

was a tragedy for my family, as it has been a tragedy for families all across this country.

I remember the NAFTA debate, and so many Members of Congress—I wasn't in Congress at the time, Mr. POCAN wasn't in Congress at the time—but we remember the debate. We remember that they told us: "Well, there would be other jobs that would be created, so don't worry about any jobs that would be lost." They said the jobs in the service sector would grow and they would stay.

Almost one of the first things to happen after NAFTA went into effect was all those call centers closed. Those were service-sector jobs, and they left, along with millions of manufacturing jobs.

In my home State of Maryland, we lost 70,000 jobs—and we are a small State—but we lost those just to NAFTA, so when people tell me now as a Member of Congress: "We want you to just Fast Track this trade deal, this Trans-Pacific Partnership deal, and just trust us that the process is going to work, just trust us that all you have to do is rubberstamp the trade deal"—I remember—and Mr. POCAN, you remember—and that is what requires us for our constituents to say no way, that we cannot just give Fast Track authority over, hand it over and, in effect, just say that whatever the deal is that has been negotiated, we will just take that deal for the American people.

Well, you and I know better. One of the things that has long concerned me is getting wind that our Trade Representative, on behalf of my constituents and your constituents, were negotiating away Buy American provisions, negotiating them away without our even having a voice in that conversation.

Let's look at those Buy American provisions. In 2012, 68 of our colleagues joined us in saying to President Obama, "Don't negotiate away the Buy American provision." Then just last year, 120 Members of Congress said, "Mr. President, don't negotiate away the Buy American provisions."

So I see that the wind is really beneath our sails because the American people understand that when you negotiate away Buy American, what you do is negotiate away the buying power and the jobs of American workers. You trade what is, in effect, billions of dollars of American taxpayer buying power for very little buying power coming from the other direction.

I am troubled that we have a Trade Representative that just wants to say, "Take the deal and run," and those of us who stand in the steps of American workers, we are in their place. We are representing them. We have their voice. We need to have their voice, and we have to have their back and say "no" to Fast Track and say "no" to the TPP and "no" to provisions that would trade away what we know the statistics are.

The U.S. procurement market is more than 10 times larger than all the

TPP procurement markets combined, and so that means that we would trade away preferential access for U.S. firms to \$556 billion in Federal Government procurement. For what? \$53 billion in return? We have to say "no" to this deal.

I want to thank Mr. POCAN for bringing us together. It is good that we are doing this from day one in the United States House of Representatives because what we are saying to American workers is: "Not only will we stand with you on the first day of the Congress and the next day of the Congress, but all the way to the end, to keep from trading away millions of your jobs."

Mr. POCAN. Thank you again so much, Representative EDWARDS. When you talked about the job loss in Maryland, we lost nearly 75,000 manufacturing job through the NAFTA-WTO period in the last 20 years.

When I was a legislator in the State of Wisconsin, it was a Buy American law that I got passed with a bipartisan vote in the Wisconsin Legislature. The fact that we are going to give up our sovereignty to have that law and some multinational corporation can sue any local unit of government so that they can contest those laws and we can lose that ability, I think the average person, if they knew that was something even being discussed, would be opposed to that, much less the other 28 chapters in addition to procurement that are included in this Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Thank you so much for all the work you have done on this and for making people aware of all the little hidden gems that if we don't have an ability to have a full and fair debate in this House, things that could happen in the biggest and the baddest of the trade deals yet we have seen in this country, so thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Caucus is going to be doing everything we can in the coming months to fight this, to make sure that Congress has a say. We aren't against trade, we want fair trade, but the so-called free trade that is out there right now that is being drafted by corporate CEOs and Wall Street banks doesn't include the public and doesn't include Congress, and it needs to have every single person represented.

We are the voices of the American people. We need to be able to have a full debate in this body, and we need to be able to amend any deal that we don't like, the particular deals that have been decided by others, by corporate leaders in this country. The American public has to be included.

Before I ever came to this Congress, the last 27 years, I have run a small business, a small specialty printing business. One of the things we do is we source American-made and union-made products for people.

I watched, over that 27 years, companies leave this country over and over and over, whether it be the mills that

I mentioned from the South that made T-shirts to things as simple as pens. Companies like Parker Pen used to have up to 1,000 jobs in Rock County, Wisconsin, that now have all gone out of this country. Those are the types of jobs that we have seen leave over and over.

