

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as was referenced on the floor of the House, in 4 legislative days, funding expires for transportation. I could actually give my speech from last summer that predicted we would be exactly in this spot—nothing changed, more delay.

There are three things that we can do to fix it:

Number one, the President ought to issue an absolute deadline that he will not sign any extension that passes September 30; 4½ months is enough time for Congress to do its work.

Second, the Ways and Means Committee should get down to work with a series of hearings involving the people who actually do this out in the real world—contractors, business, unions, local governments. For the first time in 55 months, let's have those hearings.

And finally, let's have action on legislation that I have introduced, a gas tax increase for the first time in 22 years, similar to what has happened in Georgia, Utah, Idaho, Iowa, South Dakota—Republican red States. If they can step up and take their responsibility, maybe Congress can do that in the next 4½ months.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed, with overwhelming bipartisan support, H.R. 1191, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which will allow Congress to review any deal on Iran's nuclear program negotiated by the Obama administration.

As the world's leading sponsor of terrorism, a nuclear Iran would not only destabilize the Middle East, but it would have serious repercussions here in America and across the world for generations to come.

The United States must stand with Israel, our allies, and do everything in our power to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. And this legislation allows Congress to have approval and oversight over any agreement by the administration.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama should take a clear message from these overwhelmingly bipartisan votes in both the House and the Senate that, as negotiations move forward, the administration must listen to the American people and their representatives in Congress.

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

(Mr. WELCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, as you know, in 4 days, our transportation fund will expire. This will be the 34th time in the past 6 years that Congress has failed to pass a long-term transportation funding bill.

We all know that our highways, our bridges, our airports, and our railroads are being neglected. We have got 20th century infrastructure with a 21st century economy. It is absolutely irresponsible for Republicans and Democrats—for the House of Representatives—to fail to pass a long-term transportation fund.

Potholes don't fix themselves, and we have got potholes in red States and in blue States. We also have, in all of our States, good, hard-working Americans who could be put to work if we would give that long-term funding.

You know, you can't build a bridge with 2-month funding increments. So in addition to a lack of money, there is a lack of certainty. It is not because there aren't solutions. We have got good proposals from Republicans. We have got good proposals from Democrats. But we need a decision.

We are not grasping for a new policy. And the thing that is unacceptable is for Congress not even to have a discussion about what will be the source of that funding. We should not extend another short-term highway fund. We should do our jobs and fully fund it.

TRIBUTE TO B.B. KING

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, "The Thrill is Gone." Legendary iconic guitar player and performer B.B. King passed away last night.

B.B. King, born Riley B. King, born in the delta, lived a phenomenal life. He was born into poverty and was a sharecropper in Itta Bena, Mississippi.

He moved to Memphis and went on WDIA radio, the first African American-owned station in America, and became a disc jockey, Beale Street Blues Boy. That is where he got his B.B. name.

He went on to perform and learn on Beale Street, and he went on to be one of the great guitarists of all time. He taught a lot of guitarists how to play and was their mentor, somebody they looked up to.

Memphis was his adopted hometown. A club in his name is there on Beale Street, B.B. King Blues Club.

He was a very, very nice man and a talented individual who rose to get the Presidential Medal of Freedom and Kennedy Center Honors. His art will live on forever. He will be greatly missed.

AMERICAN PATENT SYSTEM IN DANGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), my very good friend.

REPEAL THE OIL EXPORT BAN

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding.

This may not be the topic that he is going to talk about here, but I appreciate the time to be able to talk to something that is important to the folks of west Texas and is actually important to all Americans. I rise today to bring attention to an important issue that is gathering nationwide support, that is, repealing the export ban on crude oil.

This week, I submitted an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would, in fact, repeal the ban. While the amendment did not ultimately make it into the final bill, I would like to take a moment to talk about the importance of lifting that ban.

First, let's remember why the export ban was placed into law to begin with. Because of the OPEC oil embargo of 1973, Congress enacted the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, directing the President to ban crude oil exports. At the time, the ban served a purpose: to keep our oil at home in order to reduce our exposure to the wildly fluctuating markets of that time.

Today, though, the ban has outlived its purpose. It is an antiquated policy that is now only serving to harm Americans and punish domestic production. For example, right now we allow Iran to export more oil from their country than we do from our own domestic producers. This is wrong-headed and is long overdue for a change. The ban should be lifted, while leaving in place the necessary authorities to allow the President to act in an emergency and while preserving our Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Some claim that gasoline prices would increase if the ban is lifted, but analysis shows that to be incorrect. It shows that prices will actually fall, reducing the cost of the product that American families rely on every single day, which is another reason to support lifting the ban.

