

corporate money parked overseas that could be made available for infrastructure investment in the United States if it were returned for that purpose.

And I have proposed, along with two dozen of my colleagues, that we simply bite the bullet and do what Ronald Reagan did in 1992—raise the gas tax for the 1st time in 22 years.

When I introduced this proposal in this Congress, it was supported by the widest array of groups on any major contested issue on Capitol Hill. It was supported by the top echelons of business, of organized labor, of the building trades, construction companies, local government, transit, bicycles, truckers, AAA, all in alignment that Congress should step up and remedy this situation.

There are solutions. There are people who think about it. We need to have the same level of courage and urgency that has been shown by people at the State and local level where they don't have the luxury of living in a Capitol Hill bubble. They have to deal with the consequences, and they have stepped up, 19 States since 2012—in fact, 6 States already this year. Idaho, Utah, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Georgia, deep red States, have all raised the gas tax in 2015.

I am pleased that tomorrow the Ways and Means Committee will have its first hearing on transportation finance in the 56 months since my Republican colleagues took over. It is no substitute for Congress rolling up its sleeves and acting, but it is an important start. And I hope it will signify a full-court press in that committee to finally get down to cases and solve this problem.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Neiman, one of his secretaries.

RECESS

The SPEAKER *pro tempore*. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 8 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Guide the Members of this people's House with the spirit of understanding, which might lead them to their best

judgment. We live in a world of human failure and broken promises; may they be tolerant of the faults of others because they are aware of their own shortcomings.

Bless all with a quiet respect for the diversity of opinions to be found here. Through honest dialogue and contemplative listening, may Your servants search all the avenues open to them to meet today's challenges with integrity and justice.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HOLDING THE PRESIDENT ACCOUNTABLE ON TRADE

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, last week, the House approved part of a legislative package on trade promotion authority, or TPA.

There have been many mischaracterizations of what TPA is. Every day I hear from constituents who want me to hold President Obama accountable. Well, TPA does just that

by providing accountability to the President's trade negotiation efforts through enhanced congressional oversight and additional transparency. The allegations that TPA is something for President Obama is false.

It is important to recognize that more than 95 percent of the world's customers live beyond U.S. borders, and 1.2 million jobs in North Carolina rely on trade with them. Trade-related employment in North Carolina grew 3.8 times faster than total State employment from 2004 to 2013.

While I heard many different perspectives on TPA from my constituents, the argument from North Carolina families, farmers, and employers that negotiating these trade agreements is in the economic best interest of our State was a deciding factor for my vote in favor of TPA.

REBUILDING OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it is long past time for Congress to come together and pass a bold, bipartisan plan to rebuild our Nation's infrastructure.

Right now, China is spending 10 times as a percentage of GDP what we are on infrastructure. They are making huge investments in roads, bridges, ports, and rail. Meanwhile, Congress has simply not acted to put us on a competitive path in this global economy.

Now, a lot of debate has occurred here in the last weeks and days about our position in global trade, and we should have a trade deal that protects American jobs.

Meanwhile, what are we doing about China outspending us on infrastructure, which makes us less competitive? How are we supposed to compete with them when we haven't done anything to deal with our crumbling roads and bridges that are essential to making our manufacturers competitive in delivering their products to market?

It is time for bold action, big action on infrastructure, like the development of a national infrastructure bank that would leverage public capital with private capital to rebuild our crumbling roads and bridges.

Mr. Speaker, it is long past time for action. There is bipartisan support for this. We need to bring a big infrastructure bill to the floor of the House.

MAJORITY OF PENNSYLVANIANS SUPPORT HYDRAULIC FRAC-TURING

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, a recent poll conducted by Robert Morris University reveals that 57.1 percent of Pennsylvanians support natural gas production and hydraulic fracturing, with nearly half

saying they would welcome the industry into their hometown. This poll comes just 2 weeks after the Environmental Protection Agency released a report indicating that fracking poses “no widespread systemic harm to drinking water.”

Mr. Speaker, Pennsylvania is the third largest natural gas producer in the Nation and continues to drive record-breaking oil and natural gas production. The Marcellus shale, which extends through most of Pennsylvania, has grown from less than 2 billion cubic feet per day in 2007 to 16 billion in 2014 and has jolted Pennsylvania's economy.

As co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Natural Gas Caucus, I will continue to explore and promote best practices so that we can highlight the safety and the positive impacts of natural gas.