When you go back into these communities, they have not replaced the same quality paying jobs. That is part of why we have got a problem. While the economy has been coming back, unfortunately, many people are being left behind, and they are not having the same family-supporting wages that they need out there.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is 29 chapters, but only five of those chapters actually relate to trade. So much of what we have talked about has been about the job impacts and your income impacts of a trade deal, but this also covers environmental law, currency law, intellectual property law, food safety, and the ability for procurement, as we just talked about on Buy American laws, and on and on and on.

This Congress, I think, can work together, Democrats and Republicans, who have a concern about giving carte blanche authority to simply the U.S. Trade Representative and the White House and leaving the people out, leaving the Congress out of that conversation.

We are going to continue to fight this, to talk about this and to make sure that people understand what Fast Track is and what it isn't and to make sure that those myths that may be out there about how to help create jobs may not be true, and there is a lot more ramifications that are out there.

Mr. Speaker, we thank you so much for this time this evening. We appreciate the ability to talk about this on the floor of Congress.

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

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it very much. Like my colleague before me, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here on the floor to speak about issues that are of concern to the American people.

My colleague from California (Mr. LAMALFA) is joining me for a short period of time, and I would like to give him the opportunity to speak for a few minutes. I believe that he has some important things to say, and I would like him to share those.

I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. I appreciate it. Thank you to my colleague from North

Carolina. You are very gracious in yielding to me, and it has been a pleasure to work with you.

Mr. Speaker, I thank those assembled here tonight. I just want to talk a little bit about some of the issues we have going on in the West, in northern California.

First of all, the excitement we have of coming in—it is a new Congress, it is a new direction for our country, I think. We have a stronger majority in the House of Representatives, of the Republican House. As well, it is a different majority over in the Senate. A lot of people aren't too concerned with what party it is or what partisan issues are; they want to see results. That is what I am looking for as well.

Many bills were sent out of the House last session and languished on a desk over on the Senate side, and I think we will now see action on those common-sense measures that are going to help jobs in America, help our economy rebound, and help people get out from under the grip of government power and government regulation that is just killing their hopes and killing their ideals.

We are looking for that in this new session, and we expect we will be held accountable to make that happen. It is not going to be a miracle. We are not going to get all the results we hoped for, but at least there are going to be things on the RECORD now that have gone through this House and have gone to the Senate that will be showing the American people what our agenda is and what it has been about.

Bringing it back home to California, I represent the First District in the northeast portion of the State. It is a beautiful district. I am very proud to have been elected for a second time to represent the First District. It is an area that has a lot of great resources that benefit our whole State, even our whole country.

To be able to have my family here with me in Washington attending the festivities, the honor of being sworn in and getting started, getting a fast start, going to work here in this new 114th has just been a real delight.

What we need to be happening in California is a better and wiser use of our resources. You may have seen, at the end of the last session, we were working towards better management of our water supply. Now, we have a deluge of rain once in a while, even when we are suffering drought for the last few years in California.

The water seems to all come at once. If it isn't being saved in snowpack, it will come quickly via rain through our streams, and that is an opportunity for us that we should be retaining that behind the dam, so that we have as well the water that gets down the Feather River and the Sacramento River and can be transferred and put somewhere to be used later.

We have the ability to have the water allocated as needed for fish, for habitat, but there is excess water that

needs to be stored. I don't know why that isn't the automatic protocol, but Congress—a bill I cosponsored with many of my other colleagues put forward reminding the Bureau of Reclamation and others that they need to retain this extra water.

It isn't needed for fish, and it isn't needed for the normal runs, so we will have more stored later.

□ 1730

That is what we will continue to work for. But I still go back to the vision that people before us had that have given us Shasta Dam, Lake Oroville, and the whole State water project and the Central Valley project that we have in our State that we have benefited from for so many years, that everybody benefits from, whether you are an environmentalist, a farmer, a person who lives in a city, or if you just have a tap in the country. If you are not on a well, you are probably benefiting from these projects because we had the vision in the past to build them and we didn't have nearly the roadblocks.

Now, of course, we have great environmental concerns and environmental awareness to do things better than we did in the 1850s or the 1880s or what have you. We know how to do these things. But it doesn't mean that, because of a handful of people who don't want to see things happen, we stop the progress for all the rest of us.

