

being silenced by this repressive regime, because our inaction would only serve to embolden other rogue regimes that seek to fight back the tides of democracy.

Throughout the Western Hemisphere, Madam Speaker, we have seen these regimes, such as Venezuela and the one in Cuba, work together to oppress and silence civil society.

Just yesterday, in my native homeland of Cuba, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a leading Cuban pro-democracy advocate and a recipient of the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom, was unjustly arrested by agents of the Castro regime for expressing his support for Leopoldo Lopez in Venezuela, one of the leading opposition figures who remains in military jail as we speak.

We must send a unified message to these and other repressive leaders that we will not look the other way when they commit heinous acts against their own people. We must show them that the world is watching and that they will face serious consequences for their transgressions.

That is why, Madam Speaker, I have proposed House Resolution 488, that expresses solidarity with the people of Venezuela who yearn for freedom, for democracy, and dignity.

I commend the Government of Panama for calling for an urgent meeting of Latin American foreign ministers at the Organization of American States, OAS, to address this ongoing crisis in Venezuela. Sadly, this response is an exception, as other countries in the hemisphere remain deafeningly silent.

I call on the OAS to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of its Inter-American Democratic Charter and support the Venezuelan people's right for democratic reforms to be respected in their country and respect for human rights.

I urge the United States administration to make a priority of supporting the Venezuelan people's aspirations for democracy and liberty, and I urge my colleagues in the Congress to join me in this important call for solidarity.

WIND POWER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, we are in a global competition, a global race on clean energy and innovation. In our efforts to win this race and ensure our place as the kingpin of the global economy for decades to come, we must support a secure, all-of-the-above domestic energy supply that includes both newly abundant traditional fossil fuels as well as clean, renewable energy, energy such as wind, solar, biomass, hydro, nuclear, and more.

We simply cannot continue to rely on a single fossil fuel to power our economy. That is not wise, long-term policy.

Today, I would like to highlight one of these abundant, job-creating clean energy sources: wind energy.

One way to support this critical source of energy for our Nation is the Federal Production Tax Credit, the credit that keeps electricity rates low and encourages development of proven renewable energy projects.

This credit expired at the end of last year and must be retroactively extended to foster job growth and promote a greener and cleaner environment for the next generations.

The PTC, the Production Tax Credit, also creates jobs. In my district, the Capital Region of New York State, we are host to GE's Global Research Center and Wind Turbine Service Center. In 2012 alone, GE's wind division produced some 1,722 megawatts of power and provided a local capital investment of some \$3.2 billion.

If we are serious about helping the private sector create quality jobs that will put purchasing power back in the hands of the middle class, we must support wind power as one part of our overall energy policy and strategy.

Madam Speaker, today, I renew my support for wind power and the almost 2,000 jobs this clean energy source generates in my home State of New York, a number that is growing by the day, and a group whose work every day is helping to grow our economy, clean the air we breathe and the water we drink, and make us truly energy independent.

PRESIDENT OBAMA IS VERY DIFFERENT THAN SENATOR OBAMA

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

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, on the issue of increasing America's national debt, President Obama is very different than Senator Obama.

Senator Barack Obama, on the House floor, March 16, 2006:

The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. It is a sign that the U.S. Government can't pay its own bills. It is a sign we now depend on ongoing financial assistance from foreign countries to finance our government's reckless fiscal policies. Over the past 5 years, our Federal debt has increased by \$3.5 trillion to \$8.6 trillion. That is trillion with a "t." That is money that we have borrowed from the Social Security trust fund, borrowed from China and Japan, borrowed from American taxpayers.

Numbers that large are sometimes hard to understand. Some people may wonder why they matter. Here is why: this year the Federal Government will spend \$220 billion on interest.

Senator Obama later explained:

That is more money to pay interest on our debt this year than we will spend on education, homeland security, transportation, and veterans benefits combined.

