

harm here. We must secure our borders.

Having a 98 percent open border with Canada is absolutely unacceptable. This bill is the first step in moving towards securing that border in a proper manner by making sure that we do a proper analysis once and for all, which I am not sure has ever been done in this manner.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 455, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BIPARTISANSHIP IN CONGRESS

(Mr. TAKAI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, this week Congress voted on the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank. Moments ago we just cleared a bipartisan budget, which now makes its way to the Senate. Through this budget, we lift our debt ceiling and increase our defense and nondefense spending equally for 2 years and we avoid a government shutdown.

I agree with many of my colleagues that we must reduce our Nation's growing debt, but we need to make sure that we do not do so at the expense of our country's future and our ability to compete in a changing global economy.

We, as Congress, need to come together to find long-term, bipartisan, commonsense solutions rather than play politics with our national security, economy, and the well-being of its people.

Tomorrow the House of Representatives votes for a new Speaker. I hope that, under this new leadership, we see a change in how we govern. I hope Congress will no longer shy away from addressing the tough issues. I hope we can come together, both Republicans and Democrats, to get the people's work done.

HEAD START

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the students, parents, staff, alumni, and supporters of Head Start as they celebrate Head Start Awareness Month and 50 years of service to our Nation's most vulnerable children.

On May 18, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson launched Project Head Start as an 8-week summer demonstration project to teach low-income students

essential skills to prepare them for kindergarten.

Since that date, Head Start has served 32 million children and families across the country, providing them with the tools they need to build successful futures, helping to ensure a quality education and access to health care and social services. Head Start is a critical investment in the education of our Nation's youngest children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that, as a body, we reaffirm our investment in the children who are the future of this country. I urge my colleagues to support bipartisan efforts to give all of America's children a head start in life and an open door to opportunity.

□ 1815

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CLEAN POWER PLAN

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of President Obama's Clean Power Plan, and I would like to applaud the 10,000 men and women, African American faith leaders, who are engaged, involved, and committed to clean air. These faith leaders represent 13 million African American churchgoers who remain steadfast and unmovable in their cause to combat the negative impact of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Congressional Black Caucus tomorrow will receive the signatures and public statements of those demanding that this body fully support President Obama's Clean Power Plan. Nearly 40 percent of the 6 million Americans living close to coal-fired power plants are people of color and disproportionately African Americans.

Pollution and damaging toxins from these plants are responsible for thousands of premature deaths, higher risk of asthma attacks, respiratory disease, and hundreds of thousands missed workdays.

I believe this Congress can hear the Black church and work together. The Black church and their fearless leaders for generations have stood united on critical social, economic, and moral imperatives that are meant to strengthen the communities they represent. They have been in the forefront, like Dr. Martin Luther King, who walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with our colleague, JOHN LEWIS, for voting rights.

Climate change and their support for the Clean Power Plan is no different. They are in the forefront. As they state in their letter to us, "The Bible speaks passionately about the importance of stewardship for God's creation," and they believe that Obama's Power Plan calls them to action.

Mr. Speaker, I join with these ladies and gentlemen in their dedication to saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of President Obama's "Clean Power Plan."

I would like to applaud the more than 10,000 men and women African American faith leaders.

These faith leaders represent 13 million African American church-goers who remain steadfast and unmovable in their cause to combat the negative impact of climate change.

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The Black Church and their fearless leaders, for generations, have stood united on critical social and economic moral imperatives that are meant to strengthen the communities they represent.

Climate change and their support for the Clean Power Plan are no different.

As they state in their letter to us: "The Bible speaks passionately about the importance of stewardship for God's creation. And President Obama's Clean Power Plan echoes God's call."

Once again, I salute these dedicated men and women of God and for the vital work they are doing on this important issue.

FOCUSING ON WORKING FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, about 1 year ago, Speaker BOEHNER and Senate Majority Leader McCONNELL described a vision for the 114th Congress. It included "focusing first on jobs and the economy." They looked forward to helping middle class Americans "frustrated by an increasing lack of opportunity, the stagnation of wages, and a government that seems incapable of performing even basic tasks."

In the time since, they have done nothing but protect big businesses enjoy record profits, attack immigrants, and help polluters continue the destruction of our environment.