So that is what we will be pushing for in this new Congress, to build more water storage. We can do that in northern California. Sites Reservoir, and there are other projects that can be enhanced to retain more water, and there are smarter ways to keep the water that we do have to make the water go further because it is necessary. The way California is suffering from droughts, agricultural land is going to be the first thing to go. Any time an emergency can be declared to switch whatever water does get to agriculture to meet other needs around the State, we have to take care of people first and we have to take care of cities, but when we see so much being run out through the Golden Gate that could be saved, or for questionable tactics on fish that really haven't been proven for that kind of habitat, then we are missing the mark.

So we will be working very hard to add to our water storage and to be smarter with the water we have available to us because we can't count on a record rainfall this year. We are very thankful and we have been blessed with good rainfall in November and the early part of December, but it has tailed off lately. We will need record rainfall the rest of the season up through the spring to have the kind of water we need to get through a good crop year. In the meantime, we should be doing everything possible in government to enhance, to retain, to be smarter with the water we have.

When we hear ideas of removing dams in the north part of the State,

part of my district, that produce hydroelectric power because of dubious studies that might benefit fish, we are hurting our region of the State. We are hurting our grid by taking enough renewable electricity off the grid that would somehow need to be replaced with other green power to manage 70,000 homes in the State because of dubious lack of science. We need to battle through this and have smarter use of our resources.

Another thing that we are very rich in in our part of the State is timber. Each summer we see the crisis of non-management of our timber and what that looks like. It is in the air. It is in our brown skies. We get to breathe that. The people within those communities are wondering why their mills are shut down and why their storefronts are boarded up and why they don't have jobs and why they have things like domestic violence increasing because people don't have work in those communities sometimes because their industry has been taken away from them.

I sit on the Natural Resources Committee to get after both of these and other issues—our water, our timber use, and other resources—that are so necessary to the rural part of the State, the rural West that has been languishing for many years, ever since the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973, for good reason at the time, to save the bald eagle. We have bald eagles in our rice fields where I live at home. But we have gone so far beyond that rural America is suffering from this type of regulation that it isn't even proven to help recover a single species. Indeed, somewhere around 1 percent, at best, of species have been recovered after 40-plus years of the Endangered Species Act. That is pretty deplorable for what the cost has been to the people, to the jobs, and for the communities and their values.

But I am still optimistic that America is turning the corner and seeing things a little bit differently and that the job needs to come back home. And the jobs at home need to be revived once again. As a grower of grain myself, we look at our alternatives. Do we want to be in a situation where in the past we were dependent on oil from people who don't like us much? Do we want to be in a position to have our grain crops, the breadbasket of our Nation, do we want to become more dependent on that from people who maybe aren't always a reliable ally overseas? Wheat from Russia and rice from China, do we want to rely on that, or do we want to do the best we can?

My fellow farmers across the country and in my area, they are good stewards of the land. Many have been there for many, many generations. Some of the ranchers I know, their families have been farming and ranching for 160 years in northern California, my own family 80-plus years. We know how to take care of the land. We know what needs to be done. It is sustainable, to

use that buzz word that goes around a lot these days. If it wasn't sustainable, the land wouldn't still produce.

So this is the type of thing we are fighting for. If we don't have a breadbasket in this country, what will America rely on to keep us fed? With the unrest we have in the world, ultimately, if we can't fuel our own Armies if it becomes necessary, what kind of position will we be in to defend ourselves or our allies, like in Europe, like in Israel, like in Japan, or others we have great relations and great trade with? We are in great peril right now if we keep our head in the sand on these issues. We need to look at the resources we have.

As I look at the young people in the audience tonight, one of the first things that I am reminded of is that we are running an \$18 trillion national debt. We have lived for the future in the present on someone else's money. And so every dollar we have, every dollar that comes in, we have to be good stewards of, much better than in the past. So every dollar has to go for the type of infrastructure that will improve our transportation system, our water system, our flood control system, and keep our communities safe, and not on frivolous things.

I am reminded in California, instead of this water infrastructure that we so desperately need, we have had several years of drought to remind us, they are still pursuing a high-speed rail system in California. As a former State legislator, we were right in the middle of that as it was coming to a head. What will the rail cost? Voters were told then \$33 billion to go from San Francisco to Los Angeles at 220 miles per hour. It isn't even close to being that project anymore, and the price has tripled, at least. It has gone from \$33 billion to at least \$98 billion by the admission of the rail authority in a hearing we had in the State legislature back then. They are still chasing this dream. Now they have tried to downsize it to be a \$68 billion project. To this day, right now, they have still only identified \$13 billion—\$10 billion from the State bond and \$3 billion from the Federal Government via the Stimulus Act of 2009. So \$13 billion of a needed and downsized \$68 billion project. They are \$55 billion short, and they still think today they are going to go find that money. From the private sector, they are staying away in droves.

