

able to address the question of an agency that buys everything and builds everything for the Federal Government, and they don't have an incentive.

□ 2120

Just last week I put an amendment on the defense authorization. I want to thank the Democrats and Republicans for being supportive. I look forward to working with them again in the agriculture bill.

But finally what I would say is that I am grateful that we are highlighting small businesses today, and I hope that I've listed a few items that we will hear from small businesses about, that we can hear your voices tell us how we can help you better, either with the IRS, with sequestration, with the outreach in the Small Business Administration or working with the General Services Administration so that you have more opportunity to participate as a small business.

Now let me cite a few of my businesses, as I go to my seat, in Texas. I want to celebrate Frenchy's, the Creuzot family, that has been in the chicken frying business for 50 years plus. Yes, I have a great excitement that they have taken that business and they are in the marketing business of making food products that they are selling to grocery stores. They've grown from being that place where the students from Texas Southern University would go and the rest of us would go by expanding. They have kept people hired for 50 years. Their father has gone on to glory, their mother is still alive, but the children have kept it alive. I want to salute them because it is a business of the family. They came from Louisiana, made their way over in this direction.

I want to salute Kase Lawal and CAMAC as one of the only standing energy companies owned by an African American in the United States, along with Osyka, owned by Michael Harness, and a pipeline company, Milton Carroll, who's had Precision Instruments for a number of years that was in the oil drilling business. I want to salute them.

I want to salute Cool Runnings, my first visit to them, a Jamaican restaurant. They have taken their business and grown it—in Houston, Texas by the way. To be able to have a restaurant and a takeout business is great. I want to salute the Houston Black Expo, because they are having their big event on June 21 and businesses all over Houston will be benefiting from Mr. Love's great effort in the Houston Black Expo.

Finally, I want to conclude by saying that small businesses are in fact the backbone of America. I know that there will be a great opportunity for us to expand on that.

Let me close by thanking you, Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. HORSFORD, thank you so very much for highlighting what is truly the infrastructure of jobs in America, small businesses and minor-

ity-owned businesses, women-owned businesses. Thank you for your courtesy.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlelady from Texas for her very eloquent and thoughtful remarks and for her putting forth some very important policy prescriptions for what we in the Congress can do to help advance the agenda on behalf of small businesses all across this country, and certainly in the women- and minority-owned business context.

I also want to note, I am thankful that Representative CLARKE mentioned one of the important immigrant businesses that began in the Bronx, New York, but has spread all across the country, the Golden Crust Caribbean Bakery and Grill, as well as I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas for highlighting some of the important businesses that have sprouted up in Houston, Texas. Those are just a few examples of what entrepreneurs in the black immigrant community, in the African American community, have done all across the land. All we're saying is we want to make sure that we provide these businessmen and -women the same opportunities that others throughout time in America have had, because if we do, they will be able to translate their entrepreneurial spirit, their innovative ideas, their vision, into reality that will make economic sense for their communities and lead to the hiring of American citizens and others who need the employment opportunity that these small businesses will continue to generate.

Just a few observations in closing. One of the things that was mentioned earlier today on the floor was the fact that many small businesses confront an uncertain economic environment. And as a result of this uncertainty, they are unable to move forward in any concrete fashion because they don't know when the next crisis will hit our economy: Are we going to default on our debt? Are we going to fall over the fiscal cliff? How long are we going to be dealing with sequestration?

I would suggest to my good friends on the other side of the aisle that if we really want to help out small businesses and entrepreneurs, we've got to figure out a way to come together and find common ground as it relates to moving our economy forward, because as long as we're in this period of uncertainty, it will be difficult for small businesses and for entrepreneurs to take any step forward as it relates to growing their businesses and allowing them to be more prosperous.