In 2013, the United States was the number one oil producing nation in the world, surpassing Saudi Arabia and Russia, a fact that many thought impossible only a decade ago.

Taking advantage of our Nation's abundant resources by lifting the ban will, in fact, lower gasoline prices, create dependable, long-lasting jobs, and help expand our energy supply, making our Nation more energy independent.

I urge my colleagues to listen to the growing voice of the American people. It is time to lift the export ban on crude oil.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to warn my colleagues and

the American people of several threats to their safety and their prosperity. These threats are observable from Washington, D.C., but may not be observable to the American people. So I ask my colleagues to pay attention, number one, to what we are doing here, but I also would ask the American people to pay attention to what we are doing here.

There are changes being maneuvered through our legislative branch and being mandated by executive orders from President Obama that will undermine the economic well-being of hard-working Americans and put us in jeopardy as a nation, both economically and in terms of our national security.

Those pursuing these egregious policy initiatives are fulfilling President Obama's pledge to change America. And what most Americans believed was a commitment to make our country better, to change America, was, in reality, an elitist and, I believe, an arrogant pledge to dramatically alter the basic and fundamental institutions and values that have been thought of by our patriots to be the essential elements defining our country and, of course, ensuring our freedom, security, and prosperity.

What are these threats that I talk about? What are these threats that we need to pay attention to?

They are not coming from one political party. They are not coming from the Republicans or the Democrats, as a party. You can see support across the board on both sides of the aisle on various sides of these issues. It is also not a threat just stemming from one person or one political leader, but it is, of course, what we are talking about.

This threat is coming from a very powerful coalition seeking profit for themselves, even if it impoverishes the people or diminishes, at least, the economic well-being of the people of the United States.

Ironically, people who are enjoying their freedom and people who are enjoying their relative prosperity don't pay attention to some of the very intricate matters that have come before us in Congress. But I can assure all of my fellow Americans, there are powerful interests who are paying attention, and they are doing what they best can do to manipulate the law in a way that will enhance their profits, even if it is being done at the expense of the well-being of the American people.

We can see this in dramatic changes that are being suggested in something that probably is very boring and tame to most Americans when they even hear that someone is going to even talk about patent law—patent law, which is the legal structure that enforces an inventor's right to own and control the product of his or her genius, labor, and investment for a given period of time.

So I say, of course, that sounds pretty mundane, patent law. Is it some detailed, intricate regulation and control of this area of economic life, of jobs, and things that we do in America?

Well, it is more than that. It may sound mundane; but, in reality, patent law and the patent rights of our people—the right of our people to own the technology they have created for a specific period of time—has been a significant determinant in our country's way of life, our country's quality of life, and the security of our Nation.

This intellectual property right, the right through a patent ownership of 17 years' control and—not only of 17 years of control, but also of profit from one's own inventions, has been vital to our well-being as a nation and an essential part of the American Dream.

Let's note that this was a right that was written into the Constitution by our Founding Fathers. People know about the Bill of Rights. But the word "right" was only used in the body of the Constitution once, and that was a section that guaranteed that Americans—that what Congress should do is to make sure that Americans were guaranteed the right to control their own creations, if they are inventors or writers, for a given period of time, to profit from it so that they would have incentives to come up and be the most creative people in the world.

□ 1130

Our Founding Fathers believed that technology and freedom would uplift ordinary Americans and give all Americans a chance at a decent life. And they were right. They wrote that into the Constitution. It is right there. I believe it probably was under the influence of my favorite Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin. What we have to recognize is that over the years of our country, what has made us a great nation is our freedom and technology.

This is especially true for minority Americans and especially of Black Americans. Let me note that Black Americans, if you take a look at the history of our patent system, are disproportionately inventive. In the history of this country, actually, as a proportion of their population, our Black Americans have been more inventive than any other group in our country. Why is that? Because patent law and property law were considered a constitutional right, and this was in the one area in which Black Americans were not discriminated against once they were freed in 1860 to 1865, when our Black citizens were freed. After that we found that more patents proportionately went to that community because they needed an opportunity to uplift themselves free from outside forces beating down on them and denying their rights.

