

REMEMBERING VICTIMS OF NEW YORK'S DERAILMENT ON METRO-NORTH

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, this horrific tragedy, unfortunately, happened in my district about half a mile from where I live.

When a tragedy like this happens, senseless tragedy, we as Americans all pull together wherever tragedies occur. That is what we are doing here this afternoon. We are pulling together in the face of a terrible, terrible tragedy.

I know that an investigation is going on from the National Transportation Safety Board. I hope that in a short time we will know what happened and, perhaps, we will be able to take steps to ensure that it doesn't happen again, whether it be by legislation or other types of ways we can ensure that this doesn't happen again.

My heart goes out to all the victims and their families of this senseless, senseless tragedy. We as New Yorkers and as Americans in times of tragedy always pull together. New York pulled together after 9/11, and we are pulling together after this horrific tragedy as well.

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to mourn the loss of these four individuals and all those who were injured in this tragic accident.

In particular, I want to recognize the family of Kisook Ahn of Queens. The entire Korean American community in Queens and throughout the city and the tristate region mourn her loss. She was a resident of my hometown of Woodside, Queens. I particularly want to express our sorrow on her loss and all those who lost their lives or were injured, once again, in this tragic event of Sunday. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and all the victims and their families.

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, let me thank Congressman ENGEL for the compassion which he has demonstrated for the families of those that survived, those that are injured, and those that have been lost.

While all of us are anxious to see the results of the investigation, we all have

to ask ourselves, could this be avoided and did these people die in vain, and what are we going to do about it?

It would appear to me that the first thing everyone thinks of is the infrastructure: Could this have happened in Japan, in China, or in some other industrialized country? It just stresses how important infrastructure is.

It is not just the question of looking modern and developing commerce. It is human lives we are talking about. Let's not let the people who died die in vain. Let us all collectively look at our bridges, our roads, our tunnels, and our airports all over our great Nation so that we can avoid these types of tragedies.

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

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for coming forward with these moving tributes. I want to add to those my condolences, and those of my family.

This is a very resilient Nation, and New Yorkers in tough times like these, we come together. Every day I have thousands of my constituents who ride these trains back and forth to provide for their families. I pledge my support and those of our district as we ensure that a tragedy like this is not repeated.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IS UNAFFORDABLE

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, some are trying to create the impression that the only problem with ObamaCare is the Web site, and the experts will soon fix that. Actually, the biggest problem with the so-called Affordable Care Act is that it is unaffordable.

We are already having trouble paying for all of the Federal medical programs we have now. The cost of all of our Federal medical programs have been greatly underestimated at the start.

Now with many millions more losing their coverage than the administration predicted, added to the millions previously uninsured, the cost of ObamaCare is already estimated at possibly four times more than when it was passed, and it is not even fully in place.

Since it took 3½ years to even get a screwed-up Web site partially ready, most people don't believe the Federal Government can run our health care system efficiently in the first place. More bureaucratic, less-humane medical care, and all at much greater cost

to taxpayers at both the Federal and State levels.

This plan is a mess that will ultimately lead to shortages, waiting periods, and a great decline in the quality of American medical care.

SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, for far too long, Congress has failed to act while the impacts of climate change threaten our security, our economy, our budget, and the health of our citizens. In fact, the GAO included climate change in its high-risk report this year—meaning the GAO thinks it is critical for the Federal Government to address the financial threat posed by climate change. Whether we are talking about the Federal flood insurance program, whether we are talking about FEMA payments, climate change undeniably threatens our finances as a Nation and as a Federal Government.

We have to put our partisanship aside and deal with the financial effects of climate change.

That's why in the coming months, I intend to release a comprehensive climate adaptation bill that will address the need to protect our Nation's assets and our citizens from the devastation that is now inevitable due to our already changing climate.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for congressional action for our own good and the good of our children and our grandchildren.

GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand simple, one-page legislation, H.R. 3626, that passed on the floor of the House today by voice vote. Mr. Speaker, it was a gun bill. It was to extend and to ensure that undetectable firearms would be regulated so that plastic guns cannot pose a danger to law enforcement or the police.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder why we cannot come together to stop the kinds of killings at Sandy Hook and Aurora by passing universal background checks, or the bill that I introduced, which is a gun safety and storage bill. For the likes of a young man by the name of Braveon who died in the hands of strangers in my district 2 weeks ago, or the young man, 16 years old, who just was shot this past weekend in a local park, or two teenagers that died 3 or 4 weeks ago while 19 were shot at a house party, all using guns got on the underbelly of life. Not stopping stash houses, or keeping guns from going from one hand to another without a background check.

A simple bill was passed, Mr. Speaker. I ask: Is there any heart in this Congress to pass reasonable gun safety legislation to save the lives of our children and to stand against violence, gun violence? Enough is enough.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity today to talk about some things that are really important to America. I want to start really with this quote by Franklin Delano Roosevelt which kind of talks about where I am coming from and where I think we ought to be going as a Nation right now. I will try to explain this in a few moments, and then move on to really deal with this problem that we have in our Nation of income inequality, lost opportunity, or the absence of opportunity.

