Mr. Speaker, I submit this letter for the RECORD.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 22, 2015.

Hand-delivered on House Floor to Paul Ryan at approx. 4 p.m., 10/22/15

Paul Ryan called Mo and confirmed accuracy of letter via phone at 5:20 p.m. (during staff meeting)

Re: Immigration Positions & Speaker Race.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Chairman, Ways and Means Committee.

PAUL: Struggling American families have lost more than 8 million job opportunities to illegal aliens. All lower and middle income American workers have suffered from suppressed wages caused by the surge in both illegal alien and lawful immigrant labor supply.

Your past record and current stance on immigration conflicts with the values of the Americans I represent and causes great concern to me and the Americans I represent.

Yesterday during discussions about the Speaker race, you made two representations about immigration that stood out. They are:

1. It is unwise or unproductive to bring up any immigration legislation so long as Barack Obama is President.

2. As Speaker, you will not allow any immigration bill to reach the House Floor for a vote unless the immigration bill is ''supported by a majority of the majority'' of Republican House Members.

Although you talk faster than I can write your words down, I believe the above statements properly reflect what you said. I send this letter to confirm that I accurately portray your remarks and that I may rely on them when the House Floor Vote for Speaker occurs next week.

If my portrayal of your words errs in any respect, please deliver to me (before the GOP Conference meeting next week in which we are to conduct Speaker elections) a written communication correcting my errors.

If I do not receive such a communication from you, then I will infer that you concur that my portrayal of your remarks is accurate and that I, and the rest of the GOP Conference, and the American people, may rely on your words as I have written them.

I need your assurance that you will not use the Speaker's position to advance your immigration policies, except when in accord with the two above statements, because there is a huge gap between your immigration position and the wishes of the American citizens I represent. Your words yesterday constitute the needed assurance.

If your assurances as I have portrayed them are accurate, then I am much more comfortable voting for you for Speaker on the House Floor (and will do so, absence something startling coming to my attention between now and the election, which I don't anticipate).

If, however, you would use the Speaker's chair to advance an immigration belief system that is unacceptable to the Americans I represent, it will be very difficult for me to vote for you for Speaker on the House Floor.

To be clear, I intend to publicly share this letter and your responding letter, if any, to help explain to my constituents why I voted as I did on the House Floor in the Speaker's election.

Thank you for considering the contents of this letter.

Sincerely,

MORRIS J. ''MO'' BROOKS, Jr.,
M.C., AL–5.

A BIPARTISAN MAJORITY—A NEW PRECEDENT FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in over a dozen years, an unusual legislative procedure—a discharge petition—has been successfully mounted in the House. This is an extraordinary effort to allow the House to work its will—a mechanism that was part of a package of reform, dating back over a century, to deal with the iron rule of Speaker Joe Cannon. The subject of the petition, the Ex-Im Bank, was almost as obscure as the procedure that brought it to the House.

This is an agency that for over 70 years has provided financing for transactions similar to which all of our competitor nations provide their exporting companies. In this case, American companies will have the credit tools that will enable them to cost-effectively engage in international transactions that other private institutions won't finance because of political or commercial risks.

Even if providing this service meant a modest exposure to the taxpayer, which might occasionally cost money, it was probably worth it to have the businesses support good-paying American jobs and to be able to compete with foreign companies.

Yes, it would be worth it. It is not just a low-risk proposition. The Ex-Im Bank is a service that has made billions of dollars for the United States Treasury. It turns a profit—about $2 million in the last 2 fiscal years.

This is interesting—a service that all of our competitor nations provide their companies. It hasn't cost the taxpayers any money. In fact, it makes money for the Treasury. Why was it allowed to expire?

This is another example of where a minority of the House, for ideological reasons, decided they were going to take over the process. In this case, they were going to kill the Ex-Im Bank. They did so over the objections of the administration, of the business community, of many Members of Congress, of people in organized labor.

It was hard to maintain decorum during last night's debate when the chair of the committee complained that, somehow, by approving the discharge petition and the procedural motions that followed, we were stifling the will of the House. I smiled as people lamented that they would not be able to offer amendments. Members came to the floor, saying they had amendments they wished they could offer and now they were being shut out.