There is no way that it is going to be built anywhere near on time, anywhere near on any kind of budget, or that the riders they would have will ever be able to afford to ride it. Why don't we take a fraction of that money, of the \$13 billion or the \$68 billion, or whatever number it is, and put it towards the water storage we need?

We could build two really nice dams with \$68 billion, especially with private sector money that wants to come in and be a partner on this. Let's get it done, because this is the infrastructure

that will help our State and help the people and help bring jobs back to rural California and rural America.

I am looking for help from my other colleagues from other States, especially other Western States that have water infrastructure needs they are looking at themselves. Let's work together on this. That is what made us great back in the day.

We have had these huge projects that have made so much hydroelectric power. We like green power. We like renewable power. When it rains behind a dam, you have renewable power and it is reliable. And it is low cost, much more so than windmills and solar panels that require government assistance to put them in and keep them going. Let's do the right thing here and allow these things to happen, all that private sector to happen.

I am optimistic in this Congress that we can make that case and put it in front of the American people. I ask the President to join with us and help on that, whether it is that or the further development of energy that we need in this country to stay ahead of the curve. We are seeing prices coming down, amazingly. Hydraulic fracturing has played a big part in us seeing the price of fuel in some areas—not in California, but other States going below \$2 a gallon. In California, we are still taxing ourselves and thinking up cap-and-trade measures to drive the cost up so we will be our own island of high costs. But the other 49 States, God bless you, you have it pretty good.

The vision that we have had to do these things is what we need desperately going forward in 2015 because when we are productive, like what we can produce in northern California with agriculture, with timber, with our mine resources, all of the other things that come from the land, that sets the table for everything else across our district and across our State and across the whole country. That puts us back to work again.

We have trillions of dollars offshore that would love to be repatriated back to this country if we had any kind of constant as to what the tax burden would be for those dollars, for those businesses and investment that needs to be here, any kind of consistency for what our regulatory burden would be so they could predict. If they are to put 30-year loans and 30-year infrastructure in place, will they be able to do business 5 years from now? We would be bringing American jobs back if we could repatriate that money back here. So let's get it done.

We don't come here in Congress—at least I haven't—because it is nice to wear a suit and tie. We come here to get results. To be results oriented, we need to use real facts, real figures, real budgets, real numbers to get to the core of what we are supposed to be doing as to what the Founders had set for our government. The government is doing a lot more things it has no business doing and it can't do well. Let's

make sure that we are doing and we have the economy, we have the engineering to generate so we have a functioning school system, it has the funding it needs at fair and proper levels; for our law enforcement, so they are not left wanting for the equipment and backup they need; and for the folks deployed overseas defending our borders as well as helping our allies. We shouldn't leave them wanting while they are deployed; and certainly with the mess that the VA system is, when they come back home, the promises made to them are broken and the shame that we should all feel when our veterans, so many are left homeless or simply begging to have their claims processed.

I am confident in this new Congress that the House and the Senate can work together and put these ideas forward. We can put them out in front of the American people, have the accountability, have the oversight that our job demands. We will get there.

So whether it is now or 2 years from now, I challenge the President to look at these things from a commonsense way of thinking. Think about America first. That is what we will be doing in this House and over in the Senate.

So from northern California to the rest of the country, help us all to be productive and to live the lives we choose to give our kids a chance to live at home, to find jobs and opportunities in their own communities—farming, ranching, mining, whatever it is, or related industries in those small towns that so many are boarded up now. Let them have that chance to live at home, not have to go someplace else, go to a big city somewhere, a different State, or even overseas to try to find good employment so they would have the dream they see fit and the one that their parents would like to pass along to them.

My colleague from North Carolina, I appreciate the time tonight and the opportunity to talk about my district and the things we need to do there, as well as what we need to do for our country. I bid you a good evening, and thank you.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. LAMALFA from California. I have heard him often speak on the floor. I have invited him several times to speak and do 1-minute speeches because I am the person in charge of getting people to the floor. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to hear him speak in a little longer time because I found out how much we agree on issues.

□ 1745

I am particularly keen about the water issue that he spent some time talking about. I grew up in a house with no electricity and no running water. I grew up carrying water. Water has always been a precious, precious commodity to me.