Mr. Speaker, our patent system and the patents granted by Washington thus respected the rights of all of our citizens, including our minority citizens. Thus, making sure that we have patent protection has been one of the great boons to our minority populations, who otherwise suffered great discrimination and suffered from a lack of rights, except for the property rights that come from inventions.

We see this has been good not just for minority Americans however. Let me note that we have, with technology, enhanced the ability of our people to work hard and get the job done and thus create wealth that was then owned by a large number of people rather than an elite. Of course, when people understand the importance of technology—and business has more and more come to the understanding that it is new technology that will give them leverage and control over wealth.

There has been an ongoing attempt in these last 20 years to dramatically diminish the patent protection enjoyed by Americans, the patent protection written right into our Constitution. The fact is that, for the last 20 years, I have been personally engaged along with a small group of people who believe that technology and freedom are essential to the well-being of our country. MARCY KAPTUR of Ohio and others have beat back many of these attempts to diminish the patent protection of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, America does have a patent system now. It is the strongest in the world. It is the strongest patent system in the world. We have always been proud of that. We have been proud that it has resulted in the fact that ordinary people have high standards of living here and they earn a good living from work because their work is enhanced by technological superiority over their competitors.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, people work hard all over the world. Everybody works hard. In all of these countries they work hard like our people work hard, but they don't have the technology that enhances their work and amplifies their energy and hard work so that more wealth is created. We have encouraged that since the day our Constitution was ratified. That is why our people, when they work hard, end up living better because it gives us a competitive edge over the slave and oppressed labor in other countries.

We, in fact, of course, know that the prosperity of average Americans to us and to our Founding Fathers was an important goal. It wasn't just we were going to have a country that worked, but it was going to be a system with respect for rights that would lead to a good and decent living for all of us, for all the people, and not just a small elite of businessmen.

Well, we have done this over the years, and it has worked well. We have not had to have our own people who do work hard having to compete in terms of muscular and use of their physiques in order to produce goods, services, and wealth. They had the technology that permitted them to outcompete those other countries.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it ensures we have a more secure country. Having a strong patent system where people are encouraged to invent new things and to be innovative has given us the edge over people who would do harm to our country. It has been important to our national security because we can't take

on adversaries that don't respect human rights. If America was trying to secure itself from threats from groups of people around the world, leaders and gangsters who have no respect for human rights whatsoever, we lose because they are willing to lose all of their people, and they are willing for any amount of bloodshed to maintain control and power and, yes, to beat the United States and democratic countries.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, we have had technology at work helping defend our country, technology that would not have existed had we not had the patent protection that has been traditional to our country. Even look today what is happening. Without drones, where would we be? Without drones fighting the good fight against ISIL, we would have to have thousands of Americans there to fight that threat to mankind and the freedom of the world. Instead, we have joined with the forces in Erbil, which is the Kurds, in standing tough directly against this onslaught of radical Islam, and they are holding firm. But without our drones there to help them, they would be overrun.

So this idea of property ownership of technology, of your technological developments, has been heart and soul to a prosperous and secure America. So when I say there are changes being proposed here in Congress, they are trying to manipulate through the system that will affect the prosperity of the average American and the security of our Nation. The public and my fellow colleagues need to pay attention because we are again facing a major onslaught, an attack on this fundamental right of technology ownership by those who create that technology.

We are facing an onslaught that is being what? Being masterminded, being masterminded and being pushed by megamultinational corporations who are not operating in the interests of the people of the United States. They could care less about all of that. But they are operating after what they can do to enrich themselves, even if it is not in the interests of the people of the United States and the interests of our security. These megamultinational corporations have pumped millions upon millions of dollars into lobbying for changes in our patent system that diminish the rights of the inventor and enables these multinational corporations to steal the intellectual property of our inventors and use it without giving compensation to the owners. This is in direct contradiction to what the Constitution meant to guarantee and why it was written directly into the body of the Constitution that this was a right that Americans should be concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, for the last 20 years there has been a stealth attack on America's strong and effective patent system. Let us note that we have had the strongest and the most effective and recognized fair patent system in the world. All other patent systems

have been judged against us, and now we have had these last 20 years an insidious undermining, and we are on the edge of a huge attack and perhaps successful destruction of fundamental patent rights that have been part of our people for many years.

