

Mr. President, let's look at the science that your administration has invested money into. Chemical looping may be the way that we can both have what we want. I want and my colleagues want jobs for America, tax dollars coming in off of coal severance, natural gas, offshore drilling. We want to see those tax revenues coming in because then we can use that to help Americans. We want to help all Americans. You want to clean up the environment, and so do we. We can do it, but we have to be reasonable.

Let's go forward and look at another Democrat, and that would be Senator JOE MANCHIN, and he touches on this point in his comments in the Bluefield paper. U.S. Senator JOE MANCHIN, Democrat of West Virginia, said:

Obama's plan will have disastrous consequences for not only the coal industry, but also American jobs and the economy.

Democrat MANCHIN goes on:

The regulations the President wants to force on coal are not feasible. And if it's not feasible, it's not reasonable.

It's clear now that the President has declared a war on coal. It's simply unacceptable that one of the key elements of his climate change proposal places regulations on coal that are completely impossible to meet with existing technology. The fact is clear: our own Energy Department reports that our country will get 37 percent of our energy from coal until the year 2040. Removing coal from our energy mix will have a disastrous consequence for our recovering economy.

These policies punish American businesses by putting them at a competitive disadvantage with our global competitors, and those competitors burn seven-eighths of the world's coal, and they're not going to stop using coal any time soon. It's only common sense to use our domestic resources, and that includes our coal.

Senator MANCHIN is absolutely right because let me tell you that when we burn coal here and we create jobs here in the United States of America, as you well know, that means we're not sending those manufacturing jobs overseas to another country. Particularly if those countries are in Asia or in some of the emerging economies, they don't have anywhere near the regulations we have. They don't have the regulations we had in the year 2000 or the year 2005 to comply with.

So we can create the goods here, create jobs for Americans, create tax dollars which will help us deal with the national debt and deficit problem. We can do all of that here, and we can do it by burning coal more efficiently and cleaner than the countries that we're competing with. But instead the President wants to ignore all that. He wants to ignore those facts and go forward and say, No, we can't do that.

I go on with the quotes from the San Francisco Chronicle because right now he's not singing the same tune. He goes on to say after the "skyrocket."

Even regardless of what I say about whether coal is good or bad, because I'm capping greenhouse gases, coal power plants, you know, natural gas, you name it, whatever the plants were, whatever the industry was, they would have to retrofit their operations. That will cost money. They will pass that money on to consumers.

Who are the consumers? I believe the consumers are the average family out

there, the single parent trying to raise children, the elderly, the folks trying to struggle with that \$36,000-a-year-annual-household income, the miners and the workers in the factories that produce the goods that help the miners do their job who now don't have jobs, they're still going to have that electric bill coming in.

You know, it's interesting that the President actually cut in his budget proposal the LIHEAP money, which is the program to help the people who can't afford to pay their heat bill. So at the same time we're creating more unemployment, we are also going to take away some of the benefits that helps those folks. It just doesn't make sense. The President's policies don't make sense, and I submit to you all that the President needs to rethink this. He needs to look at clean-coal technology because that's the winner for America, for American jobs, for American prosperity and for America to go forward into the future, leading the way.

Mr. CRAMER. Thank you so much for your insights and your experience in this very important industry of coal and all of the things that it supports and that support it.

I think that an appropriate way to sort of wrap this discussion up is to remind folks that while we are advocates for domestic energy development, American energy production that creates a competitive global advantage in all areas, we are also good stewards of the environment.

Let me just close with this. These counties in North Dakota that have seven power plants burning coal, all got A ratings from the American Lung Association. And I believe that the same God that created the beauty and splendor of the oceans and the mountains and the prairies and the topsoil, put the minerals underneath it, and we ought to use all of them for our benefit.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

□ 1550

U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a place that is very near and dear to my heart, a place that is the source of great beauty, the source of millions of jobs for this country, an economic driver, not just for the region that I represent, not just the State in which my district resides, but for this entire country and, for that matter, this hemisphere.

I am here today to speak about the U.S.-Mexico border, and I have the privilege and honor of serving with

other Members who represent significant sections of the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border. We are joined today by SUSAN DAVIS from California; PETE GALLEGOS from Texas; and FILEMON VELA, who is also from Texas. But before I yield to them, I want to talk a little bit about my special section of the U.S.-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas.

El Paso is home to more than 800,000 people who, along with the citizens of Ciudad Juarez, form one of the largest binational communities anywhere in the world. El Paso has for decades served as the Ellis Island for Mexico and much of Latin America. Literally millions of immigrants who are now U.S. citizens, who are productive members of our communities, have passed through the ports of entry in the district that I have the honor of representing.

Beyond that and beyond the human dimension of what the border produces, the beauty, the wonder, the creativity, the culture that develops from there, the border also is an important part of who we are as a country and our past. It is one of the most essential places anywhere in the United States today, as seen by the debate that is taking place in the Senate; and it is the future of this country, whether you look at it demographically, whether you look at it economically, whether you look at it culturally or by any other measure, the border is absolutely critical to the United States.

I want to talk about a couple of aspects that help to define this critical place that the border holds for this country. I thought I would start with trade. There are more than 6 million jobs here in the United States that are dependent on the trade that crosses our ports of entry at our southern land ports between the United States and Mexico. More than 100,000 of those jobs are in the district that I represent in El Paso, Texas. The State of Texas itself has 400,000 jobs that depend on this trade. More than \$300 billion a year flows between our two countries. Mexico is the second largest export market for the United States. We are the largest export market for Mexico. And a critical aspect of the trade that comes into the United States from Mexico that is very important to remember is that unlike any other trading partner that we have, more than 40 percent of the value of the trade that comes north from Mexico originated in the United States. So we are literally producing together even those things that are imported into the United States from Mexico.

