

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this legislation today. It is a disappointment and a huge lost opportunity to actually help so many struggling families all across the country.

WE NEED TO RESTART PUERTO RICO'S ECONOMY

(Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico's economy is the most vital aspect in bringing back some sense of normalcy to the lives of 3.4 million American citizens on the island after the devastating impact of both Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Puerto Rico's economy had already been in a decline prior to these unprecedented natural disasters, due mostly to the island's outdated and discriminatory territorial status.

Tax reform presented this Congress with the historic opportunity to, even if only partially, fix these longstanding inequities by granting Puerto Rico equal treatment to that of the 50 States.

While we are grateful for the extension of federally qualified opportunity zones in this bill to the island, I believe that there is broad recognition on both sides of the aisle that more needs to be done in the future.

Congress must live up to its responsibility and act decisively to end years of improvisation by implementing sustainable pro-growth economic policies that are based upon the bedrock principles of citizen equality and political empower, and my constituents deserve no less.

AMTRAK CASCADES 501

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. Yesterday, my home State and my home district suffered a great tragedy. Amtrak Cascades 501, traveling from Seattle to Portland, Oregon, carrying 80 passengers and seven crewmembers, derailed near Olympia, Washington.

Early reports are that at least three passengers have died and nearly 100 people needed hospital care. My heart and prayers go out to all those families as they deal with this tragedy.

Our office stands ready to help any constituents in any way that we can. For up-to-date information, friends and family on Amtrak Cascades 501 can also call 1-800-523-9101.

I also want to thank our first responders for their skill and their courage. This could have been far worse without them.

But as Amtrak, the National Transportation Safety Board, and State and local officials help on the scene, there

are still so many questions, like: Why was the train going 50 miles over the speed limit as it rounded the curve? Why was the train not using positive train control technology to slow the train down? How, Mr. Speaker, can we be sure that this never happens again?

Mr. Speaker, I will do everything I can to ensure that the investigation and our affected families have the resources and the support necessary to get the facts in the coming days and months.

HONORING RILETTA CREAM

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

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a very special woman, Mrs. Rilettta Cream, from Camden County, but was known not only from the city she was born in, but the entire State of New Jersey. She passed away, unfortunately, yesterday.

Mrs. Cream was a kind, gentle, and loving woman, but had special character, strength, and conviction.

She was known as an institution for education and public service. She was a friend, a mentor, an educator, and a dear, dear friend to so many of those children who went to her school.

She was a Camden city native, and was a principal of Camden City High School for over a decade. She served as a role model for students, teachers, and administrators. After retiring, she didn't give up. She then ran as a freeholder, and was elected time after time, continuing to serve the community.

She led projects at the time called Tech 2000 to make sure there was a computer in every child's classroom and at their desk. She fought for libraries when funding was short. She knew the value of education, whether it was going to college or to a trade school.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in mourning the loss of this shining light in my hometown. Mrs. Cream accomplished so much and gave so many years of service. May she rest in peace.

IN HONOR OF LILLIE BIGGINS

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my neighbor in east Fort Worth and my friend, Lillie Biggins, who will soon be retiring from the Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital after 45 years of service.

Lillie joined the Texas Health Fort Worth family back in 1997, serving as vice president of operations. Her role was critical in overseeing major departments, such as emergency services, trauma services, and restorative services.

During her tenure, she helped cultivate a vision of success for the Texas Health Fort Worth community. Not

only did Lillie dedicate her time in the health community, but she also volunteers all around the city of Fort Worth. Lillie often mentors and helps others in the area of health, education, youth, senior citizen services, businesses, and so many areas in our city that are underserved.

For her dedicated service to the community, she has been awarded so many awards, including her induction into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Lillie all the best as she moves on into her relaxing retirement, but I know that she probably won't be that relaxed and that she is going to be very active in the community. I wish her the best in the future.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX SCAM

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what do Iran, Ebenezer Scrooge, and the Republican tax scam have in common?

Well, they are all ruthless, cutthroat, coldblooded, heartless, and stingy.

That is why I voted "no" on the Republican tax scam, and if I could have added an H to the no, I would have.

This legislation gives 83 percent of the tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent, while raising taxes on 86 million middle-income families.

The numbers prove that this is a tax cut for the ultrawealthy and not for the middle class, and anyone who tries to deceive you into thinking otherwise, shame on them.

Adding insult to injury, this tax cut adds \$1.5 trillion to the national debt, and Republicans will soon use the debt to justify their ultimate plan, which is to cut Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Today's vote proves that Republicans care more about the wealthy and big multinational corporations than they do for ordinary people.

Merry Christmas to the wealthy, who already have plenty, and to their special interest lobbyists. And to the rest of America struggling to make ends meet, bah humbug.

THE CORKER KICKBACK

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as Republicans rammed through their tax gravy train for billionaires, we learned of another carve-out to megainvestors in real estate.

This carve-out allows real estate businesses to take advantage of a new tax break, which was parachuted into the Senate bill to swing Republican votes, like Senator BOB CORKER.

Drain the swamp?

The Republicans are laughing all the way to the bank.

A tax expert at Boston College said: This is a big windfall for real estate developers like Donald Trump.

So let me ask: Where's the windfall for the middle class? Where is the guarantee that those investors who make out big time are going to invest their money here in the United States of America and stop shipping our jobs overseas? Where is the guarantee for better wages?