We are the most fortunate people in the world in the United States that we

have the greatest resources available to us. Many times I think we don't appreciate the scarcity of some of those resources or the need to husband those resources in a way that protects them not only for ourselves but for future generations.

I have always felt that people who are farmers are among the most eloquent speakers for our environment. As Mr. LAMALFA said—and I completely agree with him and said it many times myself—farmers are the best stewards of our land. They believe in sustainability. They believed in sustainability long before sustainability became a catchword in the community because if they didn't keep the land sustainable, then they wouldn't have the land in order for their own livelihood.

I am a person who also grew up farming, sometimes on a very small scale. My husband and I still have a garden every year. We certainly understand the importance of taking care of all of our resources, but particularly our natural resources. I think so often Republicans don't get the credit that they deserve for being good stewards and for looking after our land and all of our resources.

I also am very keen on the fact that we have a diversity of people serving in Congress. Again, I think it is very important that we have people from all walks of life serving in here because it is the diversity of experiences that are so important to us in terms of having the different points of view as we consider legislation, so that there are people who grew up in cities who have no idea what it is like to farm, have no idea where food comes from exactly, and it is important for us to get the different points of view. We need farmers, we need educators, we do need some lawyers, but we need people who have had all kinds of experiences. We need people who have driven trains, train engineers. But every kind of diversity that is at all possible here. I think it is very important, though, that we have particularly a large share of farmers. Our numbers of farmers have gone down over the years, obviously, as we have left the farm and as farmers have become so incredibly productive in this country. They provide so much more than they have in the past. So I really appreciate the eloquence of my colleague from California in presenting the issues that he has presented.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the other things that he talked about. He talked about our need for jobs and for, again, maintaining what we can in this country, improving the economy. I want to talk about the three focuses that we in the majority have in this session of Congress, the three initiatives that we are going to be working on: energy, jobs and the economy, and regulatory reform.

This week already we have already passed two bills that we think will help us with the creation of jobs and the economy. On our first day here on

Tuesday, it got very little attention, but we passed a bill, the Jobs for Heroes Act. The idea for it came from a constituent of one of our colleagues from Illinois. The constituent said: Look, I was a veteran, couldn't get a job because the employer was concerned about going over the 50 limit, or hitting the limit of 50, which then his company would be subject to ObamaCare, and companies are avoiding being subject to ObamaCare.

So we passed a bill introduced by Congressman RODNEY DAVIS that said veterans don't have to be included in the 50 persons in a business requirement and then be forced to go into ObamaCare; that if they are covered by TRICARE then they don't have to do that. That is a positive bill to help create jobs.

Today, we passed another bill that we think will help with employment in this country. As many people know, ObamaCare has told employers if people are working 30 hours or more then you have to cover them with ObamaCare. So we changed the definition of full-time employment from 30 hours to restore the traditional 40-hour workweek. As I have said in other comments that I have made, from adjunct professors to hourly workers, I have heard from constituents all across North Carolina's Fifth District who have one thing in common: their work hours are being reduced. ObamaCare has placed an undue burden on employers and their employees by undermining the traditional 40-hour workweek, which has long been the standard for full-time work.

This legislation will help protect the estimated 2.6 million Americans at risk for lost hours and wages at work under this destructive rule. The employer mandate in ObamaCare defines a full-time employee as someone who works an average of at least 30 hours a week. But H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act, which passed the House today by a vote of 252–172, changes that definition, and that is a good thing for American workers.

As I said, we have three big initiatives: energy, jobs and the economy, and regulatory reform. So the American people are going to see us passing bills all this year and next year focused on these three issues, in addition to the other things that we work on. We work on a plethora of subjects here.

But I introduced a bill on the first day which will help us deal with regulatory reform. It is a bill I am proud to say has passed the House before with bipartisan support. I am very proud to say that when I introduced the bill on Tuesday, it had bipartisan original co-sponsors. I am very pleased that Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ, from Mr. LAMALFA's State of California, joined me in introducing legislation to shed light on how Federal policies impact the budgets of State and local governments and private sector employers.

The bill is called the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency

Act—H.R. 50—and it would fix loopholes within the bipartisan regulatory reform act, known as UMRA, which passed in 1995. I introduced this legislation in the past four Congresses, and it has successfully passed the House with bipartisan support on three separate occasions.