This body has voted four times in support of the Confederate battle flag, but we have taken no votes on legislation that will level the playing field for

working Americans. This body has voted against a solid, long-term transportation and infrastructure bill five times, and we have taken no votes on legislation to boost American wages. This body has voted countless times to undermine the Affordable Care Act or endanger women's access to health care, but we have taken no votes on legislation to help families balance the needs of work and their personal lives. That is in spite of statements from Members like the Republican nominee for Speaker who just last week indicated he wouldn't run for the position unless he would be allowed to set aside time to spend with his family.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are here on the floor tonight to call for a shift in focus. We were elected to ensure everyday Americans have a fighting chance and opportunities to succeed. We need to change gears to get to work on an agenda for working families. We need to pass legislation that would give workers the ability to balance work and family needs, bills like the Healthy Families Act, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, the Schedules That Work Act, and the Strong Start for America's Children Act. We need to pass legislation that will give workers paychecks that actually give them a chance to make ends meet, bills like the Raise the Wage Act, the WAGE Act, and the Payroll Fraud Prevention Act.

We need to pass legislation that will give every American a chance to succeed and climb into the middle class regardless of gender, sexual orientation, or any other quality, bills like the Paycheck Fairness Act, the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and the Equality Act.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, you will hear stories from across the country of working families who have played by the rules and worked for long hours and still can't seem to make it work. These experiences are shared with countless others from my district in New Jersey all the way across the Nation to California.

I hope that my colleagues are ready to listen, and, more importantly, I hope they are ready to act.

It is my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. I would like to thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I also would like to thank the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) for her tireless support of the progressive message and her long work in New Jersey, but also here in Congress. Thank you, ma'am.

Mr. Speaker, Working Families Day of Action, the day when we came together to talk about the agenda for working people, is a far cry from what my Republican colleagues like to talk about on a daily basis. But working people in this country need an advocate; they need somebody in Congress to care.

I want to tell a quick story about a young lady in my district. Her name is

Randa Jama, and she is a member of SEIU Local 26, who took a job as a wheelchair attendant at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Airport last fall with AirServ, a Delta Airlines subcontractor. It was supposed to be a full-time position, but her employer suddenly cut her hours to only 12 hours a week. She explains to me: "They told me that you are working only Saturday and Sunday from now on." Her supervisors would still sometimes ask her at the last minute to stay late or do an extra shift, but she can't work at such short notice even though she needs the hours because it is hard to get access to babysitters. She is a young mom.

Now, on behalf of Randa Jama and many other people, I just want to make a few reflections here today, and that is that things are absolutely out of balance. They are out of balance, and the gap between rich and everybody else is wider now than it has been in decades; and working people, consumers, and environmental advocates are starting to come together to demand good jobs and shared prosperity.

The story today is not necessarily about income inequality. We all know that. But what we may not know is how Americans all over this country are moving, shaking, and doing what they need to do. Whether it is the workers of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers or whether it is WorkingAmerica or whether it is the people in the labor movement, the Fight for \$15, people all over this country—Americans—are not taking this situation lying down.

We are here today to talk about what working families need and what they are doing. They face stagnating wages and struggle to balance the demands at home and on the job. I am very pleased that when it was announced that PAUL RYAN, our colleague, was considering accepting the role of Speaker of the House, he insisted that he would have proper work-life balance and was not going to give up home time. I hope that is a signal that we can pursue a shared agenda of the work-life balance for all families all across America.

Too many lack access to paid sick leave and affordable child care. For workers who don't have a reliable work schedule, it is often impossible to plan and to pay for child care, rent, transportation, and groceries. People are not working enough hours in many cases, and when they get those hours, they often have to choose between leaving their kids at home or taking the hours that they so desperately need. Workers are seeing their right to organize erode.

Here is another opportunity to tell you a good story, which is true, about a friend named Kipp Hedges. Kipp Hedges worked as a baggage handler for 25 years for Delta. He did an awesome job day in and day out and was a member of his union. The people at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Airport said: Hey, we want to form a union.

The people who pushed the wheelchairs, the folks who drive the disabled

around the airport, and the folks who clean up the airport wanted a union. He said: Well, that is a good effort, and I want to support it.

He got fired. He got fired.

A lot of people who try to organize unions today get fired for engaging in union activity. That is wrong, and it is against the National Labor Relations Act, but people get fired for it anyway. The fact is it takes them a long time to ever get any kind of satisfaction.

In the mid-1950s, you should note that the percentage of workers belonging to unions was about 33 percent. But between 1973 and 2007, private sector union membership plummeted all the way down from about 33, 34 percent down to about 8 percent for men and about from 16 percent to 6 percent for women. It is a devastating situation.

