

right. A reduction in the ozone standard would translate into an annual cost savings of approximately \$1 billion in labor expenditure.

We have countless scientific studies that clearly display the negative health risks associated with unregulated ozone pollution. Nevertheless, critics continue to play a dangerous role in denouncing the science and the law EPA has used for more than 40 years.

The science cannot be ignored. Now is the time to protect the most vulnerable among us. Now is the time to fight for better air quality across the country. Now is the time for action to protect American health and the environment.

We cannot afford to wait. Clean air is essential to a healthy community and a strong economy.

GENIUS OF THE CONSTITUTION

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, the genius of our Constitution can be found in the separation of powers that has preserved our freedom for 225 years.

The American Founders recognized that what had gone so terribly wrong in Europe was that the same organ of government that made the law also enforced that law and adjudicated it. All the powers were in the same hands. They wanted to protect their new Nation from such a fate.

So they divided the powers of government. Congress, and Congress alone, makes the law. "All legislative power herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States."

You want many voices in that decisionmaking process. You want a great, big, messy debate. That is the Congress.

Once that decision is made, it needs to be carried out by a single will, a single branch, headed by one individual whom the Constitution commands to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." One person does not get to make the law in this Republic. The President is called upon to enforce the law.

Fundamentally, that means he does not get to pick and choose which laws he will enforce and which laws he will ignore. He does not get to pick and choose who must obey the law and who gets to live above the law. And he does not get to change laws or make laws by decree.

That is the difference between the American Republic that prides itself on being a nation of laws and not of men and the European despots of old who boasted that the law was in their mouths.

Mr. Speaker, last week the President asserted an entirely unconstitutional power to nullify existing immigration law by ordering the executive branch to simply ignore it. Further, he has or-

dered 34 million green cards to allow businesses to hire illegal immigrants, despite Federal law that explicitly forbids their employment.

Throughout our Nation's history, executives have tested the limits of their power, but this act crosses a very bright line. Fortunately, the American Founders anticipated that some day a President might attempt to subvert the Constitution in this manner, and they provided a variety of defenses available to both the legislative and the judicial branches.

The legislative branch has the power of the purse, but that power is temporarily constrained by the partisan division between the House and the Senate. Fortunately, the American people have acted to end that division in January.

But I fear that any confrontation between the executive and the legislative branches could ultimately end in stalemate. The third branch of government, the judiciary, must be brought into this process.

Since our earliest days, the Supreme Court has guarded our Nation from unconstitutional acts by both the legislative and executive branches, and that role is desperately needed now. I believe there is no substitute for Congress doing everything within its power to invoke judicial intervention.

I cannot believe that even the most devoted liberals on the bench can be comfortable with this brazen act of usurpation. Assuming the Court stands with the Constitution, the President would have no choice but to back down or face a catastrophic public and congressional backlash.

Whether we choose to recognize it, this is a full-fledged constitutional crisis. If allowed to stand, this precedent renders meaningless the separation of powers and the checks and balances that comprise the fundamental architecture of our Constitution. If it stands, every future President, Republican and Democrat, will cite it as justification for lawmaking by decree.

The seizure of legislative authority by the executive is fatal to a republic such as ours. Indeed, it was Julius Caesar's usurpation of the Roman senate's legislative prerogatives that brought down the Roman republic and began four centuries of dictatorship. Once the rule of one man is established over the rule of law, it is a very difficult thing to stop.

Unlike every law that is passed under our Constitution, the Constitution itself has no penalties for those who break it. The reason is that the Constitution was written to be self-enforcing, but that only happens if the powers of government are evenly balanced. The Founders relied on each branch acting to keep those powers in balance. Now, in our time, that responsibility is ours.

ASSESSMENTS IN EDUCATION

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I am here this morning to discuss an important issue that we hear about when we talk with teachers, parents, students, and school administrators. In conversation after conversation, they have expressed concern about what seems like an endless stream of tests that, in many cases, do little, if anything, to improve learning or classroom instruction.

