

the aisle to work together to accomplish this effort before another school year comes to a close.

LEVERAGING AND ENERGIZING AMERICA'S  
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS ACT

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Leveraging and Energizing America's Apprenticeship Programs Act, legislation that I have cosponsored.

In the midst of a slow economic recovery, one of the issues plaguing both our workforce and our job creators is a persistent mismatch of employer needs and employee skills. Right now, 10 million unemployed Americans are seeking work, while 4 million jobs remain unfilled. Fortunately, this problem can be solved with a bipartisan commitment to commonsense workforce development initiatives, as demonstrated by the Leveraging and Energizing America's Apprenticeship Programs bill.

By promoting apprenticeship programs, this legislation creates opportunities for highly motivated workers to earn a salary, while gaining the skills they need to succeed in high-demand fields.

I am proud to say that employers in my congressional district in southeastern Pennsylvania have already recognized the value of apprenticeship programs by making hundreds of these opportunities available to those looking to build their job training and skills.

I commend Congressman RODNEY DAVIS for his efforts on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OLDER AMERICANS  
ACT

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of reauthorizing the Older Americans Act.

The Older Americans Act provides social and nutritional support to members of our senior population and their caregivers. Enacted in 1965, this legislation has improved health outcomes, independence, and quality of life by offering meal delivery, respite care, and other essential services to the most vulnerable members of our population.

Reauthorization of this legislation gives Congress an opportunity to modernize multipurpose senior centers; improve falls prevention and chronic disease self-management training; strengthen laws to combat abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and support our local Area Agencies on Aging.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my support to work with my colleagues to review and advance the legislation passed by the United States Senate last year, as it is an effort that will not only help protect seniors across my district and the U.S., but will ensure that our existing Federal support programs are appropriately tailored to meet the present-day needs of our senior citizens.

PENTAGON WASTEFULNESS IN  
AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I have been coming to the floor for weeks and months to complain about the waste of money and life in Afghanistan. In the last couple weeks, I had an opportunity to read two articles. The first is titled, "This is How the Pentagon Wasted \$17 Billion in Afghanistan," by Emily Leayman. I would like to quote a couple of examples of the Pentagon's waste that she describes in her article.

The Pentagon spent "\$8 billion for a failed drug war: Despite a 14-year effort, Afghanistan now leads the world in heroin production." The Pentagon also spent "\$486 million for useless aircraft: Speaking of planes, 20 planes could not be flown, and most were sold for scrap . . . Legislators like Senators John McCain and James Lankford are fed up with the lack of accountability in spending."

Senators MCCAIN and LANKFORD have joined me in bringing to the public's attention the lack of accountability in Afghanistan. It is astounding, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, last month John Sopko, the Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, testified before the Senate Committee on Armed Services about a recent report he wrote on the waste in Afghanistan. In that report, he exposed that the Pentagon paid \$6 million to buy nine male Italian goats—the reason they bought the goats from Italy was because they are blond in color—to send to western Afghanistan to set up a farm and try to boost the cashmere industry there in Afghanistan. Now, the Pentagon doesn't even know where the goats are. And the sad thing is, as Mr. Sopko said to the Senate, "We don't know where the goats are. They might have been eaten"—\$6 million. Mr. Speaker, American people could do a lot with \$6 million, I assure you. And they wouldn't be spending \$6 million for nine goats, that I am certain.

The report that Mr. Sopko made reference to is titled, "Report Cites Wasted Pentagon Money in Afghanistan." Mr. Speaker, the waste goes on and on and on, and yet we in the House every year will send more and more money to Afghanistan. We have already been there 14 years. We are going to be there another 8 years because President Obama signed an agreement with Mr. Ghani to be there for 9 more years. We have already been there 1 year, and that means 8 more years. That is 22 years.

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General Campbell, who has been the leader in Afghanistan, but is leaving, says that we need more years to train the Afghans to have a security force. I guess we are going to be there 30 years. I will be dead and gone, for sure, by then.

What a waste of life and money in Afghanistan. It is time for this Congress to meet its responsibility and put pres-

sure on the administration and stop funding Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I have a poster here. The reason I bring this poster to the floor is to show the sad tragedy of war. There is a wife and a little girl. The husband and daddy is in a flag-draped casket.

The reason I bring this matter to the floor is that I have signed over 11,000 letters to families and extended families who died in Afghanistan and Iraq. Last Sunday I signed one letter for an Army sergeant who died in Afghanistan. Mr. Speaker, I thought: How sad. How sad it is for that family. It is just so sad.

It doesn't have to happen. We need to debate bringing our troops home from Afghanistan, and we need to debate stopping the funding for the war in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, before closing, I want to remind the House that this is the longest war in the history of America. I don't know who said it, but they said it right: Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires.

I know there is going to be a headstone that says that the empire known as America spent so much blood and money in Afghanistan. It is financially broke. We are \$19.1 trillion in debt right now.

Let's bring our troops out of Afghanistan. Let them fight the civil war themselves and decide what they want for Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, bless the families of our men in uniform. And, God, please continue to bless America.

STOP ACT

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an important congressional reform initiative that I have introduced in this body.

I have had the opportunity to study Congress from virtually every angle. I graduated from college as a young intern who drove up here having never been north of Tennessee. As my predecessor said and I shared: I never thought I would meet a Member of Congress, much less have the great opportunity and honor to be one.

Through virtually every staff role over the past 15 or 20 years, I have had a chance to study this body. There are a few experiences now, as a sitting Member of Congress, that I simply cannot accept.

One of them—the most pressing one—is the amount of time that Members of Congress are expected or, in some cases, directed to spend on raising money.

We all know it. Every Member of Congress understands that you arrive with great expectations only to learn the obligation to spend time raising money. There is a quiet anger among many Members about that.