How ironic.

His committee had no intention of allowing the House to participate in the give-and-take of legislation he was lamenting was slipping away. His committee didn't allow this proposal to come to the floor. The committee did not amend and refine the Ex-Im Bank. The committee killed it by having the authorization expire without giving the whole House a chance to be part of that decision.

Now the people who were caught on the wrong side of the majority of the House, with a losing argument and a minority position, were suddenly concerned that the House was being shut out. They had been shutting out the House for the last 2 years. They had denied efforts at reform. Only when their hand was forced did they somehow resort to the most specious of arguments. This is like, as they say, the person who kills his parents and then pleads for mercy from the court because he is an orphan.

There is no reform because they didn't want reform. They were the ones who shut the House out. Now, because of the courageous action by a bipartisan group, led by our Republican colleagues—eloquently and bravely—the House will no longer be shut out. American business will be stronger; and the House has demonstrated that there sometimes will be opportunities for a bipartisan majority to have its interests represented.

We can only hope that this sets a precedent for how we solve other problems, from raising the debt ceiling, to dealing with budgets, to rebuilding and renewing America. Involve the entire House—solutions are possible—and America will be better served.

THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, President Obama used his veto power for the fifth time since taking office. This time, it was to reject the $612 billion defense authorization bill: H.R. 1735, the National Defense Authorization Act.

President Obama vetoed the defense bill on the same day that an American was killed in Iraq. With so much uncertainty and conflict around the world, I would have expected our President to have understood the importance of supporting this bipartisan defense bill. This veto is inexcusable. Not only is this a blatant show of disrespect for our troops, but it is disrespect for our Nation.

The National Defense Authorization Act also contains key provisions that will greatly benefit my State of West Virginia. The provisions include the drug interdiction and counterdrug program, the National Guard State Partnership Program, and $3.9 million in funding for the Charleston, West Virginia, Air National Guard Base.

It is shortsighted and wrong that the President refused to sign this critical defense bill. The bill gives our troops essential resources, but President Obama vetoed it because he wants concessions in other areas of government spending.

It is time to stop playing politics with our military. I urge my colleagues in the House and Senate to join together to override this veto.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, I stood on the floor of this Chamber and shared the stories of my constituents who have family members in Syria who are experiencing the political turmoil that is seen on the news daily. These stories paint a disturbing picture of what life is like in Syria right now.

Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad is inflicting a reign of terror on his own people that include the worst kinds of torture, the repeated uses of chemical weapons bombardments, and the siege and starvation of innocent people. Assad has killed more than 130,000 of his own people and has forced an additional 3 to 4 million to flee the country.

These problems have been exacerbated by the failure of leadership from the United States of America. It is not just that Obama has a bad plan for how to handle the crisis in Syria. It is that he has no plan at all.

Edmund Burke once said: ''All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.''

That is exactly what the Obama administration has done: nothing. Evil is triumphing because of it. Innocent people will continue to die if we do not act now. We must take the first step and establish a no-fly zone so that Assad cannot continue to bomb his own people from the sky. It is so photos like these won't be commonplace in our news.

This critical action will help, but we have to do more. I call upon this administration to wake up to that fact.

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A POWERFUL COALITION

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, over the last several weeks, I visited six high schools in my district to meet with juniors and seniors, about 2,000 students in total.

Almost all of the students I meet are U.S. citizens. The majority are Latinos. Some have immigrant parents, and most will soon be eligible to vote.

All of them have one question for me. It starts every Q and A at every high school I visit. The questions are about Donald Trump. Is he going to be our next President? Is it true that he wants to revoke our citizenship and deport us to the countries our parents came from? Is it true he wants to round us up, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, and deport us all?

It is very sad when the questions a Congressman gets from American high school students are about how much they should fear their own government, whether their own government is going to break up their families, whether their own government is going to treat them not as citizens and as equal partners, but as outsiders and pariahs in their own country.

