

We hope to see tomorrow a big bipartisan vote so the American people can at least in this one glimmer look and say, hey, the House of Representatives functioned the way that the Founding Fathers intended it to and moved an important piece of legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to a big vote tomorrow. I yield back the balance of time.

WATER PROBLEMS IN THE CITY OF FLINT, MICHIGAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I have 5 legislative days—and any other speaker who may arrive—to revise and extend remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today just to take a few minutes to call attention to a problem that I have been trying to raise in this body and in my work before I came to Congress for some time, specifically, to describe the conditions in my own hometown of Flint, Michigan.

The subject that I am addressing is the unique and really difficult challenges facing America's older industrial cities, cities like my hometown of Flint, Michigan, a city that is the birthplace of General Motors. It is where the first UAW contract was created, was signed. But it is a city that has really struggled as it has made this transition from the old to the new economy.

It is a city that had 200,000 people just a couple of decades ago and now hovers right around 100,000 citizens, a poorer city than it once was, a city that has lost 90 percent of its manufacturing jobs.

□ 1815

I raise this because I believe that this Congress and the Federal Government have an obligation to reinvest in these communities, communities that helped build this country and that can have a significant effect on our future. These are the cities where innovation took place and where it can take place again.

But my own hometown right now is struggling, struggling with a problem, unfortunately, that is not entirely of its own making. My home of Flint, a city that was once really the center of the auto manufacturing universe, can't even guarantee to its citizens one of the most essential functions of government. It can't guarantee to citizens that it can deliver clean, drinkable water to their households.

We have elevated lead levels in the city of Flint in their water system. It has been known for some time, for about a year that there have been significant problems with water quality in Flint. And despite protests, really, at the State and Federal levels, public officials saying that there is no problem with the water, that it is completely safe to drink—in fact, one State official told city of Flint residents that they just needed to simply relax.

It has been revealed recently through independent studies, now confirmed by the State government, that we have lead levels far in excess of what is allowed under the Federal lead and copper rules. This is completely unacceptable.

In fact, what makes this even more troubling is that this is a tragic set of circumstances that has public health implications for the citizens of my community that were completely avoidable, that are the result of decisions that were made by the State of Michigan when it took over control of this fiscally stressed city.

This is a city that is struggling in a lot of different ways. Twice in the last decade, it has been under the control of a receiver, of a State-appointed emergency manager that takes away the authority of local government officials to make decisions for themselves, takes away the authority of the Flint citizens to elect their own representatives to govern themselves, and places authority to control the city in the hands of a single master, an emergency manager.

Well, it was during the period of time that one of those emergency managers was in control that the State decided for the city of Flint that, for a temporary period of time, simply to save money, it would begin to draw water, rather than from the city of Detroit water system, which had a water source from Lake Huron, but it would begin to draw water from the Flint River, a small river that passes through our hometown, a river that is the namesake of our own community.

The sad thing is—and this tells you a little bit about how some folks in different levels of government at the Federal and State level think about these older cities. There was no robust review, no testing, no examination as to whether or not this river water would result in clean water being delivered to homes, drinkable water delivered to citizens. As a result, this water drawn from the Flint River is substantially more corrosive and has led to lead leaching from the pipes in the delivery system into the drinking water in Flint homes.

In fact, there was a study that was just done in the last day or two that shows that in Flint school district buildings, water being delivered to Flint schoolchildren has lead levels far above the actionable level under the EPA lead and copper rule.

Think about this. In the 21st century in the United States of America, we

have a city, a great, old city that was a part of the industrial revolution, that can't even deliver clean and safe drinking water to its citizens, not only because of our failure to invest in infrastructure in this country, which is a big part of the problem, but largely because officials at the State government simply decided, well, that Flint River water, that will be good enough. There was no real scientific research that determined whether or not that water would be safe—"it will be fine." And even when evidence was presented indicating that that water might be unsafe, Flint citizens were told by the State government to just relax; don't worry about it.

Well, that is a complete failure of government. It is a failure of government, frankly, at the Federal level because, for almost a year now, I have been asking the EPA to intervene; to, first of all, help this old city of Flint rebuild itself and rebuild its water system by providing some relief through the clean drinking water revolving loan fund, some degree of loan forgiveness, which is allowable under Federal law; but in this case, a technicality has prevented the EPA from allowing the State of Michigan to grant that kind of relief. That could make a huge difference for the city and its ability to rebuild its own infrastructure. But so far, all we get from the EPA is "no," and we asked for technical assistance from the EPA.

Now, recently we have had more attention; but, frankly, it is not enough. I mean, where is the urgency?

If the role of the U.S. EPA is to ensure adherence to this rule, this law that requires clean and safe drinking water to be available to its citizens, they ought to do more than sit back and offer opinion. They need to be engaged. So I call on the EPA to take a much more focused role in making sure that the citizens of Flint have clean drinking water.

