

build jobs behind them. They have that brain trust. They have that risk-taking culture. Forty percent of the largest companies in America were built by immigrants or the children of immigrants.

It's time to also put the 11.5 million Americans who are undocumented on a pathway to citizenship. I've been on the ground. I've talked to the innovators, and I hear their cry.

The time is now. So for the sake of our economy, and the sake of our communities, the right thing to do is to put these undocumented immigrants on a path to citizenship and to make sure that we can take high-skilled workers from across the world, put them in our country, and create thousands of new jobs behind them.

SEQUESTRATION AND THE TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT

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

Mr. MARINO. Last week, thousands of my constituents felt even more pain as a result of the President's sequestration when Tobyhanna Army Depot began to furlough over 5,000 of its civilian employees.

One constituent called my office and asked, "How are we supposed to afford our mortgage if my husband is not allowed to work? There must be a more logical way to cut the budget."

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what I would like to know. Why can the President jet around the country to play golf on the taxpayers' dime when the hardworking families cannot make ends meet?

The House acted twice last year to replace the sequestration with more commonsense solutions, but the Senate refused to consider these bills. They even rejected a measure that would have given the administration more flexibility in implementing these cuts.

Because of the President's insistence and the Senate's inaction, these families will now face even more financial uncertainty, struggling to pay their bills instead of earning a steady paycheck.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the 10th Congressional District have had enough of the President's rhetoric, and they have certainly had enough of his sequestration. It's time that the President started working for the American people.

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a policy that allows Federal agencies to determine whether it makes sense for certain construction projects to have project labor agreements, PLAs, which are agreements between owners, including Federal agen-

cies, and workers that establish work-site conditions.

Federal agencies are currently empowered to consider PLAs as a means of reducing on-the-job conflicts, saving money, speeding up construction, and improving efficiency and worker safety. Unfortunately, this body will soon consider removing this tool from our construction toolbox.

While they may not always be the answer on complex projects, PLAs make it more likely that a project will be done right the first time, on time, and on budget. That's why some of the most successful companies in the world, including Boeing, in my State, use a similar model for construction. It's why the Department of Energy uses a PLA at Hanford, and the Department of Energy has a PLA at the Explosives Handling Wharf in Kitsap County in my district.

PLAs are open to all companies, union and nonunion, who see the value of this tool. At a time when we're looking to rein in wasteful spending, PLAs can be a successful model in improving and promoting high-quality, cost-efficient construction.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS

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

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of spending time with first responders and public safety personnel in my district. I toured facilities in seven counties, meeting with the men and women who are the first line of defense, the ones who go into danger rather than run away from it, the folks who are so critical to the safety of our citizens.

I believe it's important for our first responders to know that their hard work and sacrifice are appreciated. As one final step of this tour, I'd like to extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude to all those whom I did not get to personally speak with last week. On behalf of South Carolina's Third District, and Americans all across the country, we thank you for everything that you do.

Mr. Speaker, it is also with great sadness that I rise today in honor of the fallen first responders, many of whom are volunteers, who gave their lives in Houston, Texas, and West, Texas, recently. May the Members of this House honor the memory and heroism of every first responder who has lost their life serving this great Nation.

May God bless the families of the fallen. And I ask every American to remember them in your thoughts and prayers.

May God continue to bless the United States of America with heroes such as these.

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

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

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the urgent need to make college more affordable. As the father of a rising college freshman, I have renewed appreciation for the astronomical cost of college.

On July 1, the problem will get even worse. Interest rates on Federal student loans are set to double; and that's why I cosponsored the Student Loan Relief Act, which would extend the current, lower rates for 2 more years.

Last month, I voted against a proposal that would have increased rates with the extra money raised going to the Federal Government. Balancing the budget on the backs of our college students is just plain wrong.

The amount of money Americans owe in student loans is greater than the amount we owe in credit card debt. This is a serious problem with serious consequences, and it's getting worse.

The future of our country, we know, depends on the ability of our young people to compete in this global economy. This means making it easier to go to college, not harder.

I urge my colleagues to support legislation that will keep interest rates low and make college more affordable.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF STAFF SERGEANT BOBBY BRIDGET AND MR. AND MRS. STEVE MASSA

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor and tribute to three wonderful North Carolina heroes, Army Staff Sergeant Bobby Bridget, and his neighbors back home, Steve and Pat Massa.

Sergeant Bridget served us in Afghanistan with three tours. During that time, his job was to go find IEDs and then take those IEDs and dismantle them to protect his fellow soldiers.

Meanwhile, his neighbors back home, Pat and Steve Massa, they would take care of his lawn, they would do the errands around the house to make sure that their neighbor could go and serve his country and defend our freedoms.

Well, the rest of the story is, Mr. Speaker, that the Massas, during this time, were going through their own challenges. They had cancer surgeries; they had cancer treatments. It was a very difficult, emotional time; yet they did what it took to take care of their neighbor.

We're grateful for the service of Sergeant Bridget and particularly grateful for the wonderful neighbors that he had in the Massas.

May God richly bless these people.