Again, Mexico is a source of jobs. It's the source of so many things that are positive to our economy, our culture, and to our communities; and all that comes to a head at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Now, if you're listening to the debate that is taking place right now about comprehensive immigration reform and some of the provisions that have passed out of the Senate and some of the commentary that you read in the newspapers or the talking heads that you see on TV, you might not know that. You might instead see the U.S.-Mexico border as a source of anxiety, as a threat to this country's security and its future, as something to be feared, to be locked down, to be secured, and to be forgotten.

We're here to tell you today that the facts and the truth and the reality could not be further from the current debate that you're hearing on the public airwaves today. In fact, the community that I represent, El Paso, Texas, is the safest city in the United States bar none. It was the safest city last year in the United States, and the year before that. In fact, for the last 10 years, El Paso, Texas, has been among the five safest cities anywhere in the United States.

But El Paso is not alone for its security along the U.S.-Mexico border. San Diego is the second safest city in the United States. Laredo recently ranked as one of the top safest cities of any city in the United States. In fact, if you're on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border, chances are you're safer there than you could be anywhere else in the country.

And these benefits do not just accrue to El Paso, to Texas, and to the border lands. There are jobs, tens of thousands of jobs, hundreds of thousands of jobs in States throughout the country, billions of dollars of economic growth related to our trade with Mexico, not just in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, but Montana, Florida, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Again, it is important to emphasize that even that trade coming north from Mexico in many cases originated in these other States that are not border States.

So one of the messages that we hope carries from today is regardless whether you are in El Paso, Texas, and understand the border inherently, or if you're in Detroit, Michigan, you have a vested interest in a healthy border. A healthy border equals a healthy U.S. economy. That equals more jobs, more economic growth, and more positive factors for the U.S. going forward.

So with that introduction of what it is that we hope to cover today, I now want to yield to PETE GALLEGU, who by land mass represents almost a quarter of the State of Texas, someone who has served in the State legislature, someone who lives and understands the border and can speak to the positive dynamics that we see there.

Mr. GALLEGU. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman O'ROURKE, my fellow west Texan, with whom I share the privilege of representing El Paso County, for yielding me this time to talk about some issues that are critical to the border.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I don't want to use any incendiary rhet-

oric. I don't want to use any flashy words because, frankly, I think that the people of this country elected their Members of Congress not to cheerlead or use harsh rhetoric or add fuel to fires, but to solve problems. So I would like to talk about some of the challenges that in real terms this Congress has the opportunity to make a difference on.

The 23rd Congressional District, which I have the privilege of representing, runs some 800 miles along the Texas-Mexico border. It includes five ports of entry: Eagle Pass, Del Rio, Presidio, Fabens, and El Paso. No other congressional district shares a larger border with Mexico. The district is both rural and urban; and, frankly, it looks like what the rest of Texas will soon look like because it is evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. Because this district has the largest border with Mexico, the policy discussion about border security, about immigration reform, these conversations greatly impact the 23rd Congressional District. Frankly, they impact the entire State of Texas. The passage or failure of immigration reform will profoundly affect us all.

In Texas, there are approximately 1.7 million unauthorized immigrants comprising 6.7 percent of the State's population. According to a 2006 report from the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, who was a Republican office holder at the time, she indicated in her report the absence of the estimated 1.4 million undocumented immigrants in Texas in fiscal year 2005 would have been a loss to our gross State product of \$17.7 billion. Well, as public servants, as I indicated early on, the weight of our words is rather heavy. I have asked the current controller to provide an updated study to shed some light on the true impact, the current impact, that our State has as a result of these undocumented immigrants.

□ 1600

The study would ensure that all 38 Members of Congress from Texas, and everyone else, can have adequate information during what is a very important policy debate.

A more recent study from the Immigration Policy Center noted that if all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Texas, the State would lose \$69.3 billion in economic activity. The State would also lose \$30.8 billion in gross State product, and approximately 403,174 jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time.

Well, after more than two decades, I'm very encouraged that comprehensive immigration reform is clearing hurdles in the Senate. I'm hoping that our colleagues in the House will take it up as well as soon as possible.

Make no mistake. The legislation that's in the Senate, it's not what I would have drafted. Those of us on the border know that what we need are more Customs and border protection agents at our ports of entry.

Many jobs in Texas, much of our economy, in fact, is inextricably linked to international trade. In fact, more than 50 million Americans work for companies that engage in international trade. That comes to us from the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Trade with Mexico represents one of our biggest economic drivers and pumps billions of dollars into our economy every day. Every day, think of this, \$1 billion in cross-border commerce happens between the U.S. and Mexico. That equates to some \$45 million in commerce per hour.

Staffing increases at our ports would decrease wait times at our ports of entry, would increase security, and would lead to more effective screening and entry for those who are traveling, as well as for imports that are coming into the United States. It is those long lines at our ports of entry that hinder economic development and harm our economy.

Yes, it is true; no one will argue that our Nation's doorways must be secure and that our trade and our commerce along the border on which many small and large businesses depend must be allowed to move efficiently. And I'm hopeful that as debate on the immigration issue continues, as we continue our conversations, that we can increase the staffing at CBP, a policy move that does, in all truth, make sense for Texas.