For example, 20 years ago, shortly after I came here, I found that in the GATT—that is a trade treaty that we have—there were provisions that were snuck into the GATT implementation legislation. That is legislation we passed here in Congress in order to implement a trade agreement. These big corporate interests had put into the GATT implementation legislation without telling anybody two provisions that would have dramatically hurt the small inventors in this country.

Up until now, the Constitution actually says that the inventors and the writers are guaranteed a specific time where they will control. They will be granted a specific time where they will control their patent, the rights to their patent, and the rights of their creative genius. Well, it has traditionally been that once you file, as soon as the patent is actually granted to the inventor, then the clock starts ticking, and you get 17 years of protection. In different parts of the world, that is not what the law has been. In Japan and in Europe, it has been, oh, no, once you apply, after 20 years, even if it takes you 10 or 15 years to get your patent or 19 years, no, the clock is ticking then. You may not be granted your patent for 19 years, and then you have 1 year left, and that is no patent protection at all.

So now they are trying to foist that on us. By the way, that would give people, knowing the clock is ticking—those small inventors in other countries are faced by people who are trying to pressure them to accept lesser claims to the legitimacy of their patent in order to basically prevent these guys, men and women, from being compensated the way they would be if they had a guaranteed term, which is part of our Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, the other provision that was there 20 years ago was the 18-month publication demand. That is, after 18 months, when someone applies for a patent—now, it is that once someone applies for a patent, that patent application is absolutely secret until that patent is granted. Unless you have a patent in your hand—then it is published for the world because their ownership has been established. Well, that has been traditionally what our Patent Office and our patent protection has been. Basically, you have a secret and you developed it, you give it to the Patent Office. In fact, if anybody leaked that information, up until this point it has been a felony for anybody to tell anyone else until that patent is actually granted to the inventor.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they want to change this and say, if you haven't been granted your patent within 18 months, it will be published for the whole world. Think about that. Think

about what I am saying. Before, for our entire country's history, we have made sure that an application is secret so that nobody can get ahead of the inventor himself and the inventor won't be put in a bad spot. We made sure that until the patent is granted it is secret. They want to change that so that after 18 months it is published. What if that patent takes 10 years to issue? That means the man or woman who invented this piece of technology, our competitors overseas will be able to use it for all of that time because they will know all about it, but the patent hasn't been granted to the inventor yet.

□ 1145

I called that the "Steal American Technologies Act." That is what they were trying to do. That is what it would result in, and keep that in mind.

The large multinationals sought to weaken the ability of our inventors to enforce patent rights. Why? Why do they want these big companies here in the United States? Well, mostly, they are multinational companies now—they are big guys—and what they want to do is steal from the little guy—surprise, surprise.

The big guys would try to manipulate the creation of law here that will enable them to take something from some person who has less economic power than themselves. Our constitutional rights are supposed to protect the little guy's rights. We believe the newspaper should be able to be published, but little guys should be able to print a mimeographed piece of information themselves and distribute it or to gather.

Actually, what is hard for me to imagine is that, if these big guys were actually trying to diminish the rights of religion or speech in this country, or assembly, there would be an outcry; but, because it is the rights to own technology that you have created for a given period of time—it sounds too confusing, and they have let this feeling that maybe the people can't understand it, so they don't pay attention—they have let that lack of attention give them an opening to destroy and undermine the rights of Americans, and I think this right is every bit as important as those other rights of religion and speech, et cetera.

What they have set up in these last 20 years, it is an ongoing David versus Goliath because some of the biggest corporations in the world are behind the effort to change the patent law.

Well, we beat them back. As I say, there was a coalition of us—Democrat and Republican, MARCY KAPTUR. We had some very good support from the Black Caucus. I might add that, again, they recognized how important inventions have been to the Black community; but we beat them back.

It was a bipartisan coalition. We have had to, over the years, compromise and negotiate certain things, but they have not gotten their way; but every time they have tried—they

have tried to overwhelm those of us who are preventing the diminishing of patent rights—they have had to use scare tactics, always claiming that there is a boogeyman, there is a boogeyman out there, and that is the reason why we have to attack the inventor, because there is something out there that is really threatening and it is sinister and it is a sinister force that has to be defeated, that is why we have to take away all of the rights of the inventors over here, because they have now tried to tell the story in a way.

It is the equivalent of saying we are going to take away the rights of every American to sue someone—or a company or anyone else who has caused them damage—because there are frivolous lawsuits. Yes, there are frivolous lawsuits. There are some people who misuse our legal system.

