

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.

□ 1015

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 McCCLINTOCK's and Congressman THOMPSON's districts.

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

there to protect his district and assist with the fires. At this point, the Valley fire is only 30 percent contained. The Butte fire has taken 233 homes.

As a result of these devastating fires, sadly, two firefighters have lost their lives, three civilians have been killed, and four firefighters have been hospitalized due to receiving severe burns. Literally, we have thousands and thousands of men and women who are out there manning these fires.

So the question is: What should we do about it as these numbers, sadly, continue to rise?

We need to better manage our forests. We need to help alleviate and cut down on the fuel that is there through the brush that has made these fires spread incredibly fast in conditions that were never foretold. Wildfire suppression and better managing our forests is a key to doing this.

The funding that we provide for natural disasters, like to FEMA for hurricanes and for earthquakes, ought to go toward putting out these fires.

We have exceeded over \$1 billion in the U.S. Forestry Department's budget, and we have completely overrun our ability to provide funding.

Currently, money the U.S. Forest Service has allocated for forest cleanup in order to prevent fires is being used to put the fires out.

We must put our political differences aside and pass legislation that will alleviate this crisis in Western States and in California.

In addition to getting legislation passed that will provide funding for putting fires out, we need to put legislation together that would, in fact, in the future, manage our forests better.

In July, I, along with Congressman VALADAO, introduced legislation, the Western Water and American Food Security Act.

This is part of a larger effort to deal with this issue. This legislation is the first step toward passing a bill that will provide additional tools for California to manage drought. This bill addresses a number of solutions to fix California's broken water system.

They include improved operations that are governed by the latest science, which will allow us to move more water when water is available in the system; additional water storage capacity; increased water recycling and reuse; improved water efficiency; and a conveyance solution that minimizes the use of an ecosystem as infrastructure and that balances the water needs for all of California.

This is but one of the tools that we need to address. We have legislation in the House, and we have legislation in the Senate. This fall, I hope we will be able to work together in a bipartisan fashion to pass this important legislation.

Certainly, these wildfires tell the public—and the public tells us—that we must do something about this. It must be a priority that we get something signed into law this year, before the

rainy and snowy seasons begin. Lord knows, we hope it rains and snows this winter.

People in California, people in our valley, which has been ground zero for the drought impacts, and people in the West want Congress to act.

I urge my colleagues to take the appropriate action and pass much necessary legislation affecting the drought conditions in California and in the Western States.

DAVID C. HYDE, JR.

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

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, throughout our lives here on Earth, God places in our path certain people who influence our lives, who help shape who we are, and who ultimately help us to understand our purpose.

A couple of years ago, I met someone whose optimism, faith, and valor in the face of difficulty has had a great influence on me, on my family, and on our entire community.

I met Mr. David Hyde in 2013, who at that time was a small business owner in Cartersville, Georgia. At that time, I was a relatively unknown candidate for Congress, who was promoting the idea that America's days are still ahead of us if we define where we are going and aggressively set a course to get there. David quickly became a supporter and a friend.

Although many had lost hope in restoring America's greatness, David was a breath of fresh air. His patriotism was inspiring; his optimism was infectious; and his energy invigorated me with a willingness to fight on.

David and I share a vision: to restore our struggling Nation to one that is free, safe, and full of opportunity. We both believe that we can turn the tide and give our grandchildren a nation better than the one we inherited, but, of course, it will take a lot of hard work.

Within 2 weeks of our introduction, David was given the news that he had esophageal cancer and that it was rapidly spreading. Now, after nearly 2 years of, quite literally, putting up the fight of his life, the cancer is quickly taking David's life. The time my friend has left with his wife and children is no longer measured in months or weeks, but in days.

In realizing that any day could be David's last, I recently asked: David, if you had the ability to speak to the American people, what would you say?

Mr. Speaker, in response to that question, David sent me the following words of encouragement to give to the people of this great Nation. David wrote:

I recently had the honor of going to lunch with a friend just days before he shipped off to join the Navy.

As we sat enjoying our meal, I saw in the eyes of my friend a young man who was

proud to be given the opportunity to serve his country.

The more we talked, the more he reminded me of another young man who, 35 years earlier, had also left home and family to join the Navy. The similarities between the two of us were not lost on me, and it reminded me of all that America held for a young man like me back then.

While my vision of sailing the high seas and protecting the land of the free may have been somewhat jaded by the old black and white movies I grew up watching, the dream of doing something that really mattered was alive and real to me. While America may have gotten off course, the goal of why we served has never changed.

We have lost many of the freedoms we once held, but I believe we are not so far from those days that, with hard work, sacrifice, and turning our eyes back to God, they cannot be restored.

My life is a living example of God's restoration powers.

It doesn't appear God will heal my sick body, but I know that, in the land I am soon going to enter, I have already been granted a new body—a perfect one—which I will have for eternity. That, my friends, is restoration.

Just as He will restore me, I believe He can restore our Nation to the greatness it once saw, but it will only be possible if we turn our affections back to Him. The road to restoration is not easy, as I can personally attest. It is hard, painful, and discomforting. But when your eyes are upon God, not your problems, the path is much easier to endure.

□ 1030

He has set out a clear plan with guidelines that aren't hard to follow. As our Founders understood, we may have some battles to overcome and a wilderness to cross, but we must not be paralyzed by fear of the unknown, for it is "In God We Trust."

When leading the Israelites from bondage, Moses had to lift his rod over the Red Sea in complete trust before God parted the waters for safe passage. He trusted God and forged on.

Although he faced insurmountable odds, the fear of the unknown didn't stop Joshua from forging on.

During the darkest hours of the American Revolution at Valley Forge, Washington didn't give up, but dug in and put his faith in the providence of God.

Leaders who are willing to do what is difficult or even what seems to be impossible are the ones who carry the team forward.

We must honor God and know that his plans for us include only one thing. His glory. If we are in it for Him, we win. If we are in it for ourselves, we lose.

Just as my young friend went out to serve in the U.S. Navy without a clearly defined path or step-by-step guidelines, but fully relying on his authorities to lead him, we must know that, if we are to return to our country's traditional values, we need to study our history, find men and women willing to adhere to those founding principles, and tighten ourselves for a brighter future led by our intelligently chosen authorities.

Who is your leader?

My best advice, as a man looking backwards with 20/20 vision, is to decide now whom you will serve and proceed in a manner worthy of your calling.

David C. Hyde, Jr.

Thank you, David, for these words of inspiration and hope. God bless you, my friend, as you forge ahead in faith and trust in God almighty.