FDR said:

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is rather whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

In America today, there are many, many Americans that have far too little. One out of four children in America goes to bed hungry at night. Unemployment remains at a peak level, somewhere north of 7-8 percent. Real unemployment, that is, the unemployment of people who would like to work more, would like to have a full-time job, remains very, very high. What can we do about it?

Well, we can think about the great American ideal, the American Dream. This gentleman pretty well laid it out. This is Bill Clinton talking about the American Dream. He said:

If you work hard and play by the rules, you have the freedom and the opportunity to pursue your dreams and leave your kids a country where they can chase theirs.

So between these two Presidents, I think we lay out a philosophy that is well worth our attention: make sure those who have little have an opportunity, that we pay attention to their needs, and that we make sure that the American Dream is always in place.

Let's talk about that dream. How about the dream of going to college, college education. The ideal is college education is open to everyone. In reality, in 2007, one-half of the children from wealthy households completed college. Only 9 percent of the children from low-income households completed college. This gap is widening and has continued to widen since 2007, and obviously since 1989. The American Dream.

How about this dream: FDR also talked about the four freedoms and one of them had to do with freedom from want. Part of the American Dream, it has been denied. As a result of the

Great Recession, in 2010, a total of 46.2 million Americans were below the poverty level, the highest number of 52 years. The American Dream denied.

When we talk about the American Dream and we talk about what Roosevelt said about those who have much versus those who have little, so what is going on in America? In America today, income inequality is growing. The ideal is you work hard, you will do okay. In reality, the U.S. ranks 93 in the world in income inequality, behind Great Britain, Australia, Nigeria, Argentina, and Japan. The American Dream: you work hard, you will do okay. The reality: income inequality in the United States is greater than the income inequality in Nigeria. Yes, it is.

So what are we going to do?

Well, here is what we are doing. Since the Great Recession, the recovery has been slow. We Democrats have some answers on what to do about that recovery, and we will get to that in a few moments, but I think we need to understand what has happened in the last 5 years.

We have seen the economy grow. Every quarter since 2009, the economy has grown. The private sector economy has grown. Where did that wealth go? Where did the wealth of this Nation go? Well, 95 percent of the wealth generated in this Nation since 2009 has gone to the top 1 percent of Americans. The remaining 99 percent have had to split what was left. During the Clinton economy, it was reversed. The top 1 percent took 45 percent, and the bottom 99 percent took the remaining. So 1 percent took 95 percent, 99 percent were left with 5 percent.

Income inequality: What do we do about it? How do we achieve the goals of President Clinton when he talked about the American Dream? How do we achieve the goals of FDR when he talked about our purpose, not to provide more for those who have great but to provide for those who have little? How can we do it?

Well, one way we can do it is a long American tradition dating back to George Washington. In his first year in office, George Washington called upon Alexander Hamilton, his Treasury Secretary, to figure out how to grow the American economy. They were interested in manufacturing. The United States was basically exporting raw materials to Great Britain. George Washington wanted to build the American economy. So he said, Alex, give me a plan. So Alexander Hamilton came back a few months later with a plan, an economic development plan, based on manufacturing, and in that economic development plan, he said we need to do about a dozen things.

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He said we need to build the infrastructure of the United States. He said we need to build the canals, the roads, and the ports. He said we needed to protect American manufacturing, so make sure that there are proper duties

and tariffs on imported goods so that they would not overcome American manufacturers but, rather, level the playing field so that American manufacturers would have a shot. He said we needed to also make sure that we had good international trade agreements and use the American taxpayer money to buy American manufactured goods. It is all there. So for those who want to pay attention to the Founding Fathers, they ought to pay attention to what George Washington and Alexander Hamilton talked about in the first days of the first administration of this wonderful democracy we call America.

Let's talk for a moment about infrastructure. Let's talk about those roads that George Washington described, Alexander Hamilton talked and wrote about in his report. Where are we with our infrastructure today?

Joining me today is my colleague from Oregon, who has been working on the infrastructure issue now for more than a decade. He understands the problems that we have in our transportation systems and has a proposal.

I now yield to EARL BLUMENAUER of Oregon.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I deeply appreciate the gentleman from California yielding time to me, and I appreciate his leadership in focusing on where the economy is and where it needs to go.

I think it is important to look back in time because you are absolutely right, that from the founding of the Republic, infrastructure loomed large. In the Constitution, there is a provision for postal roads. And 8 years after the plan that was developed by Alexander Hamilton for President Washington, there was the Gallatin plan that was developed for President Jefferson by his Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin. It had a vision for what would happen for that next American century.

Throughout that time, infrastructure has been one thing that has brought Americans together. It is something that really didn't have a partisan tinge. Yes, Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican President, actually, on the anniversary, the centennial of the Gallatin plan, had his own vision for what we would do with inland waterways and reforestation, redeveloping America. His cousin, Franklin Roosevelt, a Democrat, likewise helped plant the seeds that ultimately grew into the Interstate Freeway Act, signed into law and funded by President Eisenhower. And 150 years ago, there was the Transcontinental Railroad Act with a Republican President, Abraham Lincoln.

This infrastructure agenda is something that has made America great. It produced the finest infrastructure in the world. Until the last quarter century, America had the best airlines, roads, freeways, bridges, passenger and freight rail systems anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, we have not kept pace with our responsibility. We have not raised the gas tax for the last 20 years. That was part of the Clinton