After talking about Hurricane Katrina, Senator Obama shifted to the debt tax:

And the cost of our debt is one of the fastest growing expenses in our Federal budget. This rising debt is a hidden domestic enemy, robbing our cities and States of critical investments in infrastructure like bridges, ports, and levees, robbing our families and

our children of critical investments in education, health care reform, robbing our seniors of the retirement and health security they have counted on.

Every dollar we pay in interest is a dollar that is not going to investment in America's priorities. Instead, interest payments are a significant tax on all Americans, a debt tax that Washington doesn't want to talk about.

If Washington were serious about an honest tax relief in this country, we would see an effort to reduce our national debt by returning to responsible fiscal policies.

And Senator Obama finally brought up our debt to unfriendly nations:

Now, there is nothing wrong with borrowing from foreign countries. But we must remember that the more we depend on foreign nations to lend us money, the more our economic security is tied to the whims of foreign leaders whose interests might not be aligned with ours.

Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that "the buck stops here." Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better.

I therefore intend to oppose the effort to increase America's debt limit.

Today, our national debt is \$18 trillion with a "t." Clearly, President Obama has forgotten Senator Obama's words, but the American people remember, and on their behalf, I ask President Obama to decrease our debt by working with Congress to reform our Tax Code to make it pro-growth and anti-debt.

HONORING DAVID LACHMANN ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor David Lachmann on his retirement from the House of Representatives and to thank him for his 25 years of federal service.

David came to Washington in 1989 to work for former Congressman Steve Solarz of Brooklyn, staffing him on the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, as well as on issues related to criminal justice, religious liberty, housing, and the environment.

When I was elected to Congress in 1992, David became my first legislative director. In 1997, David moved to the Judiciary Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law. For the past 13 years, he has served as the Democratic chief of staff on the Constitution and Civil Justice Subcommittee.

As an expert on the First Amendment, and particularly on issues of religious liberty and church-state relations, David was instrumental in the passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act.

He is also one of the foremost experts in the House on bankruptcy, a very technical and complicated area of law

but one that affects millions of people. Over the last 25 years, David has worked tirelessly to advocate for the rights and well-being of people who are most in need of Congress' protection but who do not have access to high-priced lobbyists.

David performed these services every day, whether in defending against attacks on women's reproductive rights, working to protect Americans' civil liberties against PATRIOT Act provisions, or building support for legislation to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act.

David's resume is impressive, but it does not tell the full story. David is a legend in the House. He is one of those committed public servants who has become an institution within the institution.

As the chief of staff of the Constitution Subcommittee, David has been the point person on some of the most difficult and divisive issues facing Congress each year. Yet, he brings a sense of humor, wit, and perspective that is well known in the House, without ever sacrificing his commitment to advancing the cause of equality and justice, and to defending the rights and freedoms of the most vulnerable among us.

He has provided Members of Congress, staff, and advocates with a wealth of expertise and institutional memory on a wide range of issues that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace. It will be a long time before I stop picking up the phone and dialing his number to ask him a question about some matter before the committee, or to get his perspective on the latest Supreme Court decision, or to just reminisce about the days of 1970s and 1980s New York politics.

David has worked with me for a long time, and his biggest contribution has been as a trusted adviser and loyal friend.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking David for his service and for his dedication to working on behalf of the American people. He will be sorely missed in this institution, but we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

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DIVERSE LOCAL AND NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR FARM BILL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on February 7, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Agricultural Act of 2014, the 5-year farm bill reauthorization that passed Congress with bipartisan support and reduces annual budget deficits by \$16.6 billion over 10 years.

Industry professionals across my home State of Pennsylvania and nationally—including farmers, foresters, conservationists, researchers, and pol-

icy advocates—have praised the law as a historic improvement, the Federal agriculture policy that will improve land management, support key areas of economic activity, and bolster important investments in education and applied research.