Every year, Washington imposes thousands of rules on local governments and small businesses. Hidden in those rules are costly mandates that stretch State and city budgets and make it harder for North Carolina businesses to hire. While Congress cannot create prosperity, we can work to ensure entrepreneurs and employers aren't crushed under costly regulations. This legislation will help restore transparency and hold Washington bureaucrats accountable for the true cost in dollars and in jobs that Federal dictates pose to the economy. Americans are better served when regulators are required to measure and consider the cost of rules they create.

The bill “increases transparency in the regulatory process and protects State and local governments from the burden of unfunded and often unnecessary mandates that waste time and money,” is what my colleague LORETTA SANCHEZ said. H.R. 50 would increase transparency about the cost imposed by unfunded mandates and holds the Federal Government accountable for considering those costs before passing them on to local governments and small businesses. The legislation would make it easier for people to determine how much these regulations are going to cost and make sure that we are not imposing unnecessary rules and regulations on both State and local governments and the private sector. So I am very pleased that that bill has passed. It is going to be a part of the regulatory reform package that passes this House.

I encourage people watching this to contact your Member of Congress if you are aware of unnecessary rules and regulations that are out there that we could do something about. Obviously, we need rules and regulations. We want to make sure that we have safe food, that the airlines are flying correctly and safely, we want to make sure the railroads are operating safely, we want to make sure our cars are safe to drive in.

But as we all know, often bureaucrats in Washington, and sometimes at the State and local level, look for ways to create jobs for themselves, create a reason for their being, and pass along rules and regulations that are simply unnecessary for the health and safety of the people in this country.

So what we want to do is reduce those rules and regulations. That reduces cost, that helps with our emphasis on jobs and the economy. I believe that is going to be very important to us in getting our economy going again.

As I mentioned, we are going to be working hard on our third initiative: energy. We will be passing another

version of the Keystone XL pipeline. We will do that tomorrow. That bill will then go to the Senate. The Senate is already holding hearings on the bill, but the Senate does work a little bit slower than we do here in the House. We hope very much that the President will work with us in a bipartisan fashion and sign that bill.

We are all very happy about the cost of gasoline having gone down in our country in the past few months. It, of course, doubled under President Obama, and now it is coming back down. It is because in many cases we have been able in the private sector to create more energy supply, and that's been helping bring down the cost. We know that the economies in Europe and Asia have slowed down considerably so there is less demand. We are all very grateful for the price of gasoline going down. I am very grateful for it. Every Member of Congress is very grateful.

So what we hope is to help that cause even further by passing the Keystone XL pipeline and have more energy available in this country. We want to do everything we possibly can. Republicans have always believed in all of the above. As Mr. LAMALFA said, we want solar, wind, and all those other things, but they are primarily operating now because of giant government subsidies. What we would like to see is renewable and sustainable energy that doesn't require government subsidies, and we believe Keystone XL pipeline will help us along those lines.

□ 1800

I am looking forward very much to our passing that legislation, the Senate passing that legislation, and our being able to send that bill to the President for his signature. I am hoping that he will sign it.

I oftentimes get people quoting the Constitution to me and talking about what the Constitution says. Particularly, I hear from people a lot about the role of the House of Representatives. I want to talk a little bit about that in terms of our work in appropriations.

In particularly the last few weeks, many people have expressed genuine concerns to me about the appropriations bill that passed Congress in December. Unfortunately, many Washington-based special interest groups are confusing the matter of what happened in December with the omnibus bill that we passed with incomplete and sometimes, frankly, false messages aimed more at fundraising for themselves than uniting behind our shared goal of stopping President Obama's executive overreach on immigration.

One of the most misleading and commonly circulated suggestions is that the Constitution grants the House of Representatives alone the "power of the purse," or giving the House exclusive authority to withhold funding for targeted initiatives.

I am going to be reading a part of the Constitution in a moment that relates

to this, but I want to read another part of the Constitution that I think often gets misquoted to prove this example.

We often hear the quote from the First Amendment, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."

This comes oftentimes from groups who protest Ten Commandments being placed in public buildings or creches being placed on public land. They often quote that, but they usually forget to quote the second part of that sentence, which says "or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Congress has a dual responsibility there. It is the same when people, I believe, are attempting to quote the Constitution when it comes to their version of what they call the power of the purse.

As I said, they are, I believe, misconstruing a part of the Constitution. Specifically, it is article I, section 7, clause 1, of the Constitution which states, "All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives."

I believe many well-meaning people believe that that means the House of Representatives has total control over what happens with appropriations, but they have forgotten that there is another phrase there, and it is "but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other bills."