We all know that when people are in unions they make more. People of color in unions make more than people of color not in unions. Women in unions make more money than women not in unions. Even White men in unions, working men, make more money than White men not in unions. The union factor makes a big difference.

The decline is estimated to explain at least one-third of the growth in wage inequality among men and one-fifth of the growth in wage inequality among women. The decline of union density has resulted directly in Americans of all backgrounds having less money in their paychecks.

Now, the American economy is growing. This is the richest country in the world, and it is actually doing pretty well. But the share of that growth has only been going to the very richest few, and it has not been distributed equally.

This is a pivotal moment in our history, and Americans are stepping up to do something about it. We can see clearly now that tax cuts for big corporations won't help working people. We hear all the time, day in and day out, that if you cut taxes for the wealthy and you don't make them obey any health and safety rules, then they will use all that extra money to start businesses, buy inventory, start plants, and buy equipment, and that will give the rest of us jobs. That kind of philosophy has a name. It is called trickle-down economics. It doesn't work now, and it didn't work then. It never works. As a matter of fact, Americans all over are starting to see that a tax cut for a big corporation or a wealthy individual and allowing them to abandon health and safety rules is not going to benefit anybody but them. In fact, it is going to hurt us quite a bit.

Mr. Speaker, we know that deregulation won't help consumers, and we know that it is not going to help the environment. It will leave our consumers at the tender mercies of the business community, and it will leave our communities at the tender mercy of polluters. We can't afford that.

Things are radically out of balance, and working people, consumers, and

environmental advocates need to band together to push back for shared prosperity. We in Congress need to stand with them. One thing we can do is support policies and priorities outlined in the Day of Action. One thing we can do is stand in support of the policy priorities outlined in this Working Families Day of Action, #workingfamilies. We in Congress need to stand with them.

Today we are highlighting bills that would: one, raise wages; two, protect the right to unionize and organize; three, increase access to paid sick leave, family leave, and affordable child care; and, four, promote fair scheduling at the workplace and fight workplace discrimination.

Let me just mention a few steps before I turn it over. On the issue of fair scheduling, this is a big deal. There are more than 23 million workers in low-wage jobs, and two-thirds of these workers are women. Workers in these jobs often face schedules that are rigid, unpredictable, and unstable, which can make it impossible to successfully juggle responsibilities on and off the job.

I just want to say to any small business who worries about fair scheduling: We want to be in conversation with you. We want to talk it out and work it out. We know that sometimes things do come up in unexpected ways. But for sure, we can discuss, as Americans, how to work out a schedule that is a family-friendly schedule and that meets the needs of the business. What we have now is a completely unpredictable environment where people are left either choosing between leaving their kids at home or abandoning those hours that are available.

I also want to mention something about unions. A typical union worker makes 30 percent more than a non-union worker. This is a fact. The companies they work for are thriving and growing. There are tons of union companies all over this country that are making a lot of money. The question is: How big is the CEO's bonus? If we can have some union representation, the company can thrive, but the workers can share in that thriving. Right now, workers are eking a living hand to mouth and paycheck to paycheck, and the CEO bonuses are out of control.

□ 1830

Unionized African American workers make 36 percent more than nonunionized African Americans. Unionized Hispanic women make 46 percent more than nonunionized Hispanic women.

Let me just wrap up with a little quick story because this really is about people, Mr. Speaker. It is about people. It is not just about the stats. It is about people.

This is a worker who was required to have open availability and still can't get the hours. She is required to get open availability and still can't get the hours. Her name is Jill, and she works for JCPenney.

She writes:

My name is Jill Ernst. When I interviewed at JCPenney in Minnesota, part of how I got the job was that I had to have a very flexible schedule.

I was open all 7 days of the week, but now they only give me less than 35 hours. If they give me less than 34.5 hours, it's a struggle to pay rent and my bills. If they put me on the schedule for 28 hours, I have to figure out how to convince my manager to give me more hours or find someone who is willing to give up hours.

My schedule is so inconsistent that, if I need to take paid time off for 1 day, I know that I'll have to take the entire week off or I'll be scheduled a bunch of short days and not be paid for that 1 day off.

Mr. Speaker, we need to stand up for working families, who had a day of action yesterday: #workingfamilies. We know there is inequality. We know the wages have stagnated. We know that it is tough out there for working Americans.

But working Americans aren't sitting around taking it on the chin. They are out there demanding a fair share of this economy, and Congress should stand there with them.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. ELLISON, who has been a very strong and consistent voice on behalf of all working families and, indeed, all of those that are least among us couldn't have a better advocate.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking Congresswoman BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN for organizing this evening.