But as far as the fence is concerned, the border fence, in a time of tight budgets, I have to say that I'm very perplexed as to why Congress would spend so much money on an ineffective project. You'd be hard-pressed to find too many Texans, particularly those who live and work or have been raised along the border, who support the notion of a fence.

Let me give you a couple of examples and a couple of quotes:

The idea that you're going to build a wall from Brownsville to El Paso is just—it's ridiculous on its face.

That quote comes from the Governor of Texas, Rick Perry, just last year.

How about this quote?

The border fence is a 19th century solution to a 21st century problem.

That quote comes to us from Senator JOHN CORNYN of Texas in 2006.

As I've said, I'm opposed to the notion of a border fence and would rather that we shore up our ports to speed up commerce. A fence isn't something that those of us who represent the border support, but we understand that it is important to bring families out of the shadows.

Economically, here is what comprehensive immigration reform means to those of us along the border and elsewhere:

To each and every one of us, it means that our deficits will decrease, while GDP, productivity, investment, and employment will increase. Our country will save over \$1 trillion, or about \$1 trillion over the next two decades. More than 10 million people will pay

\$459 billion just in income and payroll taxes during the first 10 years. And over that decade, we will reduce the Federal deficit by \$197 billion and will add more than \$200 billion into the Social Security trust fund. The decade after that, comprehensive immigration reform will reduce the Federal deficit by \$700 billion.

In Texas, all the key players are standing steadfast for immigration reform. It's supported by the chambers of commerce. It's supported by the Texas Farm Bureau. It's supported by labor, and it's supported by public opinion in our State because it makes economic sense.

My paternal grandfather worked cattle and founded a small family restaurant that launched our family into the middle class; my maternal grandfather built fences across the hard-scrabble landscape of far west Texas; and today, I have the privilege of representing the 23rd District in Congress.

In this Nation, our values teach us that families stick together and that hard work, not circumstances, should shape our future. It really is a country of opportunity. Our Nation becomes stronger as more people pledge allegiance to our flag and commit themselves fully to our Nation and to our economy.

I'm hopeful that we can move quickly on this, this very important policy matter that greatly impacts not only the 23rd District, but the entire State of Texas and, frankly, our country as a whole. Immigration reform is right. The time is right, and Texans are counting on us.

It is significant, if you've ever been in the Texas capitol. Years ago, our forefathers and foremothers who built that beautiful pink granite building faced the front door in a certain direction. Our front door of the State capitol doesn't face north, towards Washington. Our front door faces south, towards Mexico. The front door to our Nation, as Governor Richards used to refer to it, is a very important doorway for trade, for commerce. It's historically significant, not only for Texas, but for the rest of our country.

Again, immigration reform is right for Texas, it's right for America, and it's something that this Congress should make sure happens as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very grateful to Congressman O'ROURKE for yielding me this time.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I want to thank Representative GALLEGO for his very eloquent support of moving forward with comprehensive immigration reform and doing so in a rational, fact-based manner. And I think he would agree with me that we are very pleased to see progress being made in the Senate. Whether it was originally with the Group of 8 or the 60 or more Senators who have since joined them in key supportive votes to move this forward, I'm happy that we're making progress.

What concerns me are some of the provisions that specifically relate to the U.S.-Mexico border:

You're talking about 600 miles of border fencing and walls that currently exist being expanded to more than 1,400 miles of the 2,000-mile border. You're talking about a Border Patrol force that today is more than 20,000, which is more than double what it was in 2001, being doubled yet again to more than 40,000, and all this for the cost of upwards of \$50 billion a year. And as Representative GALLEGO pointed out, this is at a time of tight budgets, of sequester, of record deficits and debt. We simply can't afford to move forward like this.

But I will grant the proponents of these measures this: there's a certain crude logic to that. If you have a problem with immigration, if you have a problem with flows northward from Mexico and Latin America, then putting a wall in place, doubling the Border Patrol that's patrolling that line, there's a crude logic to it. And it's a solution, albeit a 19th century solution, as our Senator said, to a problem, but it is a problem that, by all accounts, does not exist.

Net migration from Mexico last year was zero. We had record southbound deportations, record low northbound apprehensions. We're spending \$18 billion a year on border security, twice what we were spending in 2006.

As I mentioned before, we've more than doubled the size of the Border Patrol, and the border is as secure as it has ever been. El Paso, the safest city; San Diego, the second safest. The U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border is the safest place to be anywhere in the United States today. We had no less authority than the Secretary of Homeland Security say the border is as safe as it has ever been. The head of the Border Patrol said the border is as safe as it's ever been. By any rational measure, that is not where the problem exists.

This next slide, I think, in an image and in a picture, shows you where the problem exists today.

□ 1610

This slide here represents the Paso del Norte port of entry coming back into El Paso from Ciudad Juarez. There are 6 million crossings each year between El Paso and Juarez, and many of those coming north are U.S. citizens, Mexican citizens, and tourists visiting our region, who face these kinds of lines that can last upwards of 4 hours to enter the U.S. And for those of you who have not been to El Paso, you may not know that we, with Ciudad Juarez, are literally joined at the hip. Our street grids flow into each other. Our families live on both sides of the border. We may wake up in El Paso, do business in Juarez, and come back at the end of the day—or vice versa. We are truly a binational community. And when you choke commerce that supports tens of thousands jobs in my

community, jobs throughout this State and this country, you're doing a disservice not just to us—because I don't expect the rest of Congress to care about the border, necessarily—not just to the State of Texas, but you are doing harm to the national economy.

