

But while the State of Utah is doing very well, the rest of our Nation is not. As a small business owner, I know that government does not create jobs; the private sector creates jobs. And businessmen all over this Nation are asking—no, they're even begging—for one thing: Get government out of the way. Allow our economy to grow. Create new American jobs. Expand opportunity; don't expand government.

There are, right now, 4.4 million Americans that have been jobless for more than 6 months, and this is completely unacceptable.

We must simplify our Tax Code. We need to become energy independent. We need to move forward with projects such as the Keystone pipeline. We need to reform health care and entitlement programs, which account for the vast majority of our deficit and debt spending.

Americans deserve better. We can do better.

□ 1210

PASS THE JOBS ACT NOW

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's now been 885 days since I arrived in Congress, and the Republican leadership has still not allowed a single vote on serious legislation to address our unemployment crisis. This Congress is pretending our unemployment crisis is completely over. This Congress is acting as though surface scandals and a now rapidly shrinking budget deficit are the only issues that matter to this country. Try telling that to any of the 12 million unemployed Americans, who are today struggling to keep their homes and to pay for their food and health care. Try telling that to any of the 3 million Americans who have been unemployed for more than a year and are facing the indescribably painful possibility that they will never work again.

Mr. Speaker, unemployment is the Nation's true deficit. Let's pass the Jobs Now Act and the President's American Jobs Act to end it. The mantra of this Congress should be: jobs, jobs, jobs.

CONSCIENCE PROTECTIONS

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

Mr. MESSER. The First Amendment is under attack in Madison, Indiana. One of my constituents, Bill Grote, is a profile in courage as he litigates against the government's attempt to force him to violate his First Amendment rights and comply with ObamaCare's contraceptive mandate. Churches deserve protection from this mandate, but private businesses and business owners deserve protection, too.

Mr. Grote is not alone. Some businesses may choose to close their doors instead of complying. Others may be fined out of business. Ask yourself: If the Federal Government can make Mr. Grote purchase products in violation of his religious beliefs, what can it do to you?

I applaud Mr. Grote's courage and urge the House to pass the Health Care Conscience Rights Act to stop this attack on religious liberty.

WE NEED A COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOYEE NONDISCRIMINATION ACT

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

Mr. POCAN. This June, as we celebrate LGBT Pride Month, LGBT Americans have much to celebrate. Every day this country moves closer and closer towards embracing full equality for all of its citizens. And yet the path to equality and justice saw a setback last week when one of our Nation's largest companies chose to deny fundamental workplace protections for its employees.

For the 14th year in a row, ExxonMobil's shareholders voted to strike down a proposal that would specifically prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This is a company that has received more than \$1 billion in government contracts over the last decade. Simply put, the government should not be in business with companies that discriminate.

Exxon's decision makes it part of a shrinking minority: 88 percent of Fortune 500 companies specifically ban employee discrimination based on sexual orientation. BP doesn't discriminate, Chevron doesn't discriminate, Shell Oil doesn't discriminate. But ExxonMobil does. Their anti-equality policies should start to hurt their bottom line.

Unfortunately, it is still legal to fire someone in 29 States based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. ExxonMobil's backwards decision highlights why we need to pass a comprehensive employee nondiscrimination act.

PASS THE FAIR TAX

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

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, all Americans are aware how our current Tax Code is too complex and punishes people who save, invest, and achieve economic success. However, the recent news coming from the IRS illustrates another pressing reason for tax reform. Our current Tax Code puts too much power and potential for abuse into the hands of unaccountable, unelected bureaucrats.

The American people deserve a tax system that cannot be a political weapon to be used against them. That is why I'm a proud cosponsor of the Fair Tax. The Fair Tax would eliminate the IRS by replacing the current Tax Code with a simple consumption-based tax. The Fair Tax would be collected equally from all Americans, with no opportunity for the government to attack or discriminate against innocent citizens.

The Fair Tax is a reform measure that offers a rare chance to unleash economic growth, create good jobs, and at the same time protect the rights of American people. I urge this body to swiftly pass the Fair Tax.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, the Equal Pay Act passed in Congress with strong bipartisan support. That should be no surprise. It makes sense.

Back in 1963, 201 Democrats joined with 160 Republicans to support equal pay for equal work. Only 9 Members voted "no." Back then, women earned just 59 cents for every dollar men earned. And today, we're still 23 cents short on the promise of equal pay. Half a century later, women earn 77 cents for every dollar men make for the same work. The Paycheck Fairness Act would strengthen the Equal Pay Act, giving women the paychecks they deserve and have earned. It would eliminate the loopholes and carve-outs that have denied women basic fairness for decades.

As we celebrate the passage of the Equal Pay Act, let's hope for a return to bipartisanship and common sense. Let's make sure that women are paid what they deserve and pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. Equal pay was bipartisan 50 years ago. It should be bipartisan today.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, our top priority in Congress should be to promote job creation and a healthy economy. Too many Americans are struggling. The unemployment rate remains too high, the labor force participation rate continues to drop, and the national debt still is nearly \$17 trillion. This is due to the administration's failed economic and overreaching regulatory policies. Wasteful government spending and higher taxes are not the answers the American people are looking for. America needs real solutions for economic recovery.