When they hear that Trump is ''leading in the polls,'' they think that means there is a pretty good chance that he will be the next President. When they see him on TV shows like Jimmy Fallon, not to mention CNN and Fox News, they get the feeling that he is a celebrity that all of us in America admire.

When they hear that Trump is hosting ''Saturday Night Live''—not just being a guest but actually hosting, even after saying Mexican are mostly rapists, criminals, and drug dealers—they get the impression that calling whole groups of people rapists, criminals, and drug dealers based on their ethnicity or national origin is basically okay with us in America.

The real question these Chicago-area high school students have is: Hey, GUTIÉRREZ, what are you going to do to defend us from Donald Trump? What are you going to do to stand up for us?

This leads to an intense discussion about American politics. And I ask the students right back: What are you going to do to stand up for yourselves, for your community?

Look, motivating 17- and 18-year-olds to do something is not always easy, including motivating them to register to vote when they are old enough and to actually go out and vote. But when I ask these young Americans whether they plan to get registered and vote, every hand goes up in the classroom.

Donald Trump is spurring youth voter mobilization like I have never seen before. Nationally, we know that 93 percent of Latinos under the age of 18 are citizens of the United States and that every 30 seconds a Latino citizen turns 18. That is about a million a year for the next decade or so. If they are half as motivated as the young people I am talking to in Chicago, Donald Trump could have a tremendous impact on the youth vote in the coming election.

But let's be honest, do we really want to motivate civic participation through fear of deportation, racial profiling, and families being broken up? These are American teenagers growing up to distrust their government.

Trump wants to take us back to the good old days of race relations, which apparently means the 1950s, when President Eisenhower evicted millions of immigrants and U.S. citizens from the United States. Dr. Carson, who believes that human history is only about 5,000 years old—that is what he says, we have only been around 5,000 years—says of mass deportation schemes: ''I think it's worth discussing.''

Here in the House, we have considered measures to deport children more quickly, to make groups more distrustful of the police, and to delay Homeland Security funding.

Testifying on one of these bills before the Rules Committee last year, I made the unfortunate but real suggestion that Republicans were gravitating toward mass deportation policies, which provoked a response from the chairman, Mr. SESSIONS. He said: GUTIÉRREZ, ''there is no one in responsible Republican leadership that has said we should deport 13 or 11 million people. And I find it extremely distasteful that people would come here and suggest things that we have not suggested.''

Well, now that people are suggesting mass deportation openly and are gaining in the public opinion polls in the Republican Party, I wonder why there is so much silence from the Republican Members of this body.

But it is not just young Latino voters in Chicago that are being motivated by Republican attacks. When Republicans attack Planned Parenthood and block laws to guarantee equal pay for women, that motivates women to register and vote. When Republicans celebrate people who will not issue marriage licenses to two men or two women, a lot of people in the LGBT community get motivated to register and vote.

When Republicans rail against unions and block increases in the minimum wage, while, of course, they earn $174,000 a year, and block environmental standards and block sensible gun laws, a lot of working class and middle class Americans get motivated to register and vote.

Together with those young people I talked about at those high schools, we are forming a very, very powerful coalition, a coalition so powerful that some day, even Republicans themselves will want to be part of it.

HOLDING THE EPA ACCOUNTABLE

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring awareness to the reckless acts of the Environmental Protection Agency.

On August 5, 2015, the EPA triggered the release of millions of gallons of toxic waste into the Animas River near Durango, Colorado, containing lead, arsenic, and other pollutants.

Originally, contaminated water was seeping into the Gold King Mine from another nearby mine. When the Gold King Mine owner refused to allow the EPA on his property, the EPA threatened to fine him up to $35,000 a day—let me repeat—$35,000 a day for a leak that wasn't coming from the owner's mine. It was only after these thuggish threats that he was forced to let the EPA on his property.

In fact, as recently as last week, investigators from the Interior Department concluded their independent investigation into the August spill and determined that the spill was preventible and occurred due to the actions of the EPA. The best that EPA administrator Gina McCarthy could do is say