

Fork Fire—the Nation's highest priority—told me this week that the behavior of the fire is unprecedented. Because of all of the beetle-killed timber, unnaturally dense forest, and dry conditions, the fire has acted in a way that defies computer models and has been incredibly devastating.

The most tragic part of all of this is the occurrence of these forest fires could be reduced, if not outright prevented, with commonsense healthy forest management.

With this in mind, I have put forward the following resolution:

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that allocating the appropriate resources to wildland fire management is needed to protect the environment, the economy and the people of the United States, and for other purposes.

Whereas, the thoughts and prayers of the Members of the House of Representatives go out to the individuals and families who have lost loved ones and their homes to wildfire;

Whereas, the Members of the House of Representatives express the utmost gratitude to wildland firefighters and first responders who bravely protect life and property;

Whereas, nearly 10 million acres of land burned in the United States in 2012;

Whereas, the acreage burned by wildfires has steadily increased over the past decade;

Whereas, the most destructive fire in the history of the State of Colorado and the largest fire in the history of the State of New Mexico destroyed hundreds of homes and hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat in 2012;

Whereas, Federal forest and land management officials continue to request fewer funds to fight wildfires;

Whereas, the funding available for wildland fire suppression in the Wildland Fire Management Account of the Forest Service was cut by \$461 million from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2013;

Whereas, the Wildland Fire Hazardous Fuels Reduction Account of the Forest Service was cut by \$22 million from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2013, and the latest budget request asks for another \$116 million decrease;

Whereas, the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program, a program that benefits local economies and improves the overall health of the landscape, has taken a 20 percent cut in funding over the past 2 years;

Whereas, senior Forest Service officials have described a Federal land management system hamstrung by "analysis paralysis;"

Whereas, decades of Federal mismanagement have increased fuel loads on Federal forest land and led to increased risk of catastrophic wildfire;

Whereas, the U.S. Forest Service has replaced responsible, environmentally sound timber thinning with allowing forests to burn through overcrowded forests;

Whereas, the bark beetle epidemic has destroyed 40 million acres of forest in North America; and

Whereas, academic studies indicate that bark beetle-infected trees can still be salvaged for timber to be used in mills and contribute to small businesses and local economies.

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

Allocating the appropriate resources to wildland fire management is needed to protect the environment, the economy, and the people of the United States;

The bravery of the men and women who risk their lives to extinguish these conflagrations can never be questioned;

A healthy forest policy must include prescribed thinning;

Funding to fight and prevent wildfires is essential to public safety, environmental protection, and economic growth;

People who live in or near our national forests have a right to expect the greatest possible protection for their homes and properties;

The government should not continue to acquire more land when the hundreds of millions of acres already controlled by the government are mismanaged; and

The Forest Service should proactively manage Federal forest lands in a manner that protects life and property, prevents catastrophic wildfire, promotes forest and watershed health, and creates jobs and economic development in the forest products industry.

I invite all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in standing with the people of Colorado, standing with all in the West who have been impacted by catastrophic wildfire. Join me in thanking the firefighters who are risking their lives to protect others. Join me in the action to prevent future devastation and restore our forests to health.

□ 1030

EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Minutes ago, a 5-4 decision, written by Justice Kennedy, ruled that DOMA is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause. Today's decision is a monumental step forward in the long march towards GLBT equality.

Forty years ago, I chaired a committee hearing in the Oregon legislature on discrimination based on sexual orientation. It was an eye-opening experience for me. It was the first time someone ever acknowledged to me their sexual orientation, let alone the discrimination they faced living a life of repression and fear. In the course of those 40 years, it has been a privilege to have been able to help fight to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.

We have watched a political movement emerge from the ashes of defeat, on discriminatory ballot measures across the country. It's exciting to see how this movement has been led at first by the people in the GLBT community, who refused to accept defeat, who, despite significant personal sacrifice, have stepped forward to declare who they are, who they love, what they want, and why they want it.

It has been encouraging to watch business leaders step forward, no longer just the more progressive elements of the business community. Lately, it has become mainstream to acknowledge that diversity in the workforce demands a nondiscrimination policy—that regardless of a person's sexual orientation and to whom they choose to commit, it makes no

difference in the eyes of a thoughtful, successful employer.

It was exciting for me to watch and to participate in this year's Pride Parade in Portland, to note the leadership of virtually every institution in our community—businesses like Nike and Standard Insurance, Northwest Natural, grocery stores, colleges, hospitals and health professionals, universities, and churches—all marching proudly in a show of solidarity, a rejection of discrimination, support for diversity in the workplace for our friends, neighbors and relatives.

Today's Supreme Court decision marks the most significant milestone yet in this struggle. By striking down DOMA, the Supreme Court has cast aside a major barrier to our GLBT friends, neighbors and relatives to be able to live complete lives—to be able to avoid discrimination, the stigma, the economic disadvantage. It's a signal that this will be the final chapter for a society that recognizes the worth of all human beings, acknowledges the right of all human beings to live as they wish, love who they will and be able to enjoy the multiple benefits that come from being involved in committed relationships and legal marriages.