I mentioned that this was not an accident. This decision to use this questionable water source was done when the city was under financial receivership, when an appointed emergency manager was making the decisions for the city of Flint. So here we had a situation where this emergency manager, this outside new management is appointed to come in and deal with the issue of fiscal insolvency and, by only looking at the short-term balance sheet, made a decision to get cheaper water that turned out to be dangerous for the residents of the city and, actually, potentially has handed the city a huge cost to fix what could be hundreds of millions of dollars of permanent damage to the water system as a result of that decision.

So an emergency manager comes in with the idea that somehow outside management is the only problem that this city faces, makes decisions that not only ruin the reputation of the city but also cause significant health risks,

and then hands the city a bill, potentially to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, and at the same time, over the last decade, has continued to cut direct support to that very city. I mean, this just doesn't make sense.

The citizens of the city are not responsible for the fact that its infrastructure has been allowed to deteriorate. They are not responsible for the fact that at the Federal level and at the State level we have not supported redevelopment in these places. In fact, through transportation policy, housing policy, tax policy, land use policy at the Federal and State levels, we have actually, unfortunately, contributed to the hollowing out of these older cities, and now the citizens of this place have to pay the price.

The failure to reinvest in these older cities is not without victims; and right now, it is the people of the city of Flint that are the victims of a failure at the Federal, frankly, and at the State level. It is something that just cannot be tolerated.

So when we think about this question, when we think about this particular case of the city, my hometown of Flint, and the fact that these decisions have been made for them by people at the State capital, they are paying the price. And almost inexplicably, even though today in a complete reversal, an admission of failure by the State, the State has come in and said now they are going to help facilitate the reconnection temporarily to the Detroit water system until a permanent Lake Huron line can be established. Inexplicably, there they are actually asking the city government to empty out its remaining resources, financial resources, and put millions of dollars up to help contribute to pay for fixing a problem that the State government is actually responsible for making. The State broke the system, and now, yet again, it is the city residents who are being asked to contribute to pay for a problem that they did not create in the first place.

Sadly, while this may seem like an extreme case, it is a pretty consistent tale all across this country, but especially in the Northeast and Midwestern United States. But in the South and West as well, there are older cities that

have, in the past, contributed greatly to economic growth in this country and have been allowed—in some ways, encouraged—to wither, to be hollowed out, and we can't let this continue.

So here when we see before our very eyes 30, 40, 50 American cities—as I said, including my own hometown—continue to fall farther and farther behind, have their infrastructure continue to deteriorate, what do we spend our time talking about here in the United States Congress? Petty fights between Democrats and Republicans and, frankly, more recently, petty fights between Republicans and other Republicans.

We haven't even touched the idea of a big infrastructure bill that could help places not just like my hometown of Flint, but other places across the Midwest and across the country that could be much more productive if we simply had 21st century infrastructure, a water system that can deliver clean water to its residents.

There is no excuse. There is no excuse at the Federal level for us not providing the kind of help that would make a place like Flint a far more productive place with decent roads, good schools, and a water system that delivers clean water. I mean, that seems pretty fundamental, and it is. Without that, these older communities, these older cities have no chance of connecting to the new economy, no chance of contributing the way they are capable of to the next economy of this country. It is shameless that we haven't seen the urgency that I think is required in order to deal with this enormous problem.

There are victims of this failure. There are victims, individuals who have been really left behind because of the failure at the Federal and at the State level.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know I have taken a few moments. I don't need to take the full half hour that has been allotted to me because we will continue this discussion. We will continue this conversation.

I just want to make sure that the folks who are listening, the people in this body, people across the country understand that unless we take time, unless we make the effort in this body

to address the problems of these older cities, we will not have done our job. It is important that the American people know that this Congress is willing to stand up for them and stand up for America's cities.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HUDSON (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and October 9 on account of family reasons.

SENATE BILLS REFERRED

Bills of the Senate of the following titles were taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 32. An act to provide the Department of Justice with additional tools to target extraterritorial drug trafficking activity, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary; in addition, to the Committee on Energy and Commerce for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

S. 2162. An act to establish a 10-year term for the service of the Librarian of Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on October 7, 2015, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill:

H.R. 2835. To actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection Officers.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, October 9, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the third quarter of 2015, pursuant to Public Law 95-384, are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, DELEGATION TO TIMOR-LESTE, INDONESIA, NEPAL, AND KOSOVO, EXPENDED BETWEEN AUG. 11 AND AUG. 21, 2015

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. Vern Buchanan	8/13	8/15	Timor-Leste		383.26		(9)				383.26
Hon. David Price	8/13	8/15	Timor-Leste		383.26		(9)				383.26
Hon. Adrian Smith	8/13	8/15	Timor-Leste		383.26		(9)				383.26
Hon. Jim McDermott	8/14	8/15	Timor-Leste		191.63		(9)				191.63
Hon. Dina Titus	8/13	8/15	Timor-Leste		383.26		(9)				383.26
Hon. Susan Davis	8/13	8/15	Timor-Leste		383.26		(9)				383.26
Justin Wein	8/13	8/15	Timor-Leste		383.26		(9)				383.26
Sean Brady	8/13	8/15	Timor-Leste		383.26		(9)				383.26