Susan Benedict, an American Tree Farm System certified forest owner from State College, Pennsylvania, stated:

As a Pennsylvania tree farmer, I can happily say this farm bill was well worth the wait. With the promotion of new market opportunities in the Biobased Markets Program and green building markets, improved access to critical conservation programs, and increased regulatory certainty when protecting water quality of my forest's roads, this farm bill is truly the best farm bill yet for forests. I applaud conference committee members for championing strong forestry provisions, such as the Biobased Markets Program changes, for America's 22 million family forest owners.

Kenneth C. Kane, president of Generations Forestry in Kane, Pennsylvania, stated:

From the outside looking in, Congress displayed a level of bipartisanship on the farm bill that has been lacking, which is far better than the gridlock we have encountered. This is a wonderful bill and a good final product from numerous standpoints. From the standpoint of the Forest Service, this bill gives Secretary Vilsack and Forest Chief Tidwell more tools to actively manage forests, which is critically important. Now that these tools are available, the Forest Service must use them. This bill also offers our foresters and private industry more tools to actively manage, so this is also very important.

Barbara Christ, the interim dean of agricultural sciences at Penn State University in State College, Pennsylvania, stated:

Agricultural policy impacts every American by advancing food security for our Nation and beyond, including providing for critical research and education programs. We are thrilled that a new 5-year farm bill is now a reality. As a specialty crop State, of particular interest to Pennsylvania is the inclusion of the specialty crop research initiative. These programs help keep our Pennsylvania farmers competitive in an increasingly complex environment and help tackle the ongoing challenge of feeding a growing population.

Robert Maiden, executive director of Pennsylvania's Association of Conservation Districts, stated:

The new Federal farm bill has many strong conservation programs that are lifelines for Pennsylvania farmers. We needed Congress to understand these points and ensure that the importance of conservation efforts wasn't lost in the final farm bill language. The final bill addressed our fiscal challenges by understanding the necessity of reductions to Federal spending while identifying the need to improve conservation program efficiencies and improvements in program delivery. The final bill will allow for cleaner water for Pennsylvania waterways, resulting in healthier communities and stronger economies.

The president and CEO of the Nature Conservancy stated:

Despite the polarized political climate and challenging budget times, this farm bill would be one of the strongest ever for conservation and forestry. The farm bill's con-

servation provisions are practical, cost effective, and provide solid ways for the government to collaborate with individual landowners.

The president and CEO of the American Forest Foundation stated:

The long-awaited farm bill provides resources critical to implementing conservation practices on the ground and making good forest stewardship affordable. The improvements in the new farm bill include stronger market opportunities for forests, specifically with improvements to the Biobased Markets Program, and a strengthened commitment to expanding prospects for wood in green building markets, the fastest growing market for wood products. It also includes strong support for programs that combat forest invasive pests and pathogens and provisions to increase forest owners' regulatory certainty when protecting water quality.

Madam Speaker, it isn't every day that a broad cross-section of policy advocates and industry professionals find themselves on the same side of a given policy issue. Then again, it isn't every day that both parties actually work together for the good of the country and produce good public policy that improves the Nation's economic health, while at the same time, reforms government, and reduces spending.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to draw attention, once again, to an issue that some in this Congress seem to have forgotten: the millions of Americans who are unemployed or are working for wages that cannot support their families.

Imagine being told that you have to support your family for the rest of your life with just a month's paycheck. If it sounds impossible to manage, it is because far too often it is.

Low-income families have to make impossible choices between food and medicine. They often live in unsafe neighborhoods and send their kids to subpar schools because they have no other option. Getting paid the minimum wage has always been difficult, but it is getting harder year after year.

If the minimum wage had been tied to inflation in 1960, it would be \$10.10 today, or just over \$20,000 per year. Now, someone making this today wouldn't be wealthy, but working full-time might at least allow them to make ends meet. For me, this is what our country is really all about. If you work hard, you can build a life for yourself and your family.

Madam Speaker, this is why I am a very proud cosponsor of the Fair Minimum Wage Act, which finally raises the minimum wage for millions of Americans. Unfortunately, some of my colleagues oppose this very bill, claiming that raising the minimum wage should be a State-by-State decision. Now, that is fine if your State chooses