

Indeed, within the last months, three journalists have been murdered in three different Mexican states, joining the tragic toll of more than 50 Mexican journalists killed or disappeared since 2007.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, I stood before you today with a simple solution to these problems. I do not. But I do know that the struggle of the Mexican people for a peaceful, safe, and well-governed nation is our struggle as well. They must know that we are paying attention and that we recognize that Mexico's problems are also our own.

DODD-FRANK WALL STREET REFORM ACT

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

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the unfortunate Dodd-Frank Wall Street Act.

This week marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the law that was the Democratic answer to the recession that impacted our Nation.

My State, the State of Nevada, was devastated by the meltdown which started with the weakening of the credit standards, and it erupted into foreclosures that brought our fiscal system to the edge of the cliff.

At the peak of the recession, Nevada had an unemployment rate of 13.7 percent. Nevadans all over the State were losing their jobs, their homes, and their businesses.

The Democratically controlled Congress and the Democratically controlled White House responded with regulation after regulation on the false pretense that the crash was caused by the lack of rules.

Five years in and what do we have today? We have for the first time in over three decades more small businesses failing than being started. Think about that. We have more small business deaths than we have small business births.

The life blood of our Nation lies with small businesses. According to the 2012 data from the Small Business Administration, 64 percent of all private-sector jobs were created by small businesses. Half of all people employed in this country work for small businesses.

I am going to repeat we now have more small business deaths than we have small businesses being started. They are being suffocated by 400 new Federal regulations.

One-size-fits-all rules have impacted small bankers, so much that we have less community banks now than we had before Dodd-Frank.

These small community banks serve my constituents. They serve the neighbors of my district. They serve the neighborhoods of our country.

These community banks were not the banks making the risky loans. They were building strong relationships with their customers, but now, because of Dodd-Frank, there are fewer of them.

How did Dodd-Frank address Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac? It didn't. It didn't reform Fannie or Freddie. Dodd-Frank, in essence, is top-down governance from Washington bureaucrats.

Instead of ending too-big-to-fail, regulators inserted it into law. We now have SIFIs, systemically important financial institutions.

If a bank is defined as a SIFI, it will surely be the first to be bailed out because they are systemically too important.

This presents a problem of moral hazard. Dodd-Frank put it in law that they will be bailed out by Americans and their hard-earned money. Dodd-Frank was supposed to end this practice and it was supposed to protect the consumer.

After 5 years, we now have SIFIs. We now have fewer community banks. Simply put, our businesses are facing higher borrowing costs and the inability to create jobs.

Nevada today has an unemployment rate of 6.9 percent. Nevadans don't want more regulations, they want more jobs. Like all Americans, they want more opportunities. They want access to capital to start their new companies and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the burdensome Dodd-Frank law is still churning out final rules. Americans will continue to face the red tape during this slog of a recovery.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, last week, thanks to the leadership of the Senate HELP Committee, Chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER and Ranking Member PATTY MURRAY, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill known as the Every Child Achieves Act that would reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This is the law the Federal Government has with respect to kindergarten through twelfth grade education.

I applaud my Senate colleagues for reaching across the aisle and working collectively in good faith to expand access to early childhood education to improve programs for English language learners and to ensure accountability in serving our neediest students.

It is far from perfect. But in 2002, the reauthorization of the same act, known as No Child Left Behind, was implemented.

It gave this principle that we would look at the students who are falling through the cracks. It meant to serve our poor and minority students, students with disabilities, and English learners.

After all, let's not forget that the original ESEA, the original one in 1965,

had an exact declaration of policy that said "in recognition of the special education needs of children of low-income families." This landmark legislation in 1965 is a civil rights law.

It reaffirmed Brown v. Board of Education. It reaffirmed the 1947 Mendez v. Westminster decision, which happened in my own district, which was the precursor to Brown v. Board. It said every child has the right to an equal opportunity for a quality education.

Let's be honest. We are in the wake of a civil rights movement in this country. When we see tragedies in Ferguson, to Charleston, to presidential candidates issuing condemnations to immigrant families who come and who contribute to this country, to milestone victories where we see all individuals throughout the States may choose to marry the ones that they love, we can no longer ignore the social and the economic issues our great Nation is currently facing.

It all starts in our classrooms, in the quality of the education and the fundamental values that we impart to our children.

That is why I am also extremely disappointed in the House version of the ESEA where it limits the opportunity for our neediest students.

The Student Success Act—this is the one that the Republicans are putting forward—would take away \$3 billion over the next 6 years from the 32 largest school districts and most diverse school districts in our Nation, by the way, many of those students being Black and Latino. While the Senate's Every Child Achieves Act accomplishes tremendous feats in expanding access, the House bill actually does not.

So what do we do? We must make sure that the bills that we pass have actions intended in them. The Senate bill, for example, makes actions optional when schools are not meeting goals while eliminating requirements for States to identify schools that are in need of intervention where it is detrimental to the progress of the children.

So laws must require timely State action to address the inequities where they persist so that we can provide the Federal resources and the support to the lowest performing schools.

Everyone hates talking about accountability. But, without it, we cannot help our low-performing students get back on track. Without clear expectations for reporting inaction, we are doing a disservice to students. These students will fall through the cracks.

I look around this room and I am proud to say that I am a public school kid and many of us in this Chamber are. We are products of our Nation's public school systems.

Look at us. Our communities have chosen us to be their voice. Our communities have chosen us to be their advocates and to fight for them in the classroom.

And I am sure that each of us has had an administrator, a teacher, a principal, who believed in us and put us on

the right track so that we might be where we are today.