The last thing we want to do is eliminate the rights of all Americans to use the court system to protect their rights. That is basically what is going on here. Our own cherished patent rights to own what you have created—and this constitutional right that was given to Americans—is on the verge of being dramatically altered and diminished and destroyed.

By the way, the first boogeyman that was used in order to try to gain support for these very same two items that they snuck in the GATT, the boogeyman was called the submarine patentors.

Submarine patents—that is all you heard about before—as if a person who was filing for a patent was a submarine patentor. Everybody has got to lose their patent rights in order to get the submarine patentor.

What was the submarine patentor? A submarine patentor was—their definition—someone who files for a patent and then does everything they can to delay the patent from being issued; and then, after years and years, the patent is finally granted, and they have got all this leverage on all the people who have used the technology in the meantime.

Well, I am sorry; there were very few submarine patentors—there were some—but the fact is most inventors were struggling to get their patents issued to them as soon as possible because they needed the money, especially the little guys needed the money, and they were struggling. “Please, give us the patent so we can move forward on this,” but, no, they were being presented as if they were trying to slow down the process.

Well, we finally, after really fighting for 10 years on this, reached the compromise, which my chief of staff, Rick Dykema, and myself negotiated, along with MARCY KAPTUR, who negotiated this agreement with us, that if, indeed, there is a patent applicant who uses his abilities or uses various powers that he has in the bureaucratic process to delay the issue of the patent, well, if that happens, then, indeed, that patent, the time, the clock, has to start

ticking against that guy, so he is using his own time when it has not been issued.

Well, that solved the problem—there it was—without diminishing the rights of those people who were struggling to get their patents out, but took 10 years or 15 years to get the patent issued.

That wasn’t a hard thing to negotiate, a hard thing to do, but it was a hard thing to accomplish because the people who were pushing submarine patents were really trying to diminish the patent rights of all Americans so that they could steal from little guys and could take away their patent rights basically as soon as possible.

Well, now, the current boogeyman is the patent troll. Now, there are some people who misuse and have frivolous lawsuits who use the patent system. There is no doubt about it. I might add this idea that people will be sent a thing—you are violating my patent, you either give my \$5,000, or I am going to sue you, and then small businesses go along with it—there have been court cases now that have taken care of that.

Obviously, that is a swindle and something we can’t put up with; that was happening to a degree, but there is no excuse, as I say, to eliminate the rights of all Americans because somebody abuses a right. That is not what is acceptable.

The patent troll is being used as a straw man. We are going to have legislation that will get this guy who has these frivolous lawsuits and is creating such havoc among small-business men and ripping them off. Just like the submarine patents, that can be taken care of without eliminating the patent rights of our people.

What we have now is the straw man, the patent troll. When you hear a debate on this issue, all you will hear is patent troll, patent troll, patent troll, not recognizing that every provision in this bill diminishes—it is H.R. 9 that is before our Judiciary Committee now—every provision makes it more difficult for the small inventor to enforce his patent against infringement by future megacorporations.

Guess who is pushing this legislation? Huge megacorporations who want that little guy not to be able to sue a corporation that has stolen his intellectual property rights—this is basically—but they are going to say: Oh, no, it is the troll we are after, the troll.

Well, as I say, there have been frivolous lawsuits, and there have been changes made in the judicial system itself of how to handle that, but there is no excuse for a troll—for this word “troll,” a straw man—get him to be used to damage and destroy the rights of the 95 percent of the technology creators in our country, take away their rights to get this straw man.

Well, let me tell you how the word “troll” came about, the word “patent troll.” That is the reason you are hearing it. Every time you hear somebody say it, remember this. A group of corporate elitists got in a circle in a

room—I know because one of the people who was in that meeting switched sides and came over and disclosed that these corporate executives said: What can we do to make it sound so sinister that we can get this passed? What words can we come up with that will just basically create such a bad feeling that the American people will not recognize that what we are really doing is trying to get the small inventor and make sure that the small inventor cannot sue us for things that we are using?

Okay. They went around the room. This friend, the fellow who told me about this meeting, said: I came up with the words “patent pirate,” and then, by the time it got around the circle, somebody came up with the words “patent troll.”

They said: That is it. That sounds so horrible, we can distract everybody’s attention using that, and that is good enough. That sounds so evil that we can make sure that we go into battle using that in front of us, instead of we want to diminish the patent rights of honest, hard-working inventors who deserve to have a profit from their creation of their technology.

