

pollution and has prevented more than 400,000 premature deaths. In fact, it has helped to cut ground-level ozone by more than 25 percent since 1980 and reduced mercury emissions by 45 percent since 1990. If that isn't enough, the economic value of these improvements is estimated to reach almost \$2 trillion by the year 2020.

The recently announced Clean Power Plan offers us the opportunity we need to continue to better protect public health. It is projected to contribute to significant ozone pollution reductions, resulting in important benefits including avoiding up to 3,600 premature deaths, 90,000 asthma attacks in children, and 1,700 heart attacks.

However, the continued effects of climate change and our inability to act are impairing our continued progress. Climate change is creating conditions that make it harder for us to clean up our air and reduce pollution. Without addressing one problem, we eliminate our progress on another.

Unfortunately, Members of this body use every opportunity possible to attack the Clean Air Act and now the Clean Power Plan. These unprecedented assaults block, weaken, or delay a host of long overdue clean air safeguards. As my colleagues continue to stand in our own way, we are harming the environment and ultimately hurting ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is a direct threat to humanity, and it is time we reexamine how we can think about it, talk about it, and respond to this growing problem. We may be part of the problem, but we also have the unique opportunity to become part of the solution.

I think Pope Francis put it best when he said: "Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start."

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to heed these wise words and make a choice to act on climate change to protect our health. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

FEDERAL CONTRACTORS

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

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to express my deep concern and disapproval of how the Obama administration has continued their assault on Federal and private contractors.

Since taking office, the President has signed a total of 13 executive orders that directly focus on Federal contracting, all of which establish new labor requirements and impose additional financial burdens on contractors. When you also include the 16 new regulations that have been created from these orders, a large portion of contractors who were once able to compete for Federal contracts are now

being forced out due to these new hurdles.

In fact, the number of small contractors who submit bids for Federal contracts have declined by more than 100,000 since 2013. This is unacceptable. While these mandates range from forcing contractors to provide additional employee benefits to being required to report additional information during the bidding process, the one thing that each of these new directives has in common is that it will make it more difficult for small contractors to compete for Federal contracts. A prime example is the executive order known as the Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces, which the President signed in July 2014. While intended to award Federal contracts only to responsible contractors who have not committed recent labor violations, the actual outcome will lead to additional reporting requirements, increased administrative costs, and the potential for a contractor to be blacklisted from bidding on Federal contracts while they prove that they are innocent from the accused infraction.

Mr. Speaker, by using executive orders to bypass congressional authority, this is nothing more than an attempt by this administration to implement their agenda without regard for the negative impact it will have on businesses and industries. But, unfortunately, this agenda extends beyond Federal contractors. The recent National Labor Relations Board ruling in the Browning-Ferris Industries case, which is more widely known as the joint employer decision, will have a massive impact on the business relationships between contractors and their subcontractors, franchisors and franchisees, and other contract labor relations.

In one politically motivated decision, the NLRB completely redefined the definition of "joint employer" when they determined that a company could be held liable for a labor violation committed by a subcontractor or a staffing agency that they hired, even if this company doesn't have direct supervision over those workers.

This sharing of responsibility is nothing more than an attempt to force both parties into collective bargaining, but the result will be much worse. Franchisors may decide that it is in their best interest to assert more authority over their franchisees to make sure that labor violations are less likely to occur, but then other franchisors may decide it is more cost effective to end their relationship as a way to avoid potential issues. Essentially, the same results could occur with companies who hire staffing agencies or independent contractors to provide them with temporary employees or contractors who hire subcontractors to perform skilled labor.

As a small business contractor for more than two decades, I understand the unique relationship between a contractor and a subcontractor. In the

end, the joint employer decision will disrupt this relationship and potentially discourage future contract arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for my colleagues to join with me in demanding this administration to stop continually adding burdens to our Federal and private contractors.

RACISM AND VOTING RIGHTS

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rewatched recently one of my favorite movies. "Selma" tells the story of the fight to register voters in Selma, Alabama, culminating in the march from Selma to Montgomery, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1965. Spoiler alert: After being turned around, threatened, beaten, tear-gassed, and killed, Black people got to vote in America.

A young and handsome JOHN LEWIS is depicted in the pivotal role of the community organizer who helps lead the movement. Another spoiler alert: JOHN is a Member of this body and serves with distinction from the State of Georgia.

It is among the highest honors of my life to know JOHN LEWIS and to work with him. In fact, I have marched with him and gotten arrested with JOHN LEWIS outside this Capitol Building in our fight for immigration reform.

I highly recommend the movie, and I want every citizen—and every person who lives here and hopes to become a citizen one day—to watch and learn from the movie "Selma." It is a moment in history when voting and citizenship were literally life-and-death struggles—and it was only 50 years ago.

And just yesterday, the NAACP completed a historic 1,000-mile march from Selma to Washington to remind us how we must always stand up to bullies and official inaction using nonviolence and community organizing and empowerment techniques.

The way to respond to racism is to vote. I have been thinking a lot about that recently as the Republican Presidential field of candidates has fallen in line with a bully who spews racism and is leading among his party's primary voters.

What can Americans do when the tail wagging the dog of the Republican Party is saying that most Mexicans are murderers and rapists?

What can we do as a nation when candidates blame unrest in reaction to police violence in Baltimore and Ferguson on Mexican and Central American immigrants?

What can we do when thousands of people cheer when a candidate proposes building a great wall of America on our southern border, and the response from other candidates is to say that we should build another wall opposite Canada as well?

