

it from my colleague today, the war on coal, the intent by this administration to take coal out of the portfolio of electricity generation—and, really, any other fossil fuel they can get their hands on, whether it be crude oil or whether they will then move to natural gas.

Later on, the mayor, in another article from the same paper, on November 12, says because the New Era Mine in Galatia is now going to close, this closure, “‘It impacts everybody,’ said David Harrawood, the village’s mayor. ‘It doesn’t just impact coal miners. It impacts trucking businesses, the stores, all their vendors. It’s not just one segment. Down here, we’re all tied together.’”

So that is the human toll of the war on coal. The human toll is lost jobs, lost benefits, bankruptcies, which then creates a risk to the promised pension payments to the retirees. It becomes a loss of revenue to the taxing districts, to the counties, to the villages, to the first line responders, support for our schools. It dries up the ability for the local grocery store to operate, the local hardware store, and it is, as the mayor has said, devastating to southern Illinois.

Now, when you hear the debate internationally, it is carbon dioxide, CO₂. In fact, I always talk in the committee about then-Senator Obama and his quote to the San Francisco Chronicle, when he was interviewed by the editorial board, when he was asked about climate and his plan, and here is his quote. You can YouTube it. It is easily accessible. “So if somebody wants to build a coal-powered plant, they can; It’s just that it will bankrupt them.”

That has been the plan since 2008. That has been the plan in the first 4 years of his administration, and that is what he is striving to do, pushing with all his force to not only do here in the United States, but do in an international venue. He is being successful, as we find out in the announcement of the closure of the mine in Galatia.

The total number of coal mines opening each year has fallen to its lowest point in at least a decade. The total number of operating coal mines has hit its lowest point on record, according to the Energy Information Administration, which has records back to 1923. At the beginning of the Obama administration, over half the Nation’s electricity came from coal. That number is down to 38 percent as of 2014.

Now remember, coal is the most efficient, the cheapest source of electricity generation and creates a base-load capacity that is very critical to keep the lights on. If you lose the base-load generation and you rely on renewables, you really do risk keeping the lights on, and you assure the Nation of higher costs of electricity.

So that is the war on coal, and that is kind of where we are right now with the administration.

So what has been the response on the floor of the House? What have we done?

Well, fortunately, yesterday we took a parliamentary procedure and a process called the Congressional Review Act to address the ability of the administration to try to promulgate regulations without the authority of Congress.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o’clock and 54 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Once again, we come to You to ask wisdom, patience, peace, and understanding for the Members of this people’s House.

Give them the generosity of heart and the courage of true leadership to work toward a common solution to the many issues facing our Nation.

As true statesmen and -women, may they find the fortitude to make judgments to benefit all Americans at this time and those generations to come.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day’s proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. QUIGLEY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

BORDER SECURITY AND SYRIAN REFUGEES

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns of the majority of Americans regarding allowing Syrian refugees into this country. Most important, I am worried that a terrorist could slip through, just like one of the terrorists involved in Paris.

But we also can’t lose sight of another vulnerability, a geographical vulnerability, our southern border, because our border is not secure. This President refuses to secure it.

Yesterday, I spoke with the director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, Steve McCraw, and he made it very clear that we are seeing another surge at the border. We are seeing folks from Syria come across. This is troubling and wrong.

The President must secure our border and protect our national security. If he refuses, we in this Congress must stop him by any means possible.

NO POLICY RIDERS

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, weeks ago, this body avoided a government shutdown by passing the Bipartisan Budget Act. Now we have to pass an omnibus.

Unfortunately, many of our appropriations bills contain divisive policy riders that threaten to create another partisan standoff. There is an appropriate time and place to debate these provisions: in the authorizing committees.

It seems that some Members have learned nothing from the brinksmanship that almost led to a government shutdown. It is hard enough to pass these measures without these divisive, controversial riders. We need to put the unnecessary fighting behind us.

The Bipartisan Budget Act represents a chance for us to return to reasonable compromises and regular order. I call upon my colleagues to follow up on that accomplishment and pass a clean omnibus package.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday marked the fifth annual Small Business Saturday, a day when we recognize the importance of local businesses by shopping at these community businesses.

Saturday’s event was particularly meaningful to small businesses in South Carolina, many of which were recovering from the tragic thousand-year flood in October.

In South Carolina, over half of our State’s workforce is employed by a

small business. Congress must do more to protect these vital job creators from excessive taxes and regulations.

I am grateful to the National Federation of Independent Business, NFIB, along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, encouraged by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, led by Ted Pitts, as well as local Chambers of Blythewood, Chapin, Greater Columbia, Greater Irmo, Cayce-West Columbia, Lake Murray, Lexington, Batesburg-Leesville, Greater Aiken, Barnwell, Orangeburg, Midland Valley, and North Augusta, for their support of small business across the Second District of South Carolina.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

VETERANS PROOF OF SERVICE RECORDS SHOULD BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Defense transfers a veteran's service record to the National Archives 62 years after they are discharged from the military.