While the House may pass an appropriations bill, it still has to go to the Senate for the Senate to pass. As we all learned in civics, the bill has to pass the House and pass the Senate in exactly the same form and be signed by the President in exactly the same form.

There is another clause that people are often thinking about also. Article I, section 9, clause 7 states, "No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law."

Those two are often talked about as power of the purse, meaning that is what people are talking about when they talk about power of the purse. As I said, all bills, including the appropriations bills that pass the House, must also pass the Senate and be signed by the President in the exact same form.

What happened, particularly last year, is the Democrat-controlled Senate could reject a House-passed bill. It could pass liberal amendments and return it to the House, forcing the House either to accept a worsened product or risk a Federal Government shutdown, which would still not stop the President's executive overreach.

What we did last December was pass a bill that would fund the rest of the government, except for the Department of Homeland Security, in a negotiation with the Senate because we needed to not shut down the government. Most of what was in that bill had already been passed by the House.

We passed seven appropriations bills and sent them to the Senate, but the

Senate had refused to act. We had also passed four more appropriations bills out of committee, but hadn't taken them up on the floor because they take so many hours to pass, and once the Senate made it clear they wouldn't take any of our appropriations bills, we thought we shouldn't waste additional time.

While H.R. 83 was not a perfect bill, we are all faced here with making decisions on what is presented to us rather than what we would like to be presented. We did have a lot of conservative victories in H.R. 83. It continued our track record of cutting wasteful discretionary spending by \$165 billion since FY 2010, but it is no small achievement that the Republican-led House has been able to implement overall spending cuts to save taxpayers more than \$2 trillion over the next 10 years since taking the majority 4 years ago. Certainly, we want to do more, but we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

We cut back spending to the Internal Revenue Service to pre-2008 funding levels. We blocked the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating farm ponds and ditches. There was no new funding for ObamaCare, and a host of pro-life and conservative, pro-gun policy "riders" were protected in that bill also.

House Republicans have worked extremely hard in the past 4 years to stop President Obama and the Senate Democrats from furthering the damage they did to this country when they and NANCY PELOSI were in control.

In fact, NANCY PELOSI and ELIZABETH WARREN both stridently opposed that legislation. However, unfortunately, when people focus on the perfect instead of the good, they don't give credit to us, and we were criticized by the liberal media and the conservative media.

Despite the short time we have had, the obstacles we faced, and the enormity of our task, House Republicans have still managed a number of conservative victories. Last summer, a bill I authored was passed. It streamlined the Federal workforce development system, including the elimination of 15 duplicative programs.

I would have liked to have eliminated more than that, but again, we take the victories that we can get. It is like being on a football team. You get the ball, and you look down field, and you think, "Gosh, I can't score a touchdown," so I just sit down because I can't score a touchdown.

No, that is not what the receiver does. The receiver says, "If I can make a few yards, if I can make a yard, I'm moving in the right direction." That is what Republicans have been doing for the past 4 years, moving us in the right direction.

Occasionally, we are going to score a touchdown, but if we are moving in the right direction totally, then we are going to win this game, and that is what we are doing. We wish we could

have done more, but we are going to have greater opportunities over the next 2 years with the Republican-led House and Senate.

This 114th Congress offers us new chances to pass legislation that will lead our country down a road of economic recovery. We are going to work to reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government, protect against executive overreach, reform Federal spending, and keep America strong.

This is America's Congress, and we are going to be addressing the American people's greatest priority in the 114th Congress. We are going to work hard to build a better future for American families. I believe we will accomplish that.

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

GETTING THE COUNTRY ON TRACK

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I have great appreciation and affection for my friend from North Carolina, Dr. Foxx, and I appreciate her comments. Actually, I didn't realize at the time, but some of the things she said leads into some rather painful things to talk about this evening, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have been greatly encouraged, first of all, over the last few days to find out that Americans are paying attention. They realize what is at risk. They realize there is a great deal at stake in this country, and now—maybe not more than ever, but as much as ever—we need to be about the business of getting this country on track.

I have mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, in recent years—maybe 3 years or so ago—my wife and I had gone to Togo, West Africa, which is by Nigeria, while Mercy Ships headquartered in my district were there. It is just an awesome charitable institution.

They bring a huge medical hospital ship into a dock in a Third World country, usually in Africa, and it is controlled by Christians, operated by Christians. They don't proselytize. They do the job of reaching out and ministering.