So if we need to spend more money, if we need to put tighter focus on the border, this is where we need it. And those Border Patrol agents that we have are doing a remarkable job, and we stand fully behind them and want to make sure that we support them in their current objectives and that we can afford to pay them what they're owed, which by the way, under the sequester, we're not doing today.

Instead of taxing resources where we already have it covered, let's move those resources to our ports of entry and make sure that we have Customs and Border protection officers who can speed the flow of legitimate travel, trade, and commerce through our ports of entry. That will create jobs not just for my district and improve the quality of life not just in El Paso and along the border, but it will be a net benefit to this country. It will be an investment that pays back many, many times over.

And now to hear from somebody who also understands the U.S.-Mexico border quite well and who lives there, who has his family there, has grown up there, and has done a remarkable job representing the interests of the U.S. border, I'd like to yield to FILEMON VELA from Brownsville, Texas.

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. O'ROURKE for putting together this Special Order.

Today, I rise in opposition to provisions which condition a pathway to citizenship on the construction of additional border fence. Historically, our country has criticized the construction of barriers of all kinds. For instance, in 1987, President Reagan stood at the Brandenburg Gate near the Berlin Wall and said, Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall. Two years later, the wall was demolished, ushering in a new era of economic harmony.

As someone who lives on the border in Brownsville, Texas, I can state with certainty the argument that construction of additional border fence will stem the flow of undocumented immigration and increase border security is flawed, for many reasons.

First, erecting some more border fence drives a wedge between border communities which are culturally united. Many who live on the U.S. side of the southern border have family and friends who live on the Mexican side and vice versa. The current border fence has come to symbolize divisiveness and serves as a daily reminder of a flawed immigration system. For this reason, the residents on both sides of the border oppose the border fence.

Second, the construction of additional border fence will damage already fragile wildlife and natural resources. Bobcats, coyotes, owls, lizards,

snakes, and raccoons all rely on habitat on both sides of the border. Additional fencing will adversely impact these and other animal habitat.

Third, erecting additional border fence will cost billions of dollars. This money could be more efficiently spent on less intrusive, high-tech border surveillance and economic aid to border communities in the U.S. and Mexico. The focus of these provisions is misguided, as it promotes a quick fix to a problem that is rooted in violence and lack of opportunity. Since 2006, approximately 71,500 people have been killed as a result of cartel violence in Mexico.

While Mexico's overall economy has performed exceedingly well in the recent past, economic conditions along the U.S.-Mexico border remain consistently stagnant. The real solution for reducing the flow of undocumented immigrants into this country from Mexico is to promote economic development on both sides of the border, thereby providing more economic opportunities for an ever-increasing population. Fostering a vibrant border economy will mean that young men and women will have an option other than organized crime to provide for their families.

While this amendment ignores the fundamental cause of illegal immigration into the United States, it also does not account for the deep trade ties between the United States and Mexico. As my colleague from Texas mentioned, last year alone the United States greatly benefited from the estimated \$500 billion in trade with Mexico, supporting 6 million jobs across the United States. Trade with Mexico even impacted the economy of Alaska and our island State of Hawaii. Importantly, trade with Mexico is critical to the economies of States on the border and those far removed from the Mexican border. And I will give a few examples.

In the State of New Hampshire, for instance, the total trade volume between the State of New Hampshire and the country of Mexico is \$1.5 billion. Computers and other electronic products amount to \$680 million, or 72 percent, of New Hampshire's total exports to Mexico. And 28,531 jobs in the State of New Hampshire depend on trade with Mexico.

In the State of New York, the total volume of trade between the country of Mexico and the State of New York is \$5.67 billion. New York exports \$2.6 billion of goods to Mexico, and 381,238 jobs in New York rely on trade with Mexico. Mexico ranks among New York's 10 international markets, with 384,000 travelers per year. Jewelry is one of the largest exports from New York to Mexico, with \$500 million in value.

The State of Pennsylvania, the total volume of trade between the State of Pennsylvania and the country of Mexico is \$5.59 billion, and 246,409 jobs in Pennsylvania rely on trade with Mexico. Primary metal manufacturers are

Pennsylvania's top sector in exports to Mexico, representing \$560 million and 21 percent of the State's total exports to Mexico. In addition, \$547 million in primary chemicals are exported to Mexico.

In the South, the State of Tennessee, the total trade volume between the State of Tennessee and the country of Mexico is \$7.62 billion. Tennessee exports \$3.81 billion to Mexico. Twenty-three percent of all cotton exported to Mexico from the U.S. comes from Tennessee, making the State the second largest exporter of cotton to Mexico, with \$256 million in revenue. Also, \$855 million worth of transportation equipment is exported to Mexico from the State of Tennessee, and 122,085 jobs in Tennessee depend on trade with Mexico.

The State of Alabama, the total volume of trade between the State of Alabama and the country of Mexico is \$2.7 billion. Alabama exports \$1.72 billion worth of goods to Mexico. Transportation equipment is the State's largest export industry to Mexico, generating \$466 million and representing 27 percent of the State's exports to Mexico; and 86,212 jobs in the State of Alabama depend on trade with Mexico.