That is just how cynical this debate has been. Every provision of H.R. 9—a bill now sitting in the Judiciary Committee—prevents—makes it more difficult for an inventor to actually enforce his rights and sue a company that is trying to steal, use his property rights, intellectual property rights, without compensating him.

Let me give you an example of something in the bill and the changes they are proposing. Now, they are changing to loser pays legal fees. If you have a small inventor and if he sues that company and it is a huge company, that is usually what he has created and making profit from it, if he sues them and he loses, he will have to pay the legal fees for that huge company.

Now, for the huge company, that is almost nothing. Taking on a case of one guy is nothing in their expense account because they have got 100 lawyers in a stable, waiting to help and being paid for. Well, if the inventor loses, that is it for him. That alone is wrong.

In this legislation, H.R. 9, they have added another little proviso to destroy the small inventor; and that is, if someone invests in his invention, if someone invests in the invention and he manages to be successful and comes up with a new piece of technology and he is granted the patent and some megacorporation comes along and incorporates it and uses it and refuses to give this guy even a small payment for using the technology that he created, his intellectual property rights, if someone has invested in that inventor to help him make the invention, let’s say that, when that inventor goes up to battle Goliath in his megacorporation, and let’s say, even though he is right, he loses—because that happens sometimes in our country many times, where some people with a great number

of very sophisticated lawyers against the little guy, the little guy sometimes loses—well, what is going to happen now, according to this bill, is anyone who has invested in the inventor is going to have to be liable for the legal fees that come out of that suit.

Who is ever going to give an investment to an inventor if that may open them up to liability? It is a liability, I might add, to some megacorporation, megamultinational corporation.

Well, this provision just demonstrates what is the purpose of that provision. The provision is to beat down the little guy so that the big guys can steal, and that is evident, very evident; yet this bill is still moving forward.

It is H.R. 9. It is in the Judiciary Committee now. As I say, H.R. 9 is the equivalent of saying: Because there are frivolous lawsuits, we are going to do everything we can to diminish the power of ordinary citizens to use the law and legal lawsuits for compensation for damages done to them.

□ 1200

Every provision of the bill weakens the right of the inventor to enforce his or her own patents.

This bill actually passed the House last year. We struggled against it here in the House, but what happens is 90 percent of the people here in this body are just so busy that it is hard to pay attention to something that seems mundane like a patent law, and they just can't get themselves to focus on it. The American people also think that issues like this are so complicated that they can't get involved, but that leaves the whole playing field open to huge corporations that are out to enrich themselves by basically structuring law in a way that the power and the wealth will flow to them.

Supposedly, the system our Founding Fathers wanted was for the wealth to flow broadly across our country so that every American could benefit from new technologies and new wealth that was being created. Now they want to corral that wealth; they want to diminish our rights in order to enrich themselves. These companies are not companies that are loyal to the United States. They are being loyal to their own profits, and some of them are multinational corporations that have actually no ties, real ties, to the United States.

Let me just suggest that this bill did pass the House last year, but it was stopped in the Senate because, by then, we had made so much noise here. As I say, a bipartisan group, led by myself, MARCY KAPTUR from Ohio, Mr. MASSIE from Kentucky, and other very strong activists, got together, and we made so much noise that the American universities finally paid attention because that bill that lets people steal patent rights was a huge threat to our university system. Had it been signed into law, the value of patents would have gone down dramatically. Let me go back to how that works.

Remember, we were talking about a troll. What their definition of "troll" is is anybody who buys the patent rights from someone who has invented something and has a patent but who doesn't have the money to enforce it. Anybody who actually buys the patent rights but is not aiming at commercializing it himself and is going to enforce that and make a profit from it, that is going to be what they are stamping out. The universities are not there to commercialize what they are doing. They are there to basically have new discoveries, and they realize they have got a lot of patents that they own as part of their portfolios and that the actual values of those patent collections by the universities would have dramatically gone down. As well, of course, the patent value of any American would have gone down at that point.

Also, other industries that are really important industries to our well-being—PhRMA and others, biotech industries—which struggle hard to come up with one patent that they then can sell in the market, are totally undermined by this effort to weaken our patent system. We managed to mobilize those people, and we stopped it the last time around; but the multinational corporations behind this legislation are so arrogant that this bill is now going to be shoved through again. This time, I think, with the American people, we can actually stop it here in the House, and we can certainly stop it in the Senate.