We have seen this movie before.

Cut taxes for the rich and the economy grows?

Well, that didn't happen under the Bush tax cuts.

President John Kennedy said: "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

Mr. Speaker, this Republican tax scam locks in 83 percent of the breaks in favor of the richest among us, but a day of reckoning is coming November 2018.

□ 1730

RUSSIA AND THE ADMINISTRATION

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, recently there has been a real flurry by the Republicans here in Congress to disparage and call names to the FBI and to the Justice Department, but it is right after Michael Flynn pled guilty, right after George Papadopoulos pled guilty in the investigation into Russia and potential collusion with the administration.

Now my question is: What are you afraid of? Why are you getting in such a big rush to complain about these folks now? What are you hiding? What is it that is bothering you? Let the detectives do their work to figure out what happened between Russia and this administration.

I mean, it is like we have been asking for the President's tax returns for ages. What is he hiding? We won't even know how much money he gets to save under this terrible tax bill that was passed today by the Republican Congress.

So I just want to know: Why are you so worried? What are you afraid of? What are you hiding?

FEMA HOTEL VOUCHERS MUST BE EXTENDED

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

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, over 250,000 of my fellow Puerto Ricans have arrived in Florida since Hurricane Maria. The tax bill on top of that absolutely is going to decimate the manufacturing sector there, which is going to only hasten further of my brothers and sisters to my home State, the great State of Florida.

We have done our best as a host State to ease school enrollment for our

young people, to have instate tuition for our college students coming here from the island. Our hospitals are doing their best to meet the challenge, and many are getting jobs, although not as high paying as we would like.

We also are putting bills forward to speed up Medicaid qualification and expand Section 8 housing. But, most critically, Florida faces a housing crisis of epic proportions.

On January 15, the FEMA hotel vouchers expire. This must be extended for another 6 months. In addition, we are leading a bipartisan effort in Florida to directly seek approval of FEMA direct lease vouchers so that people can have a place to stay.

I am appointing a bipartisan Federal task force on Puerto Rican arrivals in central Florida to help in this very good work.

PASSAGE OF THE TAX CUT AND WHAT IT MEANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chair for this time to talk about something that is rather important. Something we did today was to pass a horrendous tax cut that doesn't meet this fundamental goal.

Really, whenever we legislate here, we really ought to keep in mind our values: What is the purpose? What are we trying to accomplish? What is the goal? What is the human value that we are trying to put in place?

I often use this because it is here in Washington at the FDR Memorial. It is on the marble there: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much."

Let me read that again, Franklin Delano Roosevelt: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

I want to use this as my compass, my guiding light on where we need to go. So this afternoon, this House of Representatives, by a vote of, I think, just over 200 voted to enact a tax law that goes in exactly the opposite direction of what FDR would say is our value, our goal.

Here it is. The Speaker of the House came here to bring down the gavel to announce the vote that he was so proud to have.

Eighty percent of the individual tax cuts don't go to the poor, don't go to the middle class. They go to the top 1 percent.

How does that fit with what Franklin Delano Roosevelt said to the American Nation during the height of the Great Depression?

No. You may as well take Franklin Delano Roosevelt's words, turn them

on their head, because this House didn't follow the edict, didn't follow the value, but did exactly the opposite: gave away, to the top 1 percent, even greater wealth.

How could that be? Why would they do that? Why would they do that?

Well, I don't know why they would do it, but they surely did it. And in addition to that, not just the wealthy 1 percent, the wealthy 10 percent, why don't you add American corporations to that who are awash in cash? \$2.5 trillion in the bank accounts of American corporations, and they don't know how to spend it to create jobs in the United States.

Instead, the Republicans, today, decided they needed \$1.43 billion additional cash as a result of the tax cut that no Democrats, not a one, but every Republican voted for, \$1.43 billion—the number is from the Joint Committee on Taxation—of new after-tax revenue to American corporations.

And what do you suppose they are going to do with that? Create jobs in the United States? Expand their manufacturing? No. Or higher wages for their workers? No.

I will tell you what they intend to do with it. This is it. The corporate tax giveaway will give Wells Fargo an 18 percent earnings increase.

How do they intend to spend it? Hint: Not on jobs.

In his own words, Tim Sloan, CEO of Wells Fargo, December 2017—I think that is this month—said: "Is it our goal to increase return to shareholders and do we have an excess amount of capital? The answer . . . is yes. So our expectation should be that we will continue to increase our dividend and our share buybacks next year and the year after that and the year after that."

All right, Mr. Sloan. You can thank the Republicans, because when you buy back your shares, when you increase your dividends, guess what. The stock price goes up, and we know that your compensation is based on stock price. Are you going to use that extra money for loans to small businesses? to farmers? No, you are not. You are not going to make more loans.

This is replicated across the American corporate culture. This is not unique. This new after-tax bonus that the Republicans are giving to American corporations is going to be used for the benefit of the wealthy. So you can add, if you will, to the tax cuts that are coming as a result of the reduction in the top income tax bracket for individuals from 39.6 percent to 37 percent, you can add to it, but, by the way, their investment portfolio is going to go up also.

This tax program is an abomination, and it is going to hurt every American over time.

I am joined here tonight by my colleagues who are probably as riled up about this as I am. I am not sure which one of them came in first.

I yield to the gentleman from the State of Oregon, PETER DEFAZIO, my colleague.