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REPEAL SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, it has now been more than 2 months since across-the-board sequestration cuts were enacted, devastating so many important programs that Americans rely upon. Instead of working together to find compromise to fully reverse these automatic, indiscriminate spending cuts, House Republicans have voted for the Ryan budget, leaving these cuts in place and hurting our economy, just to gain political points.

This is not President Obama's sequestration. The GOP effort to make sequestration a reality shows they are ready and willing to take our economy backwards at a time when Americans are desperate to move the Nation forward. In fact, sequestration will cost 750,000 jobs this year alone.

House Democrats want sequestration repealed and replaced with a combination of revenue and cuts. The President has proposed \$2 in spending cuts for every \$1 of revenue. But Republicans remain dug in. Republicans refuse to address 70,000 children who could lose Head Start. They refuse to address the SNAP program, which is very important to feed the elderly and children. Republicans refuse to address the cuts to NIH and other very important programs.

We must work together. We must repeal sequestration.

VISIT OF PRESIDENT OF BURMA
TO THE U.S.

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the visit a couple of weeks ago of Burma's President, with the surrounding high-level honors, was a little disturbing. This leader's regime has engaged in well-documented horrific attacks against the various ethnic minority groups in his country—ethnic cleansing of minority groups.

When looking to the future of the country, President Thein Sein said last year that the ethnic youth should "hold laptops" and "try to live a good life." Laptop computers are going to suddenly erase the effects of years of violence, racism, rape, and decimation by the ruthless military? I don't think so.

We must stand firmly with the minority ethnic groups in protecting their rights and ensuring justice is done for all the violence perpetrated by the Burmese military before we rush in to extracting resources and applauding democracy gains with no record of results.

And to the minority ethnic groups of Burma, many of us still stand with you.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE
UPCOMING HURRICANE SEASON

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

Mr. PETERS of California. I rise today as chair of the Climate Task Force in the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition. June 1 marked the start of hurricane season, and this is a reminder that we must start planning ahead for extreme weather that we now face regularly, while also recognizing the cost of inaction.

Taxpayers spent \$136 billion on disaster relief in just the last 2 years. However, FEMA estimates that every \$1 spent on planning, preparation, and prevention yields the Nation \$4 in future benefits. We are facing harsher droughts, deadlier heat waves, more severe storms, and, in San Diego, increasingly intense wildfires. In 2012 alone, wildfires burned 9.2 million acres in the United States, an area larger than the States of Delaware, Rhode Island, and Connecticut combined.

There's no clear national plan for how to make our society more resilient in the face of extreme weather. This is unacceptable. We deserve better. Developing a planning structure for community resiliency is necessary. It will reduce Federal spending, save lives, and it's what Washington could do more of. We must act now.

FOCUSING ON SOLUTIONS

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to serve in the House, where we're continuing to work on the American peoples' priorities: encouraging job creation, growing our economy, and stopping policies that hurt American families.

Already this year, we voted to create tens of thousands of jobs and move toward North American energy independence by passage of Keystone pipeline legislation.

We've also voted to save jobs from policies that hurt our economic growth by passing a budget that will balance in 10 years and repealing the President's health care law that is already costing jobs.

In addition, we've worked to expand opportunities for all Americans by passing legislation that allows for a better trained workforce in removing barriers to help balance the needs of family time and work.

Our focus is on solutions—not blame and excuses—to help encourage a healthy and prosperous economy, to create jobs, and to expand opportunities for all Americans.

IN HONOR OF HOUSTON
FIREFIGHTERS

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Houston firefighters who lost their lives and were injured battling a deadly five-alarm blaze.

Every year, our Houston Firefighters Pension Board holds a memorial service to honor all firefighters, but especially those who gave their lives in the service as firefighters. I have attended many of those services over the years.

Last Friday, May 31, the deadliest fire in the 118-year history of the Houston Fire Department broke out in southwest Houston. Unfortunately, four brave firefighters lost their lives performing their duties. Captain Matthew Renaud, Engineer Operator Robert Bebee, Firefighter Robert Garner, and Firefighter Anne Sullivan tragically fell during the fire. Many firefighters were injured, including Engineer Operator Anthony Livesay, EMT Robert Yarbrough, EMT Foster Santos, Engineer Operator and Paramedic Marcus Hernandez, and Captain William Dowling. These firefighters were injured and died trying to save people in a motel unit.

Our hearts and our prayers go out to their families and friends. Being the grandson and nephew of a family of Houston firefighters, I understand the sacrifice their loved ones made. We shall never forget their heroic efforts to keep us safe.

WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

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

Mr. POSEY. Where are the jobs?

I'll tell you where they're not. They're not created or seemingly even encouraged by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Department is still bullying small mom-and-pop businesses to complete lengthy, time-consuming, and expensive questionnaires about their personal business; but they don't have time to answer my questions about the need, the justification, or the actual use of the information in those questionnaires.

A letter received by a constituent just yesterday threatens that if they don't get their economic census back within 2 weeks, they will refer their case to general counsel. How can constituents trust this agency when even the formerly independent IRS is now used as a partisan tool to punish people the administration does not like?

If the Department of Commerce really cared about improving our commerce, they would leave our mom-and-pops alone to make a living, creating jobs.