We need the American people to mobilize and to call their Congressmen and ask: How do you stand on this terrible patent bill, H.R. 9? We need people who are going to stand up for the little guy in America, not for some megacorporation that is trying to permit the theft of American intellectual property rights by multinational corporations.

Whether or not we succeed this time around is going to depend on, yes, the people here who understand the issue, fighting it out, being as aggressive as we can be, and the American people mobilizing to make sure we protect our sacred rights granted in the Constitution. One of the most important, I believe to be, is the right of technology ownership to people who create that technology.

As I say, there are powerful interest groups in this city and in our country and in the world that try to change policy and are manipulating government. That is clear. That is fine. We have a democratic process. We just need to make sure that we are all being held accountable—that all of the Members of the House and the Senate are accountable for their votes—and that we know and the public at least has the chance to know what we are voting on.

Actually, there is something happening right now where that is not true at all, and I sure hope the American people are paying attention to what is going on here in Washington concerning what they call TPP, the trade

promotion pact, and then there is the TPA, which gives trade promotion authority to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is a trade treaty with the nations around the Pacific. The sinister nature of this can be seen because this trade treaty with the Pacific nations is secret. It has been declared classified.

Right now, if I had gone down and read what now exists of this trade treaty and if I had announced it here on the floor, I would have been violating secrecy restrictions that they have declared—how about this?—in a policy about trade with major countries of the world, which will have an enormous impact on our well-being. It is being kept totally secret from the American people. How is that? Then they say Members of Congress can go down and look at it if they want to. Of course, as they have said, you can only do it within a certain time. They have regulated the time we can go down, and we are so busy that almost no Members of Congress will have gone down and read the actual documents that explain what that trade policy is that they are trying to foist on us.

Please, I hope the American people understand that Members of Congress should not be voting on things that, number one, they don't have access to, but we should not be voting on something if we have not permitted the American people to know what that is. You will remember the famous statement by Ms. PELOSI about ObamaCare, which was that we have to pass it in order to find out what is in it. That is totally unacceptable. In trade treaties, these things will now pass rules and regulations based on this treaty that will impact our way of life here.

Now, we have been briefed on it. I am on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and we were briefed on this the other day. The two main administration guys there—the people who had been Ambassadors and who are currently with the State Department—were briefing us. It is just like the boogey words over here, the scare words, in terms of patents. Now, this is all being used in just the opposite way with every glorious word—higher income for our people, more competitive for America, and all of the trade will come in our direction. Yet, when I asked these briefers, "Hey, have you read this treaty?" neither one of them had read it. So the people advocating for this treaty have not even read the treaty themselves.

I found a provision in the treaty, or at least I understand it is in there—I have not verified it yet because we have all of this trouble to go through to verify what we are being asked to support—that says that patents in the United States will basically have to be published after 18 months. If a patent application is made and if after 18 months the patent is not granted, the patent will be published for the whole world to see. Uh-huh. Does that sound familiar? They tried to put that over on us 20 years ago. We managed to

thwart it then, and now they want to sneak it into a treaty, and the American people are not permitted to know what is in the treaty.

Will that hurt us in some way? It will only make all of our technological discoveries available for our competitors overseas to be using long before the patent is even granted to the American inventor. You see what type of sinister forces we are up against. Who can sit down here and say how wonderful this treaty is going to be when the American people aren't allowed to see it and when almost all of us have not read it and when our briefers who come here have not even read it?

I asked them yesterday, these briefers, "Well, is this in the treaty?" They didn't know. They didn't know whether or not this provision on patents was in there, which would undermine our rights to control our own creations here and have our opponents and our competitors overseas have all of the information about our technology even before the patent is granted. They didn't even know that was in there. They didn't know if it was or if it wasn't.

By the way, if I had gone down and had finally gotten through the maze and had read the actual wording in the treaty, I would have been required not to have mentioned it today on the House floor as we are being restricted because it has been declared secret from the American people. This is outrageous.

We don't need to have a trade promotion authority that will keep things from the American people, and we don't need to have a trade treaty with the Pacific and with all of these nations in Asia that will open us up to having our technology stolen, but also we don't know the other parts of it either.

