

EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, it is un-American that House Republicans are refusing to hold a vote on extending benefits for Americans who have worked and are now unemployed. It is particularly astounding, with a Speaker from Ohio, where unemployment has just ticked up, that the Republican Party refuses to bring up a vote on extending unemployment benefits.

Since 1948, this is the first time that Congress has allowed extended unemployment benefits to expire with unemployment rates as high as they are. Long-term rates, especially among older workers—people who have worked their entire lives—are at the highest levels and doggedly resistant to amelioration.

More than 1.3 million Americans, including nearly 40,000 Ohioans, have lost benefits because of House Republicans. If House Republicans get their way, by the end of this year, 5 million Americans and their families will have been denied unemployment benefits—people who have worked their entire lives.

Speaker BOEHNER, that includes more than 128,000 Ohio families being denied benefits they have rightfully earned.

My office has been receiving call after call from constituents who don't know why they lost their benefits and asking what they can do now. In one particular case, a woman put in the required years for her job and was ready to retire. She believed in work. She valued work. She spent her life doing it. Unfortunately, suddenly, just before she put her papers in to retire, she was laid off. She lost her job as a result of cutbacks, through no fault of her own. Her husband is disabled and unable to work. Extended unemployment benefits were helping the family make ends meet. Republicans in this House took away this family's ability to pay their bills. She is now begging friends and relatives to help pay their heat bill, to keep the lights turned on, and to pay their medical bills. The uncertainty and stress this family is now facing is unfair and completely un-American.

Extending unemployment benefits to people who work is not only the right thing to do, it actually is better for our economy. The Economic Policy Institute estimates if we do not extend unemployment benefits, it will cost our economy 310,000 more lost jobs because people who aren't able to hold their family budgets together anymore don't buy as many groceries, can't pay their gas bills, can't pay their mortgages, and they fall into poverty.

Why would Congress want millions more falling into poverty while creating more job loss in the Nation? Creating jobs and growing our economy should be our first priority here in Congress.

As Paul Krugman put it in a recent New York Times article:

No matter how desperate you make the unemployed, their desperation does nothing to create more jobs.

So let's come together to strengthen our economy, to stop offshoring millions and millions of jobs in this country, and let's extend unemployment benefits to the people in this country who have earned them. Until then, I urge Republicans to at least allow a vote on restoring unemployment benefits to those Americans who have worked for a living and deserve the respect of this Congress.

HONORING SPECIALIST TERRY K.D. "DANTEZ" GORDON

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

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American hero, Specialist Terry K.D. "Dantez" Gordon, who was among six U.S. soldiers who passed away due to wounds suffered when their Black Hawk UH-60 helicopter went down in Afghanistan's Zabul region on December 17, 2013.

Specialist Gordon was born in Shubuta, Mississippi, on September 21, 1991. After graduating from Quitman High School, Gordon enlisted in the Army in the summer of 2011, fulfilling his basic training requirements at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He then went on to complete his advanced individual training at Fort Lee, Virginia, where he became a generator mechanic.

Dantez was assigned to Echo Troop, 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, Fort Riley, Kansas. He was later trained as a door gunner and attached to Bravo Company, 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment. There, Specialist Gordon was tasked with firing and maintaining manually directed armament during missions, protecting the helicopters' crew members and passengers throughout the deployment to Afghanistan.

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Dantez Gordon loved helicopters. He knew very early on that he was meant for the Army because that is where he could fly in a Black Hawk.

His family said they were surprised at first that he wasn't going into the Marine Corps like his father, but it became quite apparent that his interests were centered in going up in a helicopter. His family members were nervous, yet they realized that he loved what he was doing and he was not afraid.

Dantez loved his family, his friends and his country. He was fortunate in that he loved what he was assigned to do, and he would talk about it any chance he got when he came home on leave with anyone who would listen.

Specialist Gordon is remembered by those closest to him as always being happy, especially when he was outdoors or playing baseball. He was a practical joker, and he loved to make people laugh.

His family and his community saw him as an all-around, very devoted, humble, smart, and respectable young man who lost his life way too soon. He lost his life fighting for our families and for our country, and for this, our country, and particularly, the State of Mississippi, will be forever grateful.

"Like ripples in the water," his aunt said, "Dantez Gordon affected people he may have never even met," adding that the world is a better place because he was there.

In an article that described the moment when Specialist Gordon's flag-draped coffin was taken off the plane at Key Field in Meridian, Mississippi, on his final journey home, a family member observed: "As they unloaded him off the plane, the sun peeked through the cloudy gray sky, and as they put him into the hearse, the clouds closed back up." It was as if the sky opened up to pay its final respects to its beloved native Mississippi son.

Specialist Gordon's awards and decorations include the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Ribbon, the Afghan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Action Badge and the Aviation Badge.

Specialist Gordon was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star by executive order for meritorious service from August 13, 2013, until December 17, 2013, upon which no greater honor can be demonstrated than by this ultimate sacrifice. He will always be remembered for these actions.

Dantez Gordon is survived by his parents, Terry W. Gordon of Pachuta, Mississippi, and Sabina R. Edwards of Shubuta, Mississippi; as well as his sister, Terruna Gordon; stepfather, David Edwards; and two half brothers, David Edwards and William Edwards.