Well, in the movie "Selma," Oprah Winfrey didn't just get mad; she fought

back by making sure she could register to vote. We have all learned what the Republican Party seems to be forgetting: Appeals to a narrow Republican electorate with over-the-top racism and below-the-belt immigrant bashing will not get you to the White House.

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President Romney—oh, I'm sorry. Governor Romney got more White votes than any candidate in the history of the United States, but he couldn't overcome the demographic reality that the country is more diverse and so are its voters.

Appeals to racism and immigrant bashing are creating a predictable backlash in the neighborhoods of my district in Chicago. People are calling and coming into my office, asking what they can do to push back.

Very specifically, those who are not yet citizens are asking: How do I become a citizen? Those who have not registered to vote are asking how to get that done.

In Latino and Asian communities and in every community that thinks that calling most Mexicans "rapists" is not the kind of political rhetoric that should go unchallenged, people are becoming citizens.

My office in Chicago is known as a place to go if you want information on the citizenship process. In total, more than 50,000 American citizens have come to our office for help in figuring out the process.

The demand for information on citizenship has grown so much in my district that, this Saturday, from 9:00 to noon, at the Instituto Del Progreso Latino, I will join my staff and local advocates and the local office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for a free workshop on applying to become a citizen.

Not only will people get help in understanding the process, but we will also help them figure out if they qualify for a fee waiver so that the \$680 application fee that people have to pay is not a barrier.

Think about it. There are roughly 8.8 million immigrants with green cards who have lived in the U.S. for 5 years or more or who have been married to a U.S. citizen for 3 years or more, and they can pass a background check and qualify for citizenship today.

So what I am proposing is that, instead of renewing your green card, if you are one of those 8.8 million people, and you get it for \$450 for 10 years, you apply for permanent citizenship, with a fee waiver, and become a citizen for free. That is right.

Apply for citizenship, and you can vote for whomever you want to vote for. You can even vote against the guy who called your whole ethnic group "rapists," "murderers," and "drug dealers." That kind of ugly, un-American attack is moving people to apply for citizenship and moving citizens to become voters.

Mr. Speaker, today is Citizenship Day, and there are hundreds of citizen-

ship workshops and activities across the country. I am looking forward to meeting with the hundreds of people who will be working towards their citizenship this Saturday in Chicago.

The way to respond to racism is by voting, and in Latino and immigrant communities, we are getting that message loud and clear.

OZONE REGULATIONS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reject a proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency that would increase compliance measures in dealing with ozone. This proposal has been met with bipartisan opposition in Pennsylvania from local, State, and, yes, Federal elected officials.

As a result of these regulations, three counties in my district—Erie, Centre, and Clearfield—would fall out of compliance with Federal law. This comes at a time when Pennsylvania's ozone emissions have declined for decades.

Let me repeat that. This comes at a time when the ozone emission levels in Pennsylvania have been in decline for decades. This is an EPA-Obama administration political solution in search of a problem.

The new regulations would trigger an implementation procedure for counties which would make State and local officials answer to the EPA for basic permitting and planning decisions.

The regulations would threaten the State's ability to open new manufacturing facilities and, by the way, the jobs that would go with that. They would threaten the State's ability to expand current businesses and invest in new roadways.

They would also threaten agriculture through restrictions on animal feeding operations due to emissions from animal waste, along with limits on pesticide use.

This proposal comes at a time when ozone emissions across Pennsylvania have been in decline, again, for decades. With the State's economy still on the rebound from the Great Recession, now is the wrong time for new, stringent, and, I would argue, unnecessary rules from the EPA that could kill jobs.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, this proposal is the latest in a series of overreaches by the EPA, including the Clean Power Plan, which was announced earlier this summer by President Obama.

That plan will work hand in hand with these proposed ozone limits to kill good-paying jobs and to stifle economic development in Pennsylvania and across the Nation.

Furthermore, recent studies have called into question the claim that ozone levels lead to health issues, in-

cluding asthma, especially among children.

With that in mind, these proposed regulations, which could be the costliest in the history of this Nation, may not have any impact on the health of our citizens.

There is still time for the EPA to reconsider the stringent regulation proposals for ozone and coal power plants.

As the Representative of a largely rural district which depends on agriculture, I understand how important it is that we be good stewards of the environment.

However, that stewardship must be balanced with the protection of industries and jobs, which have powered our communities for generations.

DROUGHT AND WILDFIRES IN CALIFORNIA

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the devastating wildfires that are sweeping throughout the Western States and, particularly, in much of California.

Last week, we had over 22 wildfires at one time that were in various parts of California. Because of the incredible 4 consecutive dry years, what once was a seasonal issue now seems to be year round.

Obviously, the drought conditions facing California played a big role in the ability to manage these wildfires, and the devastation that has occurred as a result of that has been great.

These last 4 years have been among the driest 4 years we have had, climatologists say, in 1,200 years in California and in the Western States.

Over 70 percent of California is facing what is considered to be extreme and exceptional drought conditions, which are among the highest categories that you can face under drought conditions.

California is not new to managing wildfires. It is part of living in that State as well as in other Western States, but these dry conditions over the last 4 years have made it worse; therefore, we need to try to figure out different ways to address this.

The Rough fire in Fresno County, which is part of the county I represent, has burned over 140,000 acres. Yesterday, finally, we got up to 67 percent contained.

This fire has lasted over a month, and it has closed one of our great national parks, Kings Canyon National Park. Last week, when I was home, literally, ashes were raining on our communities. Governor Jerry Brown has announced a state of emergency for northern California.

The Valley and Butte fires have been significant, affecting both Congressman MCCLINTOCK's and Congressman THOMPSON's districts.

Congressman THOMPSON has lost over 600 homes, and the fires are threatening thousands more. He has stayed