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate national Men's Health Week, I urge all Americans to take action to reduce health risks and prevent disease. It can be as simple as exercising, eating right, or setting up an appointment for a checkup.

I also rise as the CBC Health Braintrust chair to bring awareness to the critical state of Black men's health and the need to expand educational opportunities and treatment options to reduce incidence of disease in communities of color.

Black men suffer disproportionately from many chronic and infectious diseases, many of which are preventable. Today, almost 40 percent of Black men are obese, which contributes to stroke, heart disease, and diabetes. In 2015, Black men were found to be twice as likely to die from prostate cancer as White men and have a higher incidence and death rate from colorectal cancer. Your skin color and ZIP Code shouldn't determine your health outcomes.

Together, through legislation and community engagement, we can reduce health inequities and provide a healthier and more prosperous life for all Americans.

PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act, that will be considered on the floor this week.

One of the most fundamental flaws of what is known as the Affordable Care Act is trying to offset the trillion-dollar price tag by imposing an arbitrary 2.3 percent tax on lifesaving medical devices, such as pacemakers and heart

valves. It actually discourages the type of innovation that will improve our healthcare system for people needing these devices.

Hindered with these new high costs, our small businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to innovate, curtailing medical advancements and often delaying the availability of new treatments and cures for patients. I personally visited a number of these companies and understand how important their work is to improving our healthcare system.

Taxing innovation is not a 21st century healthcare solution. This devastating tax is reported to have already caused a net loss of over 33,000 jobs.

American families and small businesses deserve better, and the House is committed to advancing commonsense ideas to ease the burdens of the President's healthcare law. H.R. 160 is one of those solutions.

I ask my colleagues to join me in support of repealing this job- and innovation-killing tax that only limits options for those who really need these lifesaving devices.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as we rally around the obvious in the need for criminal justice reform and, in essence, the rehabilitation of our criminal justice laws as we deal with the interaction of law enforcement and civilians, having a pathway for respect for both, one of the most forgotten aspects is dealing with the treatment of juveniles in the criminal justice system.

I intend, over the next couple of weeks, to introduce a series of legislative initiatives that address that form of the criminal justice system, which we find, as parents and family members, touches all juveniles.

One of the things that the bill recognizes is that a young person's brain is still developing into his or her early twenties, and that those who commit crimes before this point should be treated differently by the criminal justice system.

The purpose of this effort is to improve the treatment of young offenders within the Federal criminal justice system and to put them on a path toward successful reentry by providing options for the sentencing judges: a safety valve for young offenders which would, in essence, break through the mandatory minimum; an early release for young offenders; and, particularly, alternatives such as massive use of home arrest.

Our children are our future. They get on the wrong path. Let's not celebrate that wrong path and force them to live that wrong path. Let's save their lives.

AXING THE TAX

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

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the estimated 145 million Americans who are at risk of losing their employer-sponsored healthcare insurance due to an excise tax included in the President's healthcare law. Beginning in 2018, employers will be required to pay a 40 percent tax on their employees' healthcare plans due to ObamaCare.

I am already hearing from constituents back home who hear from their employers and employees alike that are preparing for this devastating tax by looking at increasing deductibles, reducing benefits, and shifting costs to consumers and property taxpayers alike. This tax is set to cost New Hampshire's largest city, Manchester, over \$5 million.

Americans simply can't afford another costly tax, and that is why I introduced H.R. 879, a bill to repeal the so-called Cadillac tax. As we prepare to vote on a series of healthcare bills this week, I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this commonsense bill.

H.R. 879 is a win for employers. It is also a win for municipalities. And, most importantly, it is a win for all those hard-working Americans who expected the President to keep his promise that, if you like your healthcare plan, you can keep it.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK REAUTHORIZATION

(Mrs. TORRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, in just 6 legislative days, the charter of the Export-Import Bank will expire.

The Ex-Im Bank has proven an important tool in expanding U.S. exports and creating American jobs. It has done that with bipartisan support at zero cost to the taxpayers.

I would like to mention two companies in particular that have received support from the Ex-Im Bank: Able Industrial Products in Ontario and Desiccare in Pomona. These aren't giant, faceless corporations. They are very small businesses that provide jobs for the Inland Empire residents.

The world economy is getting more competitive, and the Ex-Im Bank is helping to level the playing field for American companies. If my colleagues truly want to protect U.S. jobs and U.S. workers, we can't afford to let the Ex-Im Bank expire. It is time to allow a vote.

□ 1215

TRIBUTE TO DORELLA ANDERSON

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