It is not comfortable to talk about, frankly. This is one of the more uncomfortable speeches I will ever give in the well of this House. We must talk about it. Because when does this become the expectation?

This is an orientation slide for freshmen Members of Congress that was produced by one of the two major parties of this Congress a few years back, suggesting that, as a Member of Congress, your first responsibility is 4 hours a day not in your office, but across the street in a call suite asking people for money, another 1 to 2 hours a day networking and raising money, and only 2 hours a day doing your job.

Members of Congress might have a quiet anger, but the American people will have a very loud anger when they understand that we are not accomplishing things here because we are spending too much time raising money. Let's turn that anger into resolve and change this body and change Washington forever.

Former Members of Congress are happy to talk about this, retiring Members who write confessions saying they spent 4,200 hours raising money, former majority leaders of the other body now writing a book lamenting how much time they spent raising money, a colleague of ours leaving this House calling fundraising the main business of Congress.

But what do they all have in common? They are all retiring or retired. Why don't we do something about it, as sitting Members of Congress? Why don't we fix this now when we have the opportunity instead of lamenting it when we are gone?

This is why I have introduced what I call the Stop Act. It is very simple. It is 3 or 4 pages. Every Member of this body can read it before they vote on it. It simply prohibits direct solicitation of a campaign contribution by a sitting Member of Congress.

State legislators in the State of Florida and across the country are often prohibited from directly soliciting. There are 30 States where judges are elected, and they are prohibited from directly soliciting contributions.

I want to say thank you to my colleagues who have cosponsored this. In just over 3 weeks, we have six cosponsors: Mr. NOLAN of Minnesota, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Messrs. DUFFY and RIBBLE of Wisconsin, and Messrs. MICA and NUGENT from my State of Florida.

The message is very simple on this. It says to Congress to get back to work. Let's do our job, the job we were elected to do. We will never solve border security and immigration reform. We will never balance the budget. We will never address national security and foreign policy. We will never address tax reform if we have a part-time Congress in a full-time world.

In any other profession, if you spend 20 to 30 hours a week doing a job other than you are hired to do, you would be fired. But, in Washington, we accept this as the political culture.

Many will say the issue is dark money, the issue is transparency. Fine. We can have a campaign finance debate. But that is not what this is about. This is about congressional reform.

I will close with this, Mr. Speaker. Each one of us made a promise to roughly 700,000 people in the community from which we come and represent. We made a promise to do our job, not to ask them for money. We took an oath.

We each took an oath, swearing to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. The last line of our oath says: "I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of this office on which I am about to enter."

Friends, we are not well and faithfully discharging the duties of this body when we are spending 20 hours a week asking people for money and not doing our job.

We are not well and faithfully discharging the duties of this office when fundraising is the main business, when we have Members missing votes to raise money, when the most important question sometimes among colleagues is not what legislation you are working on, but how much money you have raised. We are not well and faithfully executing the duties of this House when we are not doing our job.

I stand here not to judge my colleagues. I stand here to try to change the system. Let's restore credibility to this House. Let's honor the greatness of this body with greatness of integrity, greatness of commitment, greatness of resolve.

Let's recognize the great calling of this body and the even greater calling of this Nation. Let's stand together today and change Washington forever.

Friends, colleagues, I urge you, while you are here and before retiring and lamenting the amount of time you spent raising money, cosponsor the Stop Act. Join me in this effort to change Washington.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA

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

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, there are few places in our country that have both strong historical significance and scenic beauty. Harpers Ferry is perhaps the greatest example of both.

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, was founded in 1734 by Robert Harper, who purchased the land for 50 guineas, or around \$262. Over the next 282 years, this quaint town was the backdrop for some of the most important events in American history.

From the earliest settlement of this great Nation through the founding of the railroads, the beginning of Meriwether Lewis' adventure with William Clark out West, John Brown's raid, numerous Civil War battles and skirmishes, and the beginning of the civil rights movement, Harpers Ferry has stood the test of time and watched our American history unfold.

As for the scenic beauty, none have described it better than one of our Nation's great founders, President Thomas Jefferson. After visiting Harpers Ferry on October 25, 1783, the author of the Declaration of Independence said he viewed "the passage of the Potomac River through the Blue Ridge as perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in nature."

Let me tell you, this picture does not do the town justice.

Harpers Ferry is a national treasure that has been enjoyed by millions of families for centuries. This past July, however, this quaint town of only 283 residents was struck by a large fire that swept through the downtown business district and destroyed 10 businesses, which is 30 percent of the commercial district, and 2 apartments.

Even before the embers from the fire cooled, members of the community had begun to take action and began making plans to rebuild.

The town council, the Merchants Association, and the community at large stepped up to take care of the people who were displaced by the fire. Jobs and housing were found for everyone who needed them, and space was offered for businesses that were able to immediately reopen.

The Harpers Ferry Historical Town Foundation established a fund to collect and distribute money to help displaced residents, businessowners, and employees meet their most immediate needs.

Over the past several months, in addition to the support the fund received from people who live in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, thousands of visitors from across the country and some from abroad have contributed to this fund.

The president of West Virginia University, Dr. G. Gordon Gee, brought a team to Harpers Ferry to help the town and the town council establish a plan. This plan enabled property owners to rebuild and restore their buildings, to develop a marketing plan, and to provide engineering and archeological services to prevent the demolition of their historical treasures.

The superintendent of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Rebecca Harriott, stepped forward with meeting spaces, security services, and additional personnel to protect town residents and visitors from the fragile, burned-out spaces.

The Jefferson County Commission provided in-kind and financial support to reimburse the town for the unanticipated expenses of fighting the fire and providing for safety in the middle of