Many members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus I hope will be coming down and joining us this evening for a tribute to this Working Families Day of Action, the Working Families Agenda. Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN listed some of the bills that we have on that agenda.

The problems that working families are facing are not intractable. We know that many working women and men are struggling today, but these problems are not unsurmountable. In fact, they could be solved relatively easily if the Republican majority would work with us to pass legislation that would bring U.S. labor policies in line with the rest of the industrialized world. We have the legislation. We have the public support. We just need action.

One solution, which my colleague, Mr. ELLISON, mentioned is to allow workers to join unions. We know that union members earn more and have better benefits. A study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research found that unionized women earn, on average, \$2.50 more per hour, are 36 percent more likely to have an employer-sponsored benefit plan and 18 percent more likely to have paid sick leave.

Last week I visited with some O'Hare airport workers who came to Washington, baggage handlers, passenger transporters—the people who push the wheelchairs—and others. They are hired by contractors like Prospect Company.

Now, they are wearing uniforms, and it looks to me like they are hired by either the airline or the airport. But, no, they are hired by a private contractor. They don't have paid sick leave or health insurance. One woman in the group earned only \$8.25 an hour after 14 years on the job.

One of their colleagues suffered a miscarriage after her employer refused to give her light duty. The next time she became pregnant, they offered her light duty, but only if she agreed to work only one afternoon a week.

Unionized workers have a different experience. One of the workers in the group was a cabin cleaner hired by Skyline, a union company. He earned fair wages, a pension, and benefits.

We know that these problems can be solved. But I want to talk a little bit about how unstable work schedules contribute to the chaotic life of many workers by telling you about Tanya in a letter I received.

My name is Tanya and I work in an assembly line in a frigid 36-degree warehouse chopping lettuce and other items to create grab'n'go foods destined for display cases in Starbucks, Costco, and Walmart.

I never know much in advance which days I will work, which hours, or even how long my shift will last. Sometimes I may be scheduled for an 8-hour shift, but get only 4 hours of work because my line's order is completed early. Other times I am at work and on my feet for 12 hours.

The unpredictability of my schedule makes it impossible for me to go back to school, which I desperately want to do, because I can't commit to any class schedule. I can't even plan a budget for rent, food or transportation because I have no idea how much money I will make in any given month.

It is terrible when I finish the order early and am sent home without working my full shift. It is even worse when I punch out and hear my supervisor say, "We don't need you tomorrow." My heart sinks. It is the last thing I want to hear. I only make \$9.25 an hour and sometimes I get only 25 hours a week. That isn't even enough to pay my rent.

These are stories that all of us in this Congress need to hear, to digest, to understand what the life of people in our districts is like, and we need to offer solutions that can improve their lives.

They work hard. They are not asking for much. They want good schedules. They want fair wages. They want some benefits. And, yes, even a little retirement security would be good. We could do that. We are the richest country in the world at the richest moment in history.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois. She is always a progressive voice and no greater advocate can we have.

I am now delighted to yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), someone who has been a friend for a very long time and whose work I respect and admire tremendously.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN for all of her work, particularly the work she has done in New Jersey when she was in the State legislature and now in

Congress. I want to thank the Congressional caucus for holding this Special Order on the Working Families Agenda.

Since the Republicans took over the House in January 2011, they have held hearing after hearing to make it harder for workers to form a union, they have attempted over 60 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act, they have been giving tax cuts to the wealthy, and all that time they have been wasting millions of dollars on the Benghazi Committee.

Enough is enough. The American people deserve better. We know that families across America are struggling to make ends meet. Today I am calling on my colleagues across the aisle to get to work on the responsible solutions that hardworking Americans want and need, solutions that would boost wages, help workers achieve a better balance between work and family, and level the playing field so all workers can get a fair shot at success. This is the Working Families Agenda.

This agenda would help workers like India Ford, who is from my district. During the Working Families Day of Action yesterday, she spoke to Members about how she worked nights and weekends for nearly a dozen years in the restaurant industry. As a single mom, this meant not being home for her child to help her with her homework, missing PTA meetings, and not being able to spend time with her daughter before she went to bed.

Finally, she got a new job at a new restaurant with a manager who offered to give her a schedule that worked for her family. And do you know what she did? She selected the lunch shift. This simple change was profound because now she is at home with her daughter at night. She is able to attend school events and able to help with homework.

But basic protections like fair schedules and paid sick leaves shouldn't depend on winning the boss lottery. They should be fundamental rights of every American.