I was so moved at his funeral service to see what was really a celebration of his life.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to leave you with a quote from Dantez's father: "Dantez was my hero long before joining the military, but now he's America's hero."

How true that statement is. Dantez's love for his country and his dedication to protecting our freedoms took him from Shubuta, Mississippi, to Afghanistan. Christ said in John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than he that give his life for another."

For his courage and final sacrifice, he will never be forgotten. Thank you for this opportunity to place focus on a true American hero.

RENEW UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to

lend a voice to the 1.5 million workers who have lost their Federal unemployment benefits.

Imagine a choice before you where you had to either put food on the table or have a roof over your head. This is the decision that millions of workers, including 53,000 people in L.A. County alone, will face, all because my colleagues on the other side of the aisle refused to extend unemployment insurance benefits.

Last week, I had an opportunity to talk personally with constituents who are affected by the loss of these benefits. Their message for me to send to my colleagues was clear:

We are not lazy or unmotivated. We want to work. But as we continue to navigate a tough labor market, we need these benefits in order to provide for our families and to pay for the gas and phone bills that help us talk to potential employers and get ourselves to interviews.

Mr. Speaker, unemployment benefits are not handouts. These are benefits workers have earned. They paid into the system to help them precisely during times like this.

It is time to stop disrespecting these people who are continuing to try to find work by mischaracterizing them as lazy or somehow fat and happy living on unemployment benefits.

One of my constituents, in particular, Anthony, wanted me to make crystal clear the fact that he resents those who say that is he not trying hard enough to find a job. He has a bachelor's degree in finance from Cal State Long Beach and has worked as an accountant in the private sector.

In his 47 years on Earth, he has never once been unemployed until now, and he has been trying everything he can to find work, but hasn't found anything yet.

He told me that every morning he gets up and goes to a work center to search the online listings, and that the 20 computers at this particular work center are always full, and every single person at one of those computers is actively looking for work.

Mr. Speaker, unemployment insurance benefits are a lifeline to families who are struggling. Please don't cut off this critical lifeline. Give unemployment insurance the vote that it deserves.

TURKS IN RUSSIA

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

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise awareness of an ongoing humanitarian crisis in southern Russia, and call on the State Department to respond to that crisis.

In 2003, the United States State Department, responding to a humanitarian crisis against Ahiska Turks in southern Russia, designated Ahiska Turks as a special humanitarian concern for P-2 processing. As a result, between 2004 and 2007, roughly 12,000

Ahiska Turks arrived in the United States as refugees and settled in over 25 States, including a sizable community in my home State of Ohio.

Ahiska Turks, discriminated against, belittled and persecuted in Russia, are model citizens in the United States. In less than a decade, they have been able to fully integrate into American society. They have learned English, adapted to their new environment, educated their children and helped revitalize our neighborhoods.

They live the American Dream and strengthen American society by investing in their people and our cities. It is proven that this group is an asset to our community, as seen by the fact that over 50 percent of them are entrepreneurs and create jobs for others, including many Americans.

Ahiska Turks have shown that refugees can thrive and live the American Dream and help us grow our communities and our country. It is puzzling to me why the State Department abruptly ended this successful program.

There are roughly 80,000 Ahiska Turks who remain in southern Russia in difficult circumstances. The latest report by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance cites the adverse environment for human rights organizations to even monitor the discrimination being suffered against Ahiska Turks in southern Russia, and acknowledges that the situation is "very bad."

I call on the State Department today to restart the P-2 program and respond to this ongoing humanitarian crisis.

I urge my colleagues to contact the U.S. State Department to restart the P-2 program for Ahiska Turks in Russia. This is a bipartisan issue where Congress can stand up for human rights and stand up for a persecuted group.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak about legislation that will create jobs, grow our economy, and reduce our deficit. This legislation has already passed the Senate, and the American people are still waiting for the House to do its part. I am speaking about comprehensive immigration reform.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office predicts that over the next 10 years, fixing our broken immigration system will promote job creation and wage increases, cut the deficit by nearly \$158 billion, and increase America's GDP by over \$800 billion.

This bill will be an economic benefit, and it is also the right thing to do for the 11 million immigrant families living in the shadows.

Think about what this legislation means for those families who are facing many challenges, not unlike the

difficulties earlier Irish, Italian, Portuguese and French immigrants faced when they arrived in this great country.

Diversity is a great strength of this country. We are a nation of immigrants, and our laws should reflect our values that, if you work hard and contribute to society, you can provide a life for yourself and your family.

It is time to enact comprehensive immigration reform so we can create jobs, grow our economy, secure our borders, and ensure that the American Dream remains a real opportunity for all future generations.

The American people deserve a vote on this critical legislation, and I urge my colleagues and I urge the Speaker to bring this bill to the floor so we can fix our broken immigration system and enact comprehensive reform that will make a real difference, not only in our economy, but in the lives of millions and millions of people.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 15, 2014.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on January 15, 2014 at 9:47 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3527.

That the Senate passed S. 1434.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

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 11 o'clock and 26 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

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AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Reverend Gary Grogan, Stone Creek Church, Urbana, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the stewards of our government that are gathered here today, those who are willing to serve under grueling public