It's not just a milestone for our brothers and sisters in the GLBT community. It's a significant benefit for all society. If one truly believes that marriage is one of the cornerstones that we encourage for committed relationships, for people to be able to raise their families, look after one another in a stable, committed relationship, why shouldn't they be able to marry? Why should the Federal Government refuse to recognize that and discriminate? Some of the most traditional elements of our society who are dragging their feet should be in the forefront in helping lead this charge.

Now, we must be vigilant. There are still pockets of resistance, hostility, bigotry, and discrimination. There are State laws that need to be adjusted, but it will no longer be sanctioned by Federal policy, and that is the critical difference. Once it is no longer legal to discriminate, we are truly in the home stretch for the type of society we want.

This critical step was a narrow 5-4 decision, but it was a victory nonetheless. The path forward is a little more clear, and it's going to be a little easier. But before we start this next chapter, it's fitting that we celebrate this moment—the accomplishment of what it represents and what it will mean for America.

That temple of justice that is the Supreme Court looks a little different this morning, and I hope Americans will appreciate it and think about where we go from here.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 34 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Michael Rucker, Bible Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we come into Your presence and thank You for all that You have done for this country.

We would ask Your leadership in the decisions that need to be made to keep this country great. Help us to put aside our personal feelings and do what is right for this great Nation and the people of this Nation.

Lord, we would ask You to help all the States that have had catastrophes the past few months. Continue to heal and restore back the things that have been lost or destroyed in these events.

We are so thankful for Your watch care over us. Keep us free from the tyranny of those who want to take our freedom away. Watch over our men and women in the military.

We appreciate the liberty You have so graciously blessed us with. We want to give You all the praise and the honor and the glory, and we thank You for it.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND MICHAEL RUCKER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, our guest chaplain today has been the pastor of Bible Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, for the past 20 years; but his ministry and passion for spreading

the word of God has never been confined to the walls of any church building.

Mike Rucker, known to many as the "Flying Preacher," has been combining his love of auto racing and the ministry since 1985 when he and his wife of 40 years, Sherrie, began Rucker Racing Ministries. Since then, they have traveled to racetracks across the United States, spreading the good word while he races and while Sherrie often sings the national anthem.

Pastor Rucker also serves as the chaplain for the Wichita County Sheriff's Office and for the Wichita Falls Police Department and is a regular on Joe Tom White's "Rise 'n Shine" radio show. In short, he has never been afraid to roll up his sleeves and be in the world while sharing the Gospel with folks across Texas and the Nation.

Pastor Rucker graduated from the Arlington Baptist College in Arlington, Texas. He and Sherrie have two sons, Michael and Matthew, and one daughter, Marlene, and five grandchildren.

I am pleased to help welcome Pastor Rucker, the "Flying Preacher," to the House today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

A WAR ON COAL

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

Ms. JENKINS. Yesterday, the President called for more energy taxes and regulations that will hurt the economy and job creation. One of the President's senior advisers even said, "A war on coal is exactly what's needed."

In my State, where coal supplies nearly 75 percent of the electricity and where coal plants support thousands of jobs, I don't think a war on coal is what Kansans need. Reducing one of the most affordable sources of energy will cause prices to go up, and that makes life harder for people.

The administration needs to stop picking winners and losers. This approach has failed. It has cost taxpayers billions of dollars, and dozens of green energy companies that were offered taxpayer dollars are bankrupt or floundering and are laying off workers.

Instead of favoring special interests, the House plan supports a real all-of-the-above approach to energy that will incentivize job creation, lower energy costs for Americans, and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

JUSTICE AND EQUITY RESTORED IN AMERICA

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Almost 17 years to the day—that's a long time—the House of Representatives passed the so-called Defense of Marriage Act. At that time, I went to the floor and voted with a small minority against this legislation. I said it was unnecessary, discriminatory, and unconstitutional.

It took 17 years to work through the system and to finally get the Supreme Court to act and to decide that, indeed, the Defense of Marriage Act, so-called, is unconstitutional and is a deprivation of the equal liberty of persons it has protected in the Fifth Amendment:

"The Federal statute is invalid, for no legitimate purpose overcomes the purpose and effect to disparage and injure those whom the State, by its marriage laws, sought to protect in personhood and dignity," as written by Justice Kennedy, "by seeking to displace this protection and treating those persons as living in marriages less respected than others."

Today, the Supreme Court restored justice and equity in America.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO FIX STUDENT LOANS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, more than a month ago, the House passed H.R. 1911, a bill based on the President's 2014 budget request, which would provide a market-based interest rate for student loans.

Editorial boards from across the country have lauded this bill and have called on the Senate to act on a similar proposal:

USA Today stated:

Rates on loans are now set by Washington, not markets. Obama and the House Republicans wisely call for a market solution.

The Boston Globe stated:

The solution President Obama and House Republicans have proposed would prevent what has become a frustrating annual stand-off.

The Los Angeles Times stated:

Republicans are backing a long-term solution that's similar to one President Obama proposed . . . The Senate should pass its own version . . . then work out the differences with the House.

With less than a week before student loan rates jump from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent, the Senate has failed to pass a bill that would address the issue. It's time for the Senate to come to the table.

CANYON MIDDLE SCHOOL—SCHOOL TO WATCH AWARD

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Canyon Middle School in Castro Valley, California, in my congressional district, was recently recognized as one of