Today workers are more productive than ever, but it has been a long time since most people got a raise. We need to pass legislation to raise the minimum wage. We also need to improve the National Labor Relations Act because, when workers try to organize and form a union to negotiate for a fair share, more than one-third of the time somebody gets fired during the organizational drive.

It is time to strengthen the National Labor Relations Act so that employers might think twice before they retaliate. That is what the Workplace Action for a Growing Economy, or the WAGE Act, would do.

We need to help workers better balance work and family. We need Federal paid sick days and paid family and medical leave laws, which 80 percent of the public supports. Workers need flexible schedules, schedules that work.

It is also past time that we level the playing field so that all working fami-

lies have a fair shot. It is shameful that, in 2015, discrimination still shuts many workers out of good-paying jobs.

No family should live in fear of a breadwinner being fired for being gay, but Federal law still does not provide explicit workplace protections on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Working people deserve more than just a paycheck. They deserve a decent life. It is time to rewrite the rules to make the economy work for everybody.

Democrats stand ready to take up responsible solutions, like the Working Families Agenda, to boost wages, help workers balance family and work, and level the playing field by eliminating discrimination so that everybody has a fair shot.

In honor of National Work and Family Month, on Thursday, we will introduce a resolution calling on Congress to hold hearings and votes on the Working Families Agenda.

We already have 90 cosponsors on the resolution, and we won't stop there. For as long as it takes, we will continue to call on our colleagues across the aisle to take up the responsible policies that will help people make a better life for themselves and their families.

Again, I want to thank Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN and the Congressional Progressive Caucus for coordinating this Special Order hour and thank all of my colleagues in the Democratic Caucus who are standing up for working families.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you very much. As always, you have shared information with us which is illuminating and edifying and, hopefully, convincing of our colleagues that they shall adhere to those things that you were suggesting and recommending.

Mr. Speaker, one of the stories tonight that I have comes from Armando in New Brunswick, New Jersey. For 3½ years, Armando worked at a gas station 7 days a week on the night shift. He got one day off every 3 months. Despite working 46 hours each week, he didn't get overtime pay.

In 2007, when his wife Silvia developed eye problems that required a number of doctors' appointments, Armando's request to leave work early to help with her treatment and recovery was denied.

In order to care for his wife, Armando would come in from work at 6 a.m., leave at 7 a.m. to head to the hospital with Silvia, return home at 7 p.m., and sleep for just 2 hours before doing it all over again.

When he filed a complaint with the Department of Labor, Armando lost his job. On his way out the door, Armando's employer told him he was a good worker. He liked his work, but not the complaint.

Mr. Speaker, no one should have to endure this. No one should have to work endlessly with just 4 days off each year just to make ends meet. No

one should have to choose between caring for a loved one and losing his or her job.

I would like to take this opportunity and share another story with you from New Jersey. This story comes from Josefa, also from New Brunswick, New Jersey. She works in a restaurant in the kitchen and occasionally as a cashier.

When Josefa became pregnant, she had to take 2 months off of work without pay. When she returned, she asked for the morning shift so that she could go home to be with her newborn baby.

They obliged her request, but 2 weeks later they moved her to a 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. shift. With so few hours and traveling long distances to get to the restaurant, Josefa was stuck. She asked her boss for more hours, not a raise or a handout, but the chance to work enough hours to make ends meet.

□ 1845

Despite 5 years in her job, Josefa was told that, if she didn't like it, she could leave.

In Josefa's own words: 'I was a single mom, so it was very difficult; and things like this don't just happen to me—they happen to many others. We just make enough to pay the babysitter and rent, but there are so many expenses.'

Mr. Speaker, in the greatest Nation in the world, which we are, we can—and we must—do better. We must stand up for those hardworking Americans who don't want a handout but who simply want a level playing field. We have got to stand up for those working Americans who have to work 46 hours a week, who get 3 or 4 days a year off, who are not able to make the decision to be able to care for a sick child, a sick spouse, or a sick parent.

We can do better than that. It doesn't take a lot for us to simply be decent to those who hold up our economy, who do the jobs that we take for granted every single, solitary day; but without those jobs, we would see what is lacking in our lives.

So I ask, Mr. Speaker, that our colleagues in this House—and particularly on the other side of the aisle—spend some time reflecting on what little it is they need to do to simply give our working Americans a fair shake, a fair chance, time with their families, and time to be able to bring their families into the middle class.

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

RESETTLEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to speak tonight on an issue that impacts the safety and the security of our country. There is a grave