Camp of Michigan or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the ranking member of the Committee on Rules, the gentlewoman from New York, my friend (Ms. SLAUGHTER), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. House Resolution 202 provides for a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 807. This rule provides for discussion opportunities for Members of the minority and the majority to participate in this debate.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to guarantee the full faith and credit of the United States for generations to come by ensuring that our Nation will never default on our debt obligations.

Functionally, H.R. 807, the Full Faith and Credit Act of 2013, ensures that the Treasury Department will continue to make payments on the principal and interest of our debt, including debt held by the Social Security trust fund, in the event that the statutory debt limit is reached. Requiring the Treasury to make good on its obligations to the Social Security trust fund will ensure that those funds are available to honor our commitment to seniors and disabled Americans.

Moreover, H.R. 807 provides certainty to investors, small businesses, retirees, pension beneficiaries, and international markets that we will never negatively impact our economy by allowing this Nation to default on its debts.

In the larger sense, it is our opportunity to engage, in a public forum, the Treasury Department and the administration on what we believe is the right way to engage in discussions about how we will move forward in uncharted territories as it's dealing with the financial difficulties of our country.

However, today's debate is symptomatic of the larger problem. For far too long, our Federal Government has spent too much money and borrowed too much. We have spent money and not listened to the American people, nor looked ahead at the consequences of spending too much, saving too little, and not creating jobs that will help to sustain the American Dream, the next generation, and the systems which we hold so dear to the American system.

House Republicans however, today, come to the floor, under the leadership of our great Ways and Means Chairman, DAVE CAMP, and some ideas that have come from Congressman TOM MCCLINTOCK of California, and we are working on ideas with commonsense solutions to cut wasteful spending, reform entitlement programs, and balance the budget in a way that furthers our country, strengthens what we do, and makes sure we are ready for tomorrow.

Yet at almost every turn, including yesterday, up in the Rules Committee upstairs, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have opposed pro-growth agendas and pushed for higher taxes and more spending. It happens almost every single day, every single bill

that we bring before the Rules Committee, a demand to increase spending and increase taxes.

Our Nation does not have a taxing problem. It has a spending problem; and until we enact meaningful reforms, we will not improve our dire financial dilemma and the circumstances that come with trying to manage a problem instead of a growth opportunity to make our country stronger.

Today, the American economy is struggling and has been struggling now in our fifth year to regain momentum and is burdened by massive amounts of Federal spending and Federal debt. Allowing our Nation to default would severely hinder what little growth there is, potentially causing the U.S. to slip back into another recession and risk another downgrading of our credit rating.

For these reasons, default is unacceptable; and that is why House Republicans, we think weeks, perhaps months ahead of trying to finally address this issue, we think it's time that our ideas are on the floor of the House of Representatives, talking openly, not just among ourselves and with the administration, but also the American people. And that is the purpose of us being here today.

House Republicans are willing to work with our colleagues in the Senate, as well, and also at the White House; and we'd like to find a compromise that would raise the debt limit, while simultaneously enacting meaningful legislation that will fix our Nation's broken tax system.

We need to create jobs through job enrichment, through a Tax Code that is vibrant and does not harm job creation, that does not do things that would cause people to want to not invest in this country because of taxes that are out of control and spending that harms their business.

So we want to rein in our out-of-control spending and reform our ballooning entitlement programs to preserve them for generations to come. It should be our responsibility.

We, as Members of Congress, were elected by the people, and we should be able to come and face tough issues with good answers. We should not try and scare people back home. We should be able to tell the truth about the legislation, and we need to be honest about the circumstances of the pathway that we remain on because of our President's and the Democrats' agenda.

So, unfortunately, President Obama has already stated that he is unwilling to negotiate with the House or the Senate over the debt limit.

□ 1250

It is this President when he was a Senator who voted repeatedly against a debt limit increase, called it irresponsible and a lack of leadership; and yet today he says just give him all the power, he'll take care of this himself. As such, the bill before us today is a necessary and prudent safety net designed to avoid economic calamity