the most outdated, costly, and insecure technology systems across the Federal Government. Mr. HURD was involved deeply in that effort. The result was the Modernizing Government Technology Act, which the House passed overwhelmingly with the help of Chairman CHAFFETZ and Majority Leader MCCARTHY.

Last month, Majority Leader MCCARTHY and I expressed our bipartisan support for one of President Obama's most successful efforts at bringing Silicon Valley talent into the Federal workforce: the U.S. Digital Service and GSA's 18F program. In fact, I visited the 18F program in San Francisco and was extraordinarily impressed with the individuals who peopled that project and were giving of their time. I guess we were paying them a little bit, but, relatively speaking, they were giving their time.

Today's bill, the TALENT Act, would make permanent the precursor to both these programs: the Presidential Innovation Fellows. This program has a proven track record of bringing top talent from the innovation economy into the Federal workforce where it is sorely needed.

I hope the next administration will continue all of these innovative programs, which have begun to change the culture within our government.

I also hope that the talented individuals—many of whom, as I referenced, left high-paying jobs in the private sector—will stay on through the transition and continue to serve their country by improving government technology.

President Obama made real progress in this area, including with the launch of his Open Data Directive, his We the People petition platform, and his Cyber National Action Plan. More could have been achieved if Congress had agreed to his request to invest more in these areas. We have seen a dramatic example of why cybersecurity investment is so critically important for our country, not for Democrats, not for Republicans, but for all Americans. This is an effort toward that end.

I hope we can work together in this new Congress to unleash the transformative power of modern technology within government and help renew America's faith in our government. That is critical if we are to be successful as a Nation. I am sure it hopefully is what all of us want to do on a bipartisan basis.

I thank Representative DESAULNIER for his efforts, and I thank Representative HURD for his leadership on this effort.

I am pleased to join with my counterpart, Majority Leader MCCARTHY, in strong support of this legislation.

□ 1815

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the gentleman from California aware that I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I just briefly congratulate everyone who has been involved. As somebody who represents the bay area and struggles with the innovation in the private sector there to integrate it into the public sector at all levels of government, I really admire the work by Mr. HURD, the comments and the contributions by the administration, and Mr. MCCARTHY and Mr. HOYER.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on our side. I congratulate Mr. HURD.

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

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to thank for their years of service on such an important issue Mr. DESAULNIER and Leader HOYER and Leader MCCARTHY.

I would like to urge the adoption of this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 39.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NORTH KOREA MISCHIEF

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week, North Korea declared that it can launch an intercontinental ballistic missile at any time that it wishes.

Even our own Deputy Secretary of State recently warned that Little Kim's weapon capabilities have shown qualitative improvement within the past year resulting in ''unprecedented level of activity.''

Why is that?

Well, because this administration has done little to stop Little Kim. Instead, the administration has naively pursued a strategy it calls ''strategic patience.''

Strategic patience is a fancy phrase for ignoring the obvious. There was a time when we kept North Korea on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List. They came off the list because they have made promises that they have clearly broken.

Mischievous Little Kim's threats continue to grow bolder and bolder, with no repercussions. We cannot afford to risk the security of our citizens for the sake of diplomatic strategy that has proven to be a failure.

This week I will reintroduce legislation to put North Korea back on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List because Little Kim is a terror to world peace.

And that is just the way it is.

GIVING THANKS

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

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give thanks. I give thanks to the people of California's 44th District for giving me the honor and the privilege to serve them.

My district is rich with immigrants. My own mom, who turned 76 today, is an immigrant from Mexico who came here with a third grade education so her kids could have a shot at the American Dream.

In my district, only 10 percent of students go on to college. I am grateful to be one of those 10 percenters who beat the odds and got a piece of the American Dream.

But those numbers are unacceptable. I pledge to fight for them to make sure everyone, regardless of income, immigration status, or race has a shot at the American Dream.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor to be here and, especially, to look out and see some people for whom I have eminent respect in this body. That is a nice thing, being in a body where I actually have respect for the people in the body, a good thing.

We know that elections, as President Obama told us quite succinctly 8 years ago, have consequences. Elections do have consequences, and we have a new team coming to town. One of the things that has concerned me greatly, and I know it has concerned many in this body, is that we as a Nation have had the ability to give protection basically to this idea of freedom that our Founders had, cultivated, and gave their lives to create.

As I have mentioned from this podium previously, as I was told by some west African Christians in Togo, they said:

> We were so excited when you elected your first Black President, but since your President has been there, we have seen America get weaker and weaker. We all are Christians and we know where we are going when we die, but we also know our only chance for peace in this world is if America is strong. So please go back to Washington and please tell the other Members of Congress to stop getting weaker. We suffer when you get weaker.

I seen this article from Melissa Mullins after a study was done. It said, ''Christians Most Persecuted Religious

Group in the World.'' And that is while America is supposed to be the strongest nation in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I see a friend is here on the floor, and I now yield to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY).

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to serve the constituents of the Second Congressional District of West Virginia for a second term.