The State of Kansas, the total trade volume between the State of Kansas and the country of Mexico is \$2.38 billion. The State of Kansas exports \$1.63 billion in products to Mexico. Crop production is Kansas' strongest industry in terms of exports to Mexico, accounting for \$588 million in export revenue annually and 37 percent of total exports to Mexico. Eleven percent of aerospace products exported from Kansas go to Mexico. Mexico is the largest importer of corn and the third largest importer of beef from the State of Kansas. And 59,341 jobs in Kansas depend on trade with Mexico.

□ 1620

Clearly, all States benefit greatly from trade with Mexico. Erecting more border fence would chill the robust economic relationship that our country and our States enjoy with that country. Rather than constructing new hurdles to trade with Mexico, we should be tearing down trade barriers in order to promote and strengthen our relationship with our neighbor country.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I want to thank my colleague from the Rio Grande Valley. Here he is meeting the anxiety, the paranoia, and the legislation based on emotion instead of facts with the cold, hard truth of our economic interdependence with Mexico. We ignore this at our peril and to the peril of millions of jobs in this country, hundreds of billions of dollars of economic opportunity and growth.

We welcome the focus and the attention at the U.S.-Mexico border, but we want those who are watching to see the truth. The truth is we are a positive, dynamic source of jobs and economic opportunity for this hemisphere for both Mexico and, most importantly for

us in this body, here in the United States.

It is my feeling that the wall that exists today—the 600 miles of the 2,000 miles that join the United States and Mexico—the 600 miles of fencing today will soon be looked at by a majority of Americans in this country as something to be ashamed of, as folly that followed the paranoia and the anxiety that we have towards Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico border today.

When you think about the cost of this wall, the current wall cost us more than \$2.4 billion to build and will cost us another \$6.5 billion to maintain for just the next 20 years. Why would we then spend more than \$16 million per mile for additional walls that will cost us billions of dollars to build over the next 5 or 10 years and then probably hundreds of millions, if not billions, to remove once we've realized our mistake, which I hope is not too far in the future.

If there is fear and anxiety and frustration with Mexico, I'd like to know where that's coming from, because it's not coming from the facts and the figures that we see in El Paso and that we see when we look at Mexico. Mexico is a growing, dynamic, vibrant economy. It has millions of people moving into the middle class. It's modernizing. It's breaking up its monopolies.

The country of Mexico has more free trade agreements with other countries than any other country on the planet. This is a country that wants to move ahead, that wants to do well for its citizens, that's investing back in itself and is providing opportunity so that people don't seek that opportunity in other countries like the United States. I think that helps explain why net migration from Mexico into the U.S. was at zero this past year.

Again, Mexico is not a threat. The U.S.-Mexico border should not be a source of anxiety. Mexico is a big part of our future, it's been a big part of our past, and it's a positive source for those things that we want to see happen in this country.

Someone who understands that quite well from representing her district along the U.S.-Mexico border in southern California—part of a State, by the way, that has seen more than a 30 percent drop in crime over the last 10 years despite, and maybe because of, the fact that it borders Mexico and has such large immigrant populations—I'm happy now to yield the floor to my colleague from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here with my colleagues today. I certainly want to thank Mr. O'ROURKE and Mr. VELA and Mr. GALLEGOS for presenting what we all believe is so critical and so important.

It's not just about border communities and border cities that acknowledge and benefit from our relationship with the border, and particularly with the Mexican border; it really is the entire States that we're representing and

far beyond that. Because my colleague represented how much trade is done in other States throughout our country—we know it's important to national security—we also know it's important to our economic interest, because that trade fuels our economy, it stimulates our competitiveness, and it also reflects our cultural values. Those things are critically important, and we need to bring those into the discussion as well.

You know, we often talk here in Congress about the need to give businesses the certainty that they need, but honestly, look at what's been happening today. The budget standoffs and sequestration are doing just the opposite of what our businesses really need. In fact, Congress' inability to pass legislation is jeopardizing our greatest opportunity right now, which is economic growth, and that is our commerce along our borders.

Six million U.S. jobs depend on trade with Mexico. Shall I say that again? Six million U.S. jobs depend on trade with Mexico. Last year, imports from Mexico accounted for more than half of our two nations' total trade, which is about \$278 billion. Sometimes we can differ slightly on those numbers, but that's about what it is. That trade relies on modern infrastructure, it relies on roads, and it relies on ports of entry that can accommodate the enormous volume of goods coming through every single day.

But what's the reality today? Well, the reality is that our ports of entry are in various states of disarray because of underfunding for improvement and modernization projects. Our ports do not have the capacity to meet this demand, meaning that often people have to wait up to at least 2½ hours during the day of commerce and trucks up to 6.

You know, there's an app out there that tells users how long of a wait to expect. In San Diego, in the district, wait times on Sundays at the San Ysidro Port of Entry can reach 3 to 4 hours, and now and then it can even exceed that.

The other day, I was up early getting ready to board a plane to come into Washington from San Diego; and even at about 5:30 in the morning, at the ports of entry, the wait was about 1 hour and 45 minutes. And you know what? They were celebrating the fact that it was only that long.

You have to come down to the border to see this. I think for folks who don't live on a border like we have in San Ysidro in San Diego, you can't even imagine how many cars are assembling there. It's pretty spectacular. And you know what? It shouldn't be this way, and it doesn't have to be this way. No modern economy can operate under those conditions. No modern economy devotes just \$50 million to fund infrastructure projects for ports of entry for our entire Nation. Think about that: \$50 million for all of our ports of entry.