100,000 archived records per year are requested—to determine eligibility for a medal, to research one's medical history, or to request a change in discharge status.

The Department of Defense provides records to veterans for free, but once the records are sent to the Archives, veterans are charged \$25 to \$75 for a copy of their file.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable that a veteran should have to pay the government for proof of their sacrifice and service. What is more, this fee is levied on veterans who are most likely living on a fixed income.

This fee is unnecessary and inexcusable, and I ask my colleagues to support legislation that I am introducing today to eliminate it.

REMEMBERING EZRA SCHWARTZ

(Mrs. WALORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I rise today to honor and remember 18-year-old Ezra Schwartz, a Massachusetts teenager whose life was tragically taken in Israel last month. Ezra was spending his gap year studying at a yeshiva in Israel and was one of the three people shot and killed last week by a Palestinian terrorist.

The continued violent attacks targeting Israeli civilians are, without qualification or exception, acts of terror and deserve full condemnation. Attacks on innocent civilians, whether they are American, Israeli, or Palestinian, have zero justification, and our

response to such terrorism cannot be silence.

My heart and prayers go out to the friends and family of Ezra, and we honor those whose lives have been lost by such hateful actions.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in remembering the young life of Ezra Schwartz.

THE RECENT ATTACK IN COLORADO SPRINGS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs became the target of the 351st mass shooting in the United States this year.

Three people were killed: an Iraq war veteran, a mother of two, and a local police officer. They are now among the more than 12,000 Americans who have died in gun-related incidents since the start of the year.

The shooter in Colorado Springs is reported to have used a semiautomatic, AK-47-style firearm, an assault weapon that has its origins in Stalin's Soviet Army.

This firearm and others like it are weapons of war, not tools for self-defense. They serve no purpose other than to kill. And we can no longer permit the proliferation of and easy access to these weapons in the United States.

That is why, in the coming weeks, I will be introducing legislation that reauthorizes the Assault Weapons Ban. During the 10 years this ban was in effect, localities reported as much as a 72-percent decline in gun crimes involving assault weapons.

Today, 59 percent of American voters support a ban on the purchase of semiautomatic and assault weapons. The only thing that stands in the way is Congress' failure to act. The time for action is now.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN J. PIAZZA, SR., FOUNDER, ARMED FORCES MILITARY MUSEUM

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize a Floridian who has spent the last two decades making sure our veterans and their heroic acts are never forgotten.

I rise today to commend John J. Piazza, Sr., the founder and president of the Armed Forces Military Museum in Largo, Florida.

A veteran himself, Mr. Piazza served from 1955 to 1960 in the U.S. Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Reserve.

In 1998, he founded the Armed Forces Military Museum, exhibiting a personal collection assembled into a mobile museum, with heavy equipment displayed at schools, community events, and the Florida State Fair.

But, in 2008, he was able to fulfill his dream of opening a permanent home for great military memorabilia, vehicles, and equipment, both his own and those donated by those who have served.

Mr. Speaker, today, Mr. Piazza celebrates his birthday, and I urge my colleagues to not only join me in sending him very best wishes but to thank John for his lifelong dedication to honoring the American heroes who have served our Nation and for helping educate the young men and women who today have the opportunity to learn about valor and sacrifice and our Armed Forces in Largo, Florida.

THE DISPLACED JOBS RELIEF ACT OF 2015

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

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to urge my colleagues to support the Displaced Jobs Relief Act of 2015, a bill I introduced yesterday to help small businesses that have been hurt by foreign competition.

As the Inland Empire of California fights back from the Great Recession, we need to make sure that we use every tool available to help our small businesses recover.

Small businesses were dealt heavy blows in the past decade, both from our weakened economy and from our flawed trade agreements. International trade plays an important role in our economy, but history has taught us that not all agreements are fair. Sometimes they take a toll on local businesses that don't have the ability to handle unfair foreign competition.

That is why I introduced this bill. Trade Adjustment Assistance has played a crucial role in retraining and placing Americans in good-paying jobs for generations. If we increase the availability of funds, we can help protect hardworking Americans from losing business to unfair competition overseas.

My bill would increase the authorization for TAA for businesses up to \$50 million for each fiscal year, beginning in 2016 and running through 2021.

Historically, these programs have always authorized \$50 million a year, and, in fiscal year 2011, House Republicans cut the levels to \$16 million, barely 30 percent of what funding was.

This is an important program that can help businesses in the Inland Empire and across the Nation, and I urge my colleagues to support me and the Displaced Jobs Relief Act for 2015 for the sake of American workers and businesses.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SHERIFF AL ST. LAWRENCE

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Chatham County Sheriff Al St. Lawrence.