As we begin the 115th session of Congress, my top legislative priorities are rolling back anti-coal regulations that have been imposed by President Obama's administration over the last 8 years; fighting the drug epidemic; repealing ObamaCare and making health care more affordable and accessible; and investing in our roads, bridges, airports, and other key infrastructure.

West Virginia needs good-paying jobs. President Obama has spent the last 8 years waging a war on coal on our country. During this session of Congress, we must continue to work together to promote an all-of-the-above energy strategy that conserves our natural resources, cultivates our economy and jobs, and promotes American energy independence.

One of our Nation's and our States' greatest natural resources is our fossil fuel. Fossil fuel, including coal, supplies around 85 percent of our Nation's energy. West Virginia produces about 15 percent of that total.

Under the outgoing administration, we have seen our West Virginia energy industries come under attack even though we have made significant strides in recent years to improve the quality of our air, land, and water. By rolling back harmful regulations like the so-called stream protection rule, we can save 30,000 jobs in the Appalachian region right now. That is why last year I introduced my bill, the Supporting Transparent Regulatory and Environmental Actions in Mining Act, also known as the STREAM Act. My bill was passed by the House last year with bipartisan support, and I will continue to fight to stop this outrageous rule from taking effect.

Another top priority for this Congress must be stopping the drug epidemic in our country. Drug abuse ravages our communities, rips families apart, and further ruptures our State's already-ailing economy. This issue is above party politics. It is a plague that both parties must come together to solve. There is no magical solution to this epidemic. We need local, State, and Federal officials to work together to effectively and efficiently fight back.

This past Congress I worked with Members on both sides of the aisle to find commonsense solutions to fight back against this scourge. That is why I introduced H.R. 4499, the Promoting Responsible Opioid Prescribing Act. This bipartisan bill struck out a harmful provision of ObamaCare that places unnecessary pressure on doctors and hospitals to prescribe narcotic pain medicine. I am proud to say that the Department of Health and Human Services announced that they changed their policy and implemented my bill. This change in policy is an important part of the fight against opioid abuse. I will remain steadfast in my efforts to fight this epidemic.

Another important way to fight back against the drug epidemic is by making health care more accessible and affordable. The first step to do this is to repeal ObamaCare.

Healthcare costs are on the rise because ObamaCare adds burdensome taxes, regulations, and mandates onto American consumers. The limited choice in health insurance plans is harming families and their budgets. ObamaCare will kill 2.5 million jobs in 10 years. It has continued to raise health insurance costs and has placed the Federal Government in between patients and their doctors.

Research done by the National Center for Policy Analysis found that average monthly premium costs increased for almost everyone regardless of their age, race, or gender after ObamaCare was implemented.

As a Republican in Congress, I want to ensure that everyone has access to health care, but I want it to be quality health care that people choose for themselves. That is why Republicans have come up with a plan that we call A Better Way. Our plan recognizes that people deserve more patient-centered care, not more bureaucracy. That means more choices, not more mandates.

The A Better Way plan offers many improvements that will help West Virginia's Second Congressional District, including commonsense reforms such as allowing health insurance sales across State lines. Simple changes like these will lower costs and increase choice for Americans.

Finally, it is imperative to pass bills that invest in our Nation's deteriorating infrastructure. President-elect Trump has said that updating our Nation's infrastructure is a top priority for his administration.

□ 1830

The Federal Highway Administration has classified more than 142,000 bridges as either ''structurally deficient'' or ''functionally obsolete.'' Also from the Federal Highway Administration, traffic delays cost the U.S. economy more than $50 billion annually. Most major roads are rated as ''less than good condition.''

Improvement to other Nation's infrastructure would greatly benefit West Virginia, which needs road, bridge and rail repairs. We are also in need of water, sewer, and power line repairs.

By improving the transportation, our country will open the opportunity for job growth and expansion. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House and the Senate, as well as the new administration, to make sure that these legislative priorities take hold.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much my friend Mr. MOONEY's points. Well made.

This administration hasn't turned around health care in America, hasn't seen more choices, people keeping their doctors, keeping their insurance policies they liked. They have seen deductibles skyrocket, such that so many people across America have had $5-, $6-, $7-, $8,000 deductibles. We never had deductibles that high before.

What that effectively meant was they weren't going to get any health insurance help. They were totally on their own, that every single payment that they made, even if they got subsidies from the Federal Government, was for nothing. They got no help. They could never come up with enough money in 1 year to meet the deductible so that the insurance would start paying in.

What is even more egregious is that apparently we found out that much of this was known would happen before people had ObamaCare forced onto them.

Then, in the last week we have had this story from Stephen Dinan, from The Washington Times, finding out that the IRS prioritized their role in ObamaCare over taxpayer customer service. That is what their own inspector general report said.

You would think that an administration that says their number one concern was America's health care, that they would not drive so many people off of the insurance they had, they loved, that they could afford, that had the doctor in the system they could use, had the medicine in the policy covered that they could use. Millions have been driven off of their policies to Medicaid, which so many doctors don't even take, and this