We keep hearing of the great things that are in it that are going to benefit the American workers, but we know what has happened in China. As for China, we were told, if we opened up our trade with China, China would modernize, and they would become a liberal, democratic country over the years. I call it the "hug a Nazi, make a liberal" theory. Basically, we were told that China would become a benevolent force. As we know now, China is becoming a malevolent force. China is becoming a threat to world peace, and the American people have not benefited from China trade as our good-paying jobs have gone to China.

We don't want that for the rest of the world. We need to know what is in these trade treaties because they might have a major impact on bringing our working people's salaries down even more. Whether it is immigration or trade or patent law, our criteria should be what is in the interests of the people of the United States or whether it is in trade, where we have been basically having trade for the benefit of some mega-multinational corporations or patent law for the same clique.

Guess what they also want? They want cheap labor, and that is why you see today this push to give 11 million people amnesty who have come here illegally. It is not 11 million. That is a 10-year-old figure. By the time they get done, they are going to bring 50 million people into our country who wouldn't be here otherwise. What is that going to do to our wage base? What is that going to do to Americans who are out looking for work right now? What is that going to do to our schools? to the money we have for our veterans' benefits? What is that going to do? We are undermining the well-being of the American people for the profits of some mega-multinational corporations. That is wrong.

I am a Republican—I believe in free enterprise; I believe in private property; I believe in the profit motive—but we have to have a Congress that is working for the benefit of and protecting the rights of the American people, and they need to mobilize to make sure we are doing that by supporting them to make sure that our communities are not overrun with illegal immigrants.

By the way, if you grant amnesty to 25 million illegals, there will be a huge surge of people from around the world who will know that all they have to do is outlast us, and they will get their amnesty. We need to make sure that these decisions, those things—immigration policy and trade policy and, yes, intellectual property protection policy—are done in a way that will benefit us and will not benefit our competitors.

□ 1215

When I say us, United States, it is us, U-S, us, the American people. That should be the basis of our criteria: what is going to be in the interests of the American people; not bring down their wages, not let people steal our technology and use it to compete against us.

I ask my colleagues, please pay attention to H.R. 9 and these issues. Join with me in supporting the cause of the American people, of us instead of the big corporations.

I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING DEREK "CHIP" ANDREW HANSEN

(Mr. NEWHOUSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, during National Police Week we honor those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives while protecting and providing for the safety and protection of our communities.

As an important part of these ceremonies that we see here today in Washington, D.C., we honor city of Wapato, Washington, police officer Derek "Chip" Andrew Hansen, an Army veteran who paid the ultimate sacrifice on March 8, 2014, when he passed away as

a result of injuries sustained in the line of duty in 2011.

Over his 15-year career as a police officer, Officer Hansen demonstrated exemplary service. He acted as an instructor for Standard Field Sobriety Testing. He was a school crossing guard. He wrote numerous grants related to school safety. And he served as a volunteer in his community.

As Derek's name is added to the list of heroes we lost last year, we also recognize his family, especially his son Colt, for their loss.

I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring Officer Derek "Chip" Andrew Hansen and his family for his dedicated service and for their sacrifice.

I yield back the balance of my time.

A MISSION OF MERCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I am on a mission of mercy; a mission of mercy, Mr. Speaker, because a U.S. military helicopter has gone down in Nepal on Tuesday, May 12. They were on a mission of mercy. The United States of America always responds to those who are in need, those who are in harm's way. This was no exception.

Our very finest volunteer to serve in our military. Many of them will go to distant places, and some of them will not always return home the same way they left. Some will not return at all. I am honored to say that we should be proud of those who serve. Regardless as to how we feel about conflicts around the world, we ought to appreciate the service of those who are in our military, and we ought to want every one of them to return home safely. So today I stand in the well of the House on a mission of mercy for our military persons who have lost their lives in distant places, but more specifically in Nepal.

We are there for a reason, Mr. Speaker. We are there because Ruth Smeltzer is right:

Some measure their lives by days and years,
Others by heartthrobs, passions, and tears,
But the surest measure under God's Sun.
Is what for others in your lifetime have you
done.

We, in the United States of America, are doing things for others in the lifetime of people in this country currently, and we do it in the lifetime of our Nation. We want it said that we were there to help those in time of need.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a time of need for those in Nepal. On April 25, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal; 7.8. Thereafter, on May 12, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal. These earthquakes have devastated this country. Lives have been lost, more than 8,000 lives. People have been injured,