What we should be doing is viewing our ports of entry and our borders as

assets to our Nation. But instead, chronic underfunding has led to wait times that cost our country every day in total productivity loss and tax revenue. It's tremendous. Wait times translate to \$7.2 billion in output loss and cost us upwards of 62,000 jobs—62,000 jobs—people who could be working if we could make our ports of entry more efficient.

Well, we do have some good news. Congress has already authorized infrastructure improvements at the Nation's ports of entry, including critical phases at the San Ysidro Port of Entry in San Diego. We know that's the busiest land crossing in the world. So that's the good news that Congress has authorized that.

What's the bad news? The bad news is that Congress has refused to provide the funding necessary to break ground on those two additional phases. And you know what? That's just not consistent for what we talk about as needing a border security bill for this Nation. The fact that that is so underfunded and chaotic, by any means, suggests that we don't really think that we need to do the right thing when it comes to border security.

So let's place the need where it belongs. It belongs on infrastructure, and it belongs in trying to figure out what is it that's going to make a difference for this country. Well, certainly funding that border security will help on the border for ports of entry.

If there is one thing that this body should be able to do, that we should be able to come together on, it should be a smart investment that businesses want and workers need. I can assure you, that's what they want and businesses need.

So I urge my colleagues to get to work on a budget that supports our Nation's ports and our engines of economic growth and place the need for border security where it belongs. We know that it will help create the economic engines that we need for our future.

Thank you so much to my colleagues. I appreciate your bringing us together for this.

□ 1630

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you Representative DAVIS. I appreciate hearing, again, more facts, more rational arguments, from my colleague from California about the border. I place that in contrast to, again, the anxiety and the fear that is surrounding much of the border policy that we're hearing from the Senate and in some circles here in the House.

The reason that we are so sensitive to that here on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border is we bear the brunt of those policies. The disproportionate burden of the enforcement, of the cost to our economies, to our way of life, falls to those communities that reside on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border.

But what is the source of that anxiety and fear? Where does it come

from? If I had to characterize it bluntly, I would say that it comes from those who feel that Mexican nationals are coming to our country to steal our jobs, take our resources, consume our benefits, and put our country at an economic disadvantage.

But again, if we take that and then actually look at the underlying facts, we see a far different picture. The Congressional Budget Office has recently scored the comprehensive immigration reform proposal from the Senate and has found that over the next 10 years it will net \$197 billion in deficit reduction for the United States. That's a huge positive for this country, and that's by the numbers by a nonpartisan analysis of the facts. The next 10 years following that first decade, it jumps to almost \$700 billion in deficit reduction. Those are net positives to this country.

Even for those immigrants who are here today in an undocumented status, we find that they are net contributors to our economy and to our tax system rather than net beneficiaries in terms of drawing down those benefits and resources. So any way you look at it, any way you cut it, immigration to the United States is positive.

Again, the factors that we see today in Mexico lead us to believe that the situation will only get better. Mexico is the 14th-largest economy in the world by GDP. It's expected to grow from this year to 2016 by almost 5 percent annually. The lowest unemployment rate in all of Latin America is in Mexico today, and we expect it to fall as low as 3.5 percent by 2016.

If we have net-zero migration from Mexico today, I think there's a good case to be made that it will be a negative number by 2016. There is absolutely no sense in building 1,000 miles more of walls, of spending \$50 billion in doubling the size of the border patrol, for a threat that does not exist, for a problem that does not exist.

I think we've illustrated where those resources would be better spent—to create more jobs, more economic growth, and more positive development for the U.S. economy and for our country.

Someone who I think has been quite articulate on this issue in the past, especially from his perspective on the U.S.-Mexico border in Arizona, is representative RAÚL GRIJALVA, and I now yield such time as he may consume so he can illustrate the positive dynamic of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my colleague from Texas, Congressman O'ROURKE, for organizing this discussion, a discussion that needs to happen. A discussion that talks about the border in a full context is drowned out by the shrillness, the overreaction, and a rhetoric that sometimes borders or crosses into hatred and fear.

I represent District 3 in southern Arizona, 300 miles of border between the U.S. and Mexico that I happen to have the privilege to represent. Border communities, such as Nogales, San Luis,

and Sasabe are all part of this district that I represent. I grew up in those borderlands, borderlands that share a common history, heritage, and share a common dependency on the economic development and the jobs and the social welfare of those borderlands. That dependency is with our neighbors across the border in Mexico.

I want to talk a little bit about looking at this context in very human terms, in geographical terms, and in historic terms. The discussion on immigration reform, when it comes to the issue of security, has been about how much more can we do in order to satisfy, in order to accommodate, and in order to draw more support for a comprehensive immigration reform package. I understand the logic, but I—certainly with the Corker amendment—don't understand at all the overkill and the excess.

To double the number of border patrol agents without a strategic plan, without accountability for the 18, \$19 billion that has been spent on this border up to this point, I think is throwing money, potentially good money, after bad.

Second of all, to look at technology as the answer, we should also be looking at addressing our ports of entry, addressing the very, very real need of understaffing among Customs agents that are essential both to security and the flow of goods and services, trade, and economic development.

My colleagues have indicated how many jobs depend on this trade. This is the second-leading trading partner in the world for the United States, Mexico is. We cannot have a border whose sole purpose is to shut down the availability of goods and services and to cripple and constrain the very trade that we need for economic development in this country. Many jobs depend on it, and certainly the health and well-being of the region depends on it.