Now there is a vehicle for us to try and find common ground. For 4 years, my good friends on the other side of the aisle were complaining about the fact that we were not in regular order, that the Senate failed to pass a budget. Well, this year a budget resolution was passed in the House of Representatives. A budget resolution was passed in the Senate. Two very different visions for where we should go as a country. But

the vehicle to find common ground is to move forward with a conference committee. The majority in the Senate has indicated they are prepared to move forward and appoint conferees, but the Speaker of the people's House refuses to do so, even though for the last 4 years folks were complaining about the absence of regular order.

If you want to do something about small businesses, what we should do in America is figure out how we in the Congress can come together, find common ground and create some economic certainty so these entrepreneurs can move forward.

I don't know if my good friend has any parting comments, but let me just say that we in the CBC are committed to continuing to stand up for entrepreneurship in America, for opportunity, for the fruitful pursuit of the American Dream through innovation, and we extend an olive branch to Members of the other side of the aisle on this issue and on all other issues so we can finally find a way to come together and move this economy forward in a way that should benefit all Americans.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate American small businesses during the 50th Annual National Small Business Week, it is important that we recognize minority entrepreneurs and their contributions to local economies all across the country. Small businesses serve as the backbone of America's economy, and minority-owned enterprises have played a critical role in our Nation's economic development, generating an estimated \$1 trillion in annual revenue as of 2011.

In Texas, there are more than 365,000 minority-owned firms, employing more than 690,000 individuals. Small businesses account for the majority of the employers in the State of Texas, and create a substantial number of local new jobs. Small businesses bring dynamic ideas, and generate innovative services and products, to the marketplace which are necessary for economic prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, as we honor small businesses this week, let us all reaffirm our commitment to expand economic opportunities for aspiring business owners all across the country. These enterprises are a key component to a strong economy and a flourishing middle class.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. With respect to a unanimous-consent request entered earlier today, the Chair would clarify that, under clause 7 of rule XII, a request to remove the name of a cosponsor cannot be entertained after the final committee authorized to consider the measure reports it to the House or is discharged from its consideration.

H.R. 1797 is currently on the Union Calendar and any request to remove a cosponsor at this point may not be entertained.

JOBS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HULTGREN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, as I begin, I do want to wish and hope that you and others of our colleagues had a very happy Father's Day yesterday. It is one of the most important things for fathers, and mothers, to be able to provide for their families.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I would like to talk about what for many Americans is probably the most pressing, or maybe depressing, issue our country is facing right now: jobs, unemployment and the need to create more jobs. But while we as a Nation face challenges, the roadmap to prosperity is clear. The question is, will we act on the recommendations of those who create the jobs, that drive our national economy, America's small businesses and entrepreneurs?

As I speak, the unemployment rate in the United States stands at 7.6 percent. According to the American Enterprise Institute, just 64.4 percent of working age men are employed, the lowest level by far since the Great Depression, and an astounding 5 percentage points lower than at the beginning of the current downturn. A staggering 4.4 million workers have been out of work for 27 weeks or longer.

□ 2130

In Illinois, my home State, the unemployment rate is even higher—at 9.3 percent. The unemployment rate in my home State has been at or above 8.6 percent since April of 2009; 611,000 people are currently out of work in Illinois.

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, of the 26.3 million part-time workers, 7.8 million are working part time for economic reasons, meaning the job market wasn't robust enough to support full-time positions or they could only find part-time work.

Jobs, unemployment, job growth—all of these are issues on the minds of Americans because, directly or indirectly, all Americans are affected by them. When I meet with small businesses and employers around my district, I ask them, what would it take for you to create just one more job? I would love for them to create 10 more jobs or 20 more jobs or 50 more jobs; but I ask them, what would it take for you to create just one more job? They

tell me that the best way to spur job creation and economic growth is to reduce government regulations, cut taxes and simplify the Tax Code, and reduce the size of government by cutting spending.