After the ship has been there, blind can see, and lame can walk. People who had massive tumors that were about to cut off their breathing are able to live. Women who had a child and developed a small hole in either the urinary tract or the colon when having a child that had been banned from families—sometimes, for 20 years, they were not allowed to be with the family. They were considered unclean.

They would have the fistula repaired and, after rather emotional ceremonies, for the first time, they would be reunited with family members. Sometimes, like I said, they hadn't seen them in 20 years. There were specific occasions like that.

□ 1815

And it is an amazing thing to watch. I was there for a week, really was blessed to help out with a number of different things.

But some of the West Africans wanted to meet with me before I left. They knew I was in Congress. Some of them were a little perplexed to see a Member of Congress. They were told he was a Member of Congress, but he is back there washing dishes in the kitchen.

But my late mother once said: I am not going to have you bunch of boys grow up and not be able to cook and wash dishes. So she made sure we could, and we can.

But we had the meeting with the West Africans there. They were Christians. And the oldest, senior citizen, hardworking man, after we had a really nice visit, he concluded, in essence, by saying: We were so thrilled when you elected your first Black President—his words—but since then, we have seen America getting weaker. It appears you are getting weaker and weaker. And the weaker it appears America gets, the more we suffer. Please, please, go back to Washington and tell your friends there stop getting weaker, because we know where we go when we die, but our only chance of having peace in this world is if America is strong.

I don't try to shove my religious beliefs on others, but it is part of who I am, just as it was with most of our Founding Fathers and those that went before us. But we were founded on Judeo-Christian beliefs. If you go look at one of the most important documents that established our independence—yes, the Declaration of Independence is critical. We are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights.

But the Treaty of Paris, 1783, that was after the Revolutionary War, after the war had been won, but the Americans weren't sure that Britain wasn't going to come back. They had the most powerful navy, the most powerful army. What is to say they wouldn't come back?

So it was critical that a document be signed, and something put in that document that was so important, that would be such an oath that the leaders of Great Britain would not dare break that oath, that they truly would recognize the United States as being independent and free of Great Britain.

I didn't know until I got to Congress—I mean, I read history books. I read biographies. I love to learn more all the time. But I was struck when our pastor, David Dykes, his wife, Cindy, were up here and they wanted to go on a tour of the State Department. I had never been through a tour of the State Department.

I went with them and, lo and behold, there was an original copy of the Treaty of Paris, the actual treaty. We were told it was an original copy. And I was surprised at the huge, big, bold letters that started the document because that document, if that is not signed, we

are not free and independent, regardless of what the Declaration of Independence says. It means Britain is going to come in any time they get ready to. There had to be something so important put in that document so that when they signed it they wouldn't dare want to break it.

The words that started the Treaty of Paris, 1783, were: "In the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity." That is a Christian belief. That was so important and held with such reverence that neither side would want to break an oath under the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.

Mr. Speaker, for those that don't know—I know you do—but that means the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. That is how the Treaty of Paris started that established not just our hopes and aspirations and principles as the Declaration of Independence did, this was the treaty that gave us the independence.

So, yes, we got back into a fight with Great Britain in 1812, the War of 1812. 1814, part of that war, this building was burned and, apparently, if it had not been for a massive thunderstorm or rainstorm that night, this would have gone the way—this actual wing didn't come into existence for about 40 years, 44 years or so, but the reason we didn't get a big ruin up here on what was once called Jenkins Hill was because the rainstorm put out the fire. The roof was badly damaged. And even though sandstone, marble granite doesn't burn, necessarily, in the presence of extreme heat you get cracks and it falls. We didn't get a big ruin because of the rainstorm.

Some thought maybe we ought to move the Capitol back to Philadelphia or New York, but others felt that what was here was preserved for a reason, so it was built back. It is part of our founding.

And what we have seen in the last 6 years as this noble effort by our President wanting to bring peace throughout the world by showing how nice we were, by showing that we meant them no harm, we would be glad to meet with them, to sit down, we will give them offices, we will give them things, we will let murderers go from prison, and those type things will show our enemies how really decent and good we are, and so they will want to be our friends and will not want to be at war with us—the only problem is that may work in some common core-type thing taught in school, but it is not in touch with reality because there is evil in this world, and that evil has been most recently manifested repeatedly in radical Islamic jihadist actions. And there is no way around it. The more the people in this administration refuse to rise up and call evil what it is, the more the evil rises up.

Last June, I was asked to go to Nigeria and meet with 23 of the mothers of daughters who were kidnapped by Boko Haram, a radical Islamic group. And I hope and pray more around this town,