In order for all Americans to thrive, we need jobs. Over 60 percent of new jobs are generated by small businesses,

which have always been the backbone of our economy. Many small business owners are holding off hiring new workers because they're uncertain of higher taxes, more government red tape, more regulations.

We must remove unnecessary regulations. We need to promote real solutions that heal our economy and create new jobs. Americans share the same goal: a healthy economy and positive future. We need to keep the American Dream alive for future generations.

RETURN BUFFALO TO THE URBAN AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House will take up Homeland Security appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2014. Unfortunately, this legislation, once again, limits the number of cities in the Urban Area Security Initiative program to 25. This is unacceptable. It excludes many cities that have been determined to be a high risk of a terror threat.

The Buffalo-Niagara region, which I represent, includes four international border crossings and the busiest passenger crossing along the northern border with Canada; the largest electricity producer in New York State; and is within a 500-mile radius of 55 percent of the American population and 62 percent of the Canadian population. Recently, authorities thwarted a terror plot in which the target is thought to have been a bridge in Niagara Falls. It is unthinkable this bill should continue to exclude Buffalo from this important program it was once eligible for.

Mr. Speaker, protecting the homeland should be a Federal Government priority. We should be doing more, not less, to protect our most vulnerable cities, including returning cities to this program and ensuring we maintain the capabilities gained under the program.

FREE SPEECH

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment of our Constitution is first because nothing is more important to secure liberty and freedom of speech and freedom of the press than our First Amendment.

There are currently two scandals that put into question the President's commitment to this sacred freedom, with the Justice Department secretly obtaining phone records of reporters at the Associated Press and Fox News, and the IRS targeting certain groups because of their political beliefs.

Yesterday, the Ways and Means Committee held a hearing with the victims of the IRS abuse, and we learned that

IRS officials not only asked many inappropriate questions to members of these groups, like what books they read or what was in their prayers, but also tried to tell free Americans who they could not protest against, and even illegally released private tax records to groups with opposing viewpoints.

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press should never be in question in this Nation, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we can all agree that units of the Federal Government should never use their powers to punish Americans simply because of their ideas. This House will get to the bottom of this issue by following the facts. These free people, our great patriots, deserve no less.

□ 1220

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

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

Mr. BARROW of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this is the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, and I rise to urge my colleagues to strengthen that law by passing the Paycheck Fairness Act.

I'm a proud cosponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act because, even today, working women in my district in Georgia and across the country earn, on average, 77 cents for every dollar that men earn for the same work. That's because the penalties under the current law aren't strong enough to deter employers from breaking the law. And the current law doesn't protect employees from retaliation for sharing salary information with coworkers. The Paycheck Fairness Act will plug these loopholes in the law.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand here today with so many of my colleagues to call for the passage of these long-overdue improvements in this landmark law. Every day we ignore the shortcomings of the law is another day we deny women their rights under the law, and that should end right now.

OBAMACARE

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss ObamaCare's assault on jobs and full-time employment. The law is costing wages that are important to families in these tough economic times.

I received an email from a constituent in my district who is a teacher's assistant. Because of the 30 hours that is considered full-time employment in the Affordable Care Act, her hours have been cut to 28 hours a week, along with all of her colleagues. She stated:

I don't even need health insurance, I get it through my husband's employment. But be-

cause of this bill, I will be losing money that my family needs and depends on.

Indiana is also home to over 300 medical device companies, with an economic impact of over \$10 billion a year. Companies in Indiana, like Cook Medical, have already scrapped plans for expansion in the State, citing the 2.3 percent medical device tax.

Yesterday, I discussed with Secretary Sebelius the vote in the Senate, 79-20, and the vote in the last House Congress, 270-146—including 37 Democrats—to repeal the law, but the administration sticks by the fact that they do not want that part of the law repealed.

Mr. Speaker, this administration has been telling Americans for the last 5 years that they are trying to create jobs, but they're refusing to acknowledge the jobs that are being lost because of their health care bill.

STUDENT LOAN RATES

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, by 2018, 63 percent of all American job openings are going to require some sort of post-high school education. Workers who hold bachelor's degrees make, on average, double the people who don't have bachelor's degrees.

Now, if we fail to take responsible action this month, student loan rates are going to double on 7.4 million American students. At a time when other interest rates are at historic lows, this body passed H.R. 1911, a bill that would make college more expensive.

I urge this body to pass H.R. 1433, to hold interest rates where they are in order to broaden opportunities and allow everybody a piece of the American Dream.

HONORING DR. JOSEPH COX

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an educator, leader, author, and role model for young men in Pennsylvania.

This week, Dr. Joseph Cox will preside over his final commencement ceremony as headmaster of the Haverford School, a secondary school for boys in Haverford Township, Delaware County.

Dr. Cox took office as Haverford's headmaster in 1998; and since then, he has led the school and its faculty with his firm belief that teachers and boys must be "firm, fair, funny, focused, and friendly." These qualities were the backbone of Dr. Cox's philosophy of teaching.

Dr. Cox has set a long example for men outside the classroom as well. He's a 30-year Army veteran, serving his country in Vietnam, commanding a battalion of the famous 101st Airborne Division and retiring as a colonel.