Having a full-time, stable job and going to work every day is necessary just to meet the challenges of daily living. Americans' pocketbooks are pummeled every day. Take gas prices, for instance. The nationwide average price for a gallon of gas has jumped by more than \$1 in the last 4 years from \$2.58 a gallon in June of 2009 to \$3.64 a gallon in June of this year.

The price of gas in Illinois right now is averaging \$4.08 a gallon. That's 15 cents per gallon higher than this time last year. In the Chicago area and in my district, prices are even higher. The average price for a gallon of regular gas is a ridiculous \$4.28. This is just one example of how everyday life is becoming less and less affordable for ordinary Americans.

Creating good, full-time jobs must be our priority. But small business owners in my district tell me that in the current "business averse" climate, this is difficult, if not impossible, for them to do.

Jeff, the president of a small industrial pump manufacturing company, is not hiring. He would like to, but he says he can't. He says that "business owners have to be optimistic that the business environment will be suitable for business growth." He goes on to say, however, "The unfriendly business climate coming from Washington and the huge deficit spending reduces optimism that the business climate will continue to improve or even remain stable." Jeff also says, "Government regulations and high taxation create uncertainty—and government regulation and inflationary policies are driving up the cost of hiring. The primary resource of business needs is employees."

Then there's Tom, the president of a raw materials distribution company in my district, who says "the biggest thing holding me back from hiring is uncertainty of the future business climate." Tom said, "We have already seen health care cost increases of nearly 20 percent year over year in early 2013, which was on top of the 12 percent increase in 2012." Tom also stated, "We pay for 75 percent of the cost of health care for our employees. The parts of health care legislation yet to be implemented will probably penalize us even more for doing the right thing. We do not understand how health care legislation will impact our business."

The recommendations of the small businesses that create the jobs in this country—the "engines of the economy"—are critical to increasing employment and spurring growth in our national economy.

Reducing the regulatory burden on small businesses is one critical factor toward inducing them to hire more workers. The burdensome nature of

proposed Federal regulations is making long-term planning for businesses and growth virtually impossible. An inability to plan is having a paralyzing effect on local investment and hiring.

According to the National Federation of Independent Business, in only the last 3 months there have been 6,669 regulatory changes posted or notices posted on the Federal regulatory Web site. That's an average of 74 regulations per day. Let me repeat that: NFIB's own study says in only the last 3 months there have been 6,669 regulatory changes posted or notices posted on the Federal regulatory Web site, an average of 74 regulations every single day.

This regulatory morass forces small businesses to hold onto any extra revenue they may have for fear of new compliance costs. This means foregoing opportunities to invest or hire new workers. Some businesses are forced to close altogether.

A recent poll of the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Federation of Independent Business found that 62 percent of small business owners and manufacturers say the United States' own regulations, rules, and taxes impact their businesses more negatively than foreign competition. So our own regulations, according to a majority of business owners, are more harmful to them or more threatening to them than foreign competition.

Small businesses are the engine of our Nation's economy. They create about two-thirds of new jobs in the United States. They employ more than half of the private sector workforce. We need to unleash their potential.

So what can be done? Well, we must require regulatory authorities to review their regulations for usefulness and relevance and amend them as necessary to get rid of them if they are obsolete.

I have introduced legislation to do just that. H.R. 309, the Regulatory Sunset and Review Act, requires Federal agencies to regularly review regulations on their books and establish a process to sunset those that are duplicative, conflicting, or no longer necessary.

Small businesses need a seat at the table at the earliest stages of crafting regulations. Too often, regulators generating rules have little or no contact with the businesses affected by those regulations they implement and, thus, little knowledge of the impact on jobs.

Regulators need to assess the long-term costs and benefits of regulations—including how they will affect job loss and job creation—using the best available tools and adopt only those regulations whose benefits clearly outweigh the costs.

The regulatory process requires transparency and accountability. Sharing publicly the reasons why certain public input was not incorporated and disclosing the data, methods, and models underlying Federal regulatory decisionmaking are also important steps to restoring trust to the Federal regulatory process.