The excess of security, based on the amendment to the legislation in the Senate, the overkill, as I called it—I think one has to harken back to discussions that have been before this floor in the past, and that has to do with how much is enough. I will take a very, very safe bet that regardless of how much, how many, and how much money is spent on security along that border—how high the fence is, how long the fence is—that there will still be those who get up on this floor and on the other Chamber's floor and demand more without a plan, without accountability, and without an audit for what's been done at this point.

Let me discuss the current state of security on the border—the largest numbers of deportations, the largest number of detentions, 20,000 Border Patrol agents on the border, largest number of apprehensions, and the reduction in unauthorized entries into this country, significant reduction. The plan in place to deter is, like it or not, working. And for us to layer that with additional money, additional personnel, is,

I think, to me pure political symbolism and doesn't really address the issue of security.

If you want to address the issue of security, you must deal with the ports of entry primary, you must fully staff Customs, and you must have the very necessary blend on the border of security, trade, economic development, and necessary and important exchange with Mexico.

□ 1640

Two issues: the humanitarian issue in Arizona.

Arizona has been ground zero on the question of immigration and immigrants beginning with State Law 1070, which was thrown out by the Supreme Court, beginning with various legislative efforts at the State level to make immigrants a target in that State, many of those legislative efforts having been successfully defeated in the courts.

The flow of drugs should be the point of concentration, the organized crime on both sides of the border, the gunrunning there, drugs coming this way, people-smuggling and the abuses associated with that. If there is going to be a security initiative as part of this new comprehensive immigration reform, let's be focused, let's be real, and let's address the real problem and the humanitarian crisis.

Over 6,000 souls have perished in the desert in southern Arizona, in my district, and on the O'odham reservation—people desperate, people being left there by coyotes. It's a humanitarian crisis. If the money we are talking about for enforcement does not include rescue, humanitarian relief, then it's money that's not addressing the problem.

I guarantee you that, over a 10-year period, if 6,000 people were to perish in any other part of this world, we would be calling it a human rights and a humanitarian crisis. It doesn't get the attention it should, but the tragedy continues. With this increased security, people will look for further and further, more desolate areas in which to attempt or to be dropped off by smugglers. Again, the deaths will increase. I suggest that that has to be part of it.

Oversight in the context of security needs to be part of it. Human rights abuses along the border due to the increased militarization has to be part of it. A uniform policy for the use of lethal force has to be part of it. The GAO report on those very procedures I just mentioned has to be completed, and those recommendations need to be implemented before we continue to talk about giving more money without taking care of the civil rights, due process, and humanitarian crisis that we have on the border.

We have an opportunity in this Congress to finally reform this broken system of immigration. We have an opportunity to do it in a just, humane, fair, and secure way. As we go forward with the debate in this House, let us hope

that the discussion is over facts, that it's rational, that we talk about the human quotient involved in this discussion and not the pandering, fear-mongering and divisions that have marked this debate in this House, to which the leadership of this House instructs its Members. Let this be a debate about the future of this country, not the divisions of this country.

I want to take time again to thank Congressman O'ROURKE, a freshman who has taken leadership on this issue and on that of the borderlands, and I am very grateful for his organizing this.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I thank my colleague from Arizona for talking about the moral dimension of this issue and for putting a human face on a problem and also on the opportunity, the other side of that problem, that being the opportunity we see along the U.S.-Mexico border.

To add a little bit to what he said, if you just look at the numbers in terms of northbound apprehensions along our southern border, 7 years ago the average agent apprehended 106 migrants for every agent patrolling the line. Last year, it was 17. In the El Paso sector, it was 3.5.

The Corker-Hoeven proposal to add more than 800 miles of additional border fencing to the tune of billions of dollars in order to double the size of the Border Patrol to the tune of more than \$40 billion is a solution in search of a problem. Not only that—not only is it a waste of taxpayer money—it is also going to cause harm and death along the border. Last year, 477 people, human beings, died in trying to cross the southern border. It's the second highest number on record despite historically low migration. So, as we build these walls and fortify our border, we push people who are coming here for economic reasons further out into more treacherous, harmful and deadly terrain—and they are dying. More than 5,000 people have died in this manner over the last 15 years. Today, someone is eight times more likely to die crossing than one was 10 years ago.

Whether you look at this issue from a moral perspective, what we are doing in proposing the Corker-Hoeven amendment to comprehensive immigration reform is wrong. Whether you're looking at it from an economic perspective, where we have record job growth and creation related to our trade and commerce with Mexico, shutting that down and not applying resources to facilitating that trade is wrong. When you look at it in terms of good policy and being good stewards of taxpayer money at a time of sequester and at a time of deficits and record debt, this proposal is wrong. I do want to say that comprehensive immigration reform is a good thing, and we want to see it move forward, but let's not attach proposals like this one to it that will do far more harm than good and may imperil its chances of success in this House and for this country going forward.

Before I close, I do want to yield to my colleague from the Rio Grande Valley, FILEMON VELA, who wants to make sure that we are focusing on problems where they truly exist, not where they have been created for political purposes.

Mr. VELA. Thank you, Mr. O'ROURKE. I just have one final point to make.

In neither Chamber nor, for that matter, in neither party, do we hear talk these days of two things that I think are very crucial to the debate, and that is the violence in Mexico. Both countries have an obligation to ensure that we eliminate that violence. Second is the economic development along the U.S.-Mexico border. The Mexican economy is doing exceedingly well in central Mexico; but along our U.S.-Mexico border, we still have a lot to go.

Until we address those two things—the violence and the economic conditions along the border—we are going to have a very difficult time solving this entire problem.

Mr. O'ROURKE. I thank my colleague from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that what we have discussed today has been able to illustrate the positive dynamic of the U.S.-Mexico border.

What we have offered historically to this country, whether it is Ellis Island for much of Latin America or the economic growth that we've seen, not just along the border and in border States but for this entire country, 6 million jobs depend on the commerce and trade that cross our ports of entry along the U.S.-Mexico border today.

I hope we have also been able to illustrate how harmful policies don't just hurt the U.S.-Mexico border but how they hurt the rest of this country in our ability to grow this economy and create more jobs.

Lastly, I hope that we've been able to show a positive way forward where we can have comprehensive immigration reform, where we can respond to concerns about a secure border but do so in a way that does not sacrifice our economy, our way of life, and our Constitution.

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

JOB, SECURITY, AND THE WELL-BEING OF THE COUNTRY

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I will be joined by my colleague from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), whom I will recognize at the appropriate time.

We wanted to make this Special Order this evening about solution-driven legislation and about the need on behalf of the United States Congress to

come together in a nonpartisan manner and get after the concerns that this Nation cares so deeply about, most notably those as they relate to jobs and security and the well-being of the country.

This evening, Mr. Speaker, what if I told you that we could deal with all of the rising costs of health care, bring down the national debt and that we could do so while providing better quality, coordinated patient-centered care?

□ 1650

There might be some skepticism. What if I further told you that we could do it without raising taxes or cutting Medicare? In fact, what if we did it by extending the benefits of Medicare?

What if I were to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this idea germinated with the Heritage Foundation, a conservative organization dedicated to conservative ideas, and was piloted by a Republican Governor in a Democratic State and served as the basis for what we now call the Affordable Health Care Act?

The Affordable Health Care Act, in its final form, was something that a number of colleagues on the Democratic side didn't necessarily prefer. It was not their first choice. A number wanted to see a single-payer system or Medicare for all, but that is not what transpired and that is not what is the law of the land nor is what is upheld by the Supreme Court.

We need, in this body, a paradigm shift that will allow us to come together and embrace the ideas that we all agree upon in a way that we can move this Nation forward. The budget leader in the Republican conference is PAUL RYAN, a distinguished, bright, and capable gentleman. We agree that health care costs are what are driving our national debt. There is no doubt about that. Statistics will reveal that.

Further, when it comes to improving patient care, patient outcomes, making sure that we provide for our elderly, making sure that we have a continuum of care for people, that's something that's neither Democrat nor Republican. That's something that is truly American and that we all agree on.

Where we may disagree but where we can come together is in recognition of how we get to the solution, solve this problem, instead of these endless "tastes great, less filling" debates that go on in the United States Congress. To do so, you have to be bolstered by studies.

This slide will show that there are no less than 10 different studies that have been authored by private sector individuals that all point to one thing: that there's \$750 billion to \$800 billion annually that's wasted in fraud, abuse, and inefficiencies.

This evening, we want to focus on the inefficiencies, noting of course that fraud, abuse, and waste are very important, have been documented several times on "60 Minutes" and other notable sources as well, and certainly is

something that will help us in terms of bringing down the costs of health care, which, of course, solves our problems with the national debt.

Health care costs in the United States of America have risen to 18 percent of our gross domestic product. This next slide will demonstrate clearly that we are way above every other Western democracy, and this is what the inefficiencies of a system have produced: a hodgepodge system that is inefficient and driven upward in its cost because of the lack of coordinated care and outcomes that suggest a new paradigm shift and people coming together and embracing that which is in the public health care system that works and does extraordinarily well, all that's in the realm of science, technology, and innovation that we get from the National Institutes of Health and for the Centers for Disease Control that have been taxpayer funded and produced miraculous opportunities and a better quality of life.

Then, thirdly, to embrace that with the private sector, entrepreneurial efforts to drive inefficiencies out of a system. This chart demonstrates how that can be done and that there is both the profit in doing it for the private sector and the results of lowering that cost for the public sector and an outcome for patients that is centered around wellness, their well-being and their security in the later years of their life. It's that combination that we believe can work.

How do we know that that is so? We're fortunate to see, even in this time of politics where there has been disagreement and too much politics around the quality of health care, that our citizens rightly deserve and the private sector in our hospitals with our doctors, with our surgeons, with our medical devices, and with our entrepreneurship are coming to embrace. The passage of the Affordable Health Care Act is, in fact, a paradigm shift.

What do we need to shift to? How do we need to move that forward? Mark Bertolini, the president of Aetna, based in Hartford, Connecticut, said that the one thing we have to make sure of is that we're not taking away benefits from people who are going to pay for the medical devices—the hospitals, the doctors, the insurance, and the pharmaceuticals that they all need. We need to enhance that system.

Economists like Clayton Christensen have talked at length about how we need to be disruptive in economies, and in doing so, disruptive in terms of our innovation. With the genomic projects at hand and the potential for people to be living well beyond the age of 100 for my children and for current generations, as we all know obviously living longer, there's a need for us to embrace commonsense solutions and not issues that either say we have to drive down the debt at the expense of beneficiaries or that we have to raise taxes to help the beneficiaries.

How about we drive out the inefficiencies within the system, get after