As I continuously reflect on my own experience, the daughter of poor immigrants from Mexico, first generation and low income and a child that the original ESEA was meant to serve, I ask my colleagues, let's work together and pass a bill that really helps our children.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as a subcommittee chair of the Committee on Agriculture, I am committed to safe and affordable food.

In recent years, there has been increased interest in where our food comes from and how it is grown. In my view, this movement is long overdue, as far too many Americans are removed from the family farm for several generations.

Agriculture is the backbone of rural America, and its success is critical for local economies and to deliver a product every American needs on a daily basis.

With a growing world demand for food and less Americans engaged in farming, science and innovation have become essential components of agriculture and remain paramount to meet increased demands.

Aside from tractors, combines, and physical technology, innovation also extends to biotechnology. Biotech ensures that America will always have the safest, most abundant, and affordable food supply.

As world populations continue to increase, producing more food on less land will be an ongoing challenge, but one that can be addressed through advances in biotechnology.

With this in mind, there has been an ongoing debate and much attention to what have been dubbed GMOs, or genetically modified organisms, seeds or crops.

Despite the alarmist claims of some, GM products, GM seeds, have provided great benefits to farmers, ranchers, food producers, and consumers.

For instance, some varieties of GM seeds have been engineered to host genetic traits that resist certain types of insects, molds or diseases that destroy crops or, in other cases, GM seeds allow for longer growing seasons or greater crop yields.

GM crops have had an enormously positive impact on farmers, ranchers, and food producers. GM seeds have also had a positive environmental impact because they have reduced the need for large-scale sprays or open-range distribution of pesticides or insecticides.

While some continue to question the safety of consuming GM seeds, the overwhelming consensus among the various credible scientific organiza-

tions, such as the National Academy of Sciences, the World Health Organization, and the American Medical Association, remains.

Quite simply, there is no sound scientific evidence that such crops or foods are harmful to human health or the environment.

In fact, a January 2015 study from the Pew Research Center found that 88 percent of surveyed scientists believe that GM seeds or crops are perfectly safe for human consumption.

However, one of the real challenges that has developed regarding GM foods is the lack of a fair and consistent regulatory structure.

Recently several States have made attempts to mandate all GM foods are labeled as genetically modified organisms. As a result, a patchwork of different State laws have begun to emerge over the labeling requirements of GM foods.

Now, this is already causing confusion as to how such labeling standards would directly apply to farmers, ranchers, food processors and, yes, also regulators.

This patchwork of State laws could also create some constitutional questions, should such laws affect interstate commerce and trade.

Nearly 80 percent of the food produced in the United States contains some kind of GM product, and the implications of a State-by-State labeling requirement would be vast.

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This week, Mr. Speaker, the House will consider H.R. 1599, the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act of 2015, in an effort to address this confusion. Because there are so many myths surrounding this debate, let's start with what the bill does.

This legislation is squarely centered on State labeling efforts. While the bill does preclude States from enacting their own GM labeling laws, it also creates a Federal framework for pre-market review and labeling of GM foods; or, in other words, the legislation requires the FDA to conduct a review of any and all new plant or seed varieties before such products are commercially available.

The bill would also require standards for defining whether a product is of the "GM" or "natural." The legislation does not prohibit States from outright banning GM crops or writing new relevant laws, but what the bill will do is give farmers, ranchers, and food producers much-needed certainty by establishing a unified and clear regulatory process.

Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H.R. 1599, I rise in support of the legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on it.

CALLING FOR THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO INVESTIGATE THE DEATH OF SANDRA BLAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand in the well of the United States House of Representatives today to call to the attention of the Nation the death of Ms. Sandra Bland, something that has been widely published. Videos have been shown. People can draw their own conclusions. But I stand here today because I want to announce that I join the many requesting that the Justice Department impose a thorough investigation—a thorough investigation.

Mr. Speaker, there are some who contend that the Justice Department should not look into this death. I differ. The district attorney, himself, in Waller County—this is where she died—the district attorney, himself, is looking into this and has said the death will be treated as a murder investigation.

A person who is stopped for a minor traffic violation should not end up dead. I think we should all agree that the basic premise is that, if you are stopped for a minor traffic violation, even if you are taken into custody, you should not be found dead in your jail cell.

It is said that she died from self-inflicted asphyxiation, a very polite way to say that she committed suicide. Under these questionable circumstances, the district attorney investigated. It is said that the FBI is looking into it. It is said that local constabulary will look into it in the State of Texas.

Why not have the Justice Department look into it? This is what the Justice Department is for, to look into these questionable circumstances of which too many have occurred as of late and, quite frankly, over a substantial period of time in our country. So this is a questionable case, and I believe this is a case ripe for the Justice Department to investigate.

I want to let the family know—and by the way, I don't know them. I didn't know Ms. Bland. I have no association with them. This is not about her ethnicity, and it is not about her gender. But I want the family to know that I am in sympathy with them, and I feel a certain amount of pain. I cannot feel their pain, but I feel a certain amount of pain because I believe that, if I had a daughter and if my daughter were arrested for a minor traffic violation or as a result of an initial stop for a minor traffic violation and my daughter was found dead in a jail cell some time thereafter with an allegation of suicide, I would want that case investigated, and I believe most people of goodwill would want to see an investigation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am addressing those who contend that there should be no Justice Department investigation. I have great sympathy for this family—I want you to know that—and I believe there ought to be such an investigation. If this case isn't ripe for a Justice Department investigation, I am not sure that we can conjure up in our