Of course, assessments play an important role in education, and high-quality assessments are valuable for informing meaningful instruction. Nonetheless, too much time is devoted to redundant, low-quality, or unnecessary tests.

In many cases, teachers administer tests, but the results aren't made available for months, and hardworking educators have little opportunity to design individualized support based on the results of those tests.

Furthermore, some of the tests are redundant. They take up time that could be used on meaningful instruction, use resources best spent elsewhere, and cause students undue stress. In other schools, too much time is dedicated to preparing for tests that are not well-aligned with State standards. Simply put, unnecessary assessments have hindered our progress as a global leader in education.

We know that the Federal Government mandates several tests each year, and States and school districts often require even more tests. Does this all make sense? Do all of these tests improve instruction, improve public education?

Today, I rise to discuss legislation that I am working on to help States and local districts implement good, reliable assessments aligned to standards, and importantly, eliminate redundant, poor-quality assessments that take valuable time from teachers and students, time that could be used on meaningful instruction.

We don't need more tests. We need better tests. My bill will use an existing grant to provide States with funding to develop assessment systems that ensure the best use of students' test results and that align assessments with college and career-ready standards.

The transition to rigorous content standards is hard work, and my bill will support States as they implement high-quality assessments linked to those standards.

Working with local educational agencies, States will create assessment plans outlining how they will improve the quality of their tests, how they will use the assessment data, and how they will make the data more accessible to educators, students, and parents.

This legislation will also support States and local districts that want to lead the way on developing more sensible assessment systems. States will be able to volunteer to audit their assessment systems and use the results to design plans to eliminate unnecessary and redundant testing.

Many State school chiefs and district superintendents have recently made a commitment to this effort. My legislation will make available much-needed Federal support.

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The focus in the classroom should be on the student. This bill will help States improve their assessments and make better use of the results, so they can draw valuable conclusions about students and give educators the data they need, so they can do what they do best: teach.

Ultimately, we must address the culture of testing that has created stress for students, parents, and teachers. This bill is a strong first step. It keeps control in the hands of the States and school districts, and it provides the funding to streamline assessment systems and make sure that the remaining assessments are high quality and useful.

My bill offers this support through an existing funding stream, and it will help put the focus back on our students. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

OPPOSITION TO UNESCO FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against a push by the administration and its allies here in Congress to ignore U.S. law—this time, to ignore the legal prohibition on using U.S. taxpayer dollars to fund UNESCO.

Frankly, it is an indictment against the administration and some of our colleagues that we have to go through this song and dance every year or whenever a funding measure is set to come to the floor; yet here we are again, as some in Congress want to help President Obama circumvent and undermine U.S. law and restore at least partial funding for UNESCO, so that that body can continue to push its anti-U.S./anti-Israel agenda.

Time and again, the President has taken unilateral action meant to get around congressional opposition and has openly stated that he will continue to do so.

Since 1990, U.S. law has prohibited any funding to the U.N. or to any U.N. agency that gives the PLO membership status and recognizes the nonexistent State of Palestine.

UNESCO was well aware of our laws when its members voted to include this so-called Palestine among its ranks, triggering the U.S. funding prohibition. President Obama knew this when we cut off UNESCO's funding in response because it is the law; however, since then, he has sought ways to undermine and circumvent this law to not only restore funding to UNESCO, but to also pay dues in arrears which now would amount to over \$300 million in U.S. taxpayer dollars.

This is the very same body that allows the likes of Cuba—the antithesis of freedom and the respect for human rights and the rule of law—on its executive board. When UNESCO admitted a nonexistent Palestine, it undermined the peace process and only emboldened Abu Mazen even further to move forward with his unilateral push for statehood at the U.N.

There cannot be a legitimate Palestinian state unless it comes about as the result of direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. This unilateral scheme by Abu Mazen is a way for him to use that U.N. body to gain de facto statehood without having to first come to an agreement with Israel.

If President Obama and his enablers in Congress have their way and U.S. funding for UNESCO is restored, it will signal that the U.S. supports this unilateral push for statehood, and we will have sold out our closest friend and ally: the democratic Jewish State of Israel.

We must make it clear to the administration in no uncertain terms that Congress will not allow it to continue to circumvent and undermine congressional authority or the law and that we will not allow it once again to fund UNESCO.

Giving the administration the authority it seeks to fund UNESCO would not only set a dangerous precedent by showing those with an anti-Israel agenda at the U.N. that the U.S. does not have the courage of its convictions or the fortitude to enforce our own laws, but it would also give the green light to the rest of the bodies at the U.N. to follow UNESCO's lead and also admit Palestine.

Abu Mazen has already signaled that he will seek further recognition at the U.N., and unless we make it absolutely certain to the entire U.N. system that admitting Palestine has very real and tangible negative consequences, the bodies at the U.N. will fall in line with this dangerous scheme, and that would cause irreparable harm to the peace process.

Instead of President Obama's looking for ways to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars at an anti-U.S./anti-Israel body at the U.N., which is in violation of U.S. law, the President should perhaps instead focus on institutions at the U.N. that do work and that are effective.

This month, for example, the World Food Programme, WFP, was forced to suspend its assistance to millions of refugees who fled the crisis in Syria and went to Jordan, to Lebanon, to Iraq, to Turkey; as a result, millions could go hungry as they are set to face the harsh winter.

Our money would be better spent helping an institution we know works because it relies on voluntary contributions only, and we should be doing more to ensure that the WFP, the World Food Programme, can continue its good work to assist these millions of refugees around the world.

THIS CONGRESS MUST VOTE TO AUTHORIZE THE WARS

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great frustration and anger that this Congress—the 113th Congress—continues to ignore its constitutional responsibilities to debate and vote on whether to authorize the U.S. war against Islamic State forces in Iraq and Syria.

On July 25, this House voted 370–40 that, if the United States engages in sustained combat operations in Iraq, then the House would need to authorize such actions. Let me read exactly what this House approved by such an overwhelming, bipartisan majority:

The President shall not deploy or maintain United States Armed Forces in a sustained combat role in Iraq without specific statutory authorization for such use enacted after the date of the adoption of this concurrent resolution.

That vote, supported by 180 Republicans and 190 Democrats, was taken nearly 4.5 months ago.

What has happened since then? On August 8, just 2 weeks after the House vote, the U.S. began bombing Islamic State forces in Iraq. We are now bombing Iraq to protect infrastructure, as part of coordinated military operations with Kurdish and Iraqi military forces, and to take back or to hold cities, towns, and other territory. We are flying dozens of bombing sorties nearly every day in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we have also escalated the number of U.S. troops in Iraq, ostensibly as trainers and advisers. On November 7, the President announced yet another escalation in the number of U.S. troops deployed to Iraq, sending roughly an additional 1,500 troops to the region for a “comprehensive training effort” for Iraq's army.

When they arrive, this will put the number of American troops in Iraq at around 3,000. The U.S. Central Command is also working on setting up new “expeditionary advise-and-assist operation centers” far outside the cities of Baghdad and Erbil.

What else has happened since July? We expanded the war to Syria. On September 17, this House voted to include in the short-term continuing resolution authority to arm and train certain Syrian rebel forces, ostensibly to provide ground troops inside Syria to fight Islamic State forces.

Five days later, the U.S. began bombing inside Syria. We have flown scores of bombing missions inside Syrian territory against the Islamic State and—and this should come as no surprise—other radical groups like the Khorasan Group.

This week, we are in military negotiations with Turkey to establish a safe zone—a no-fly zone—along the northern border of Syria that will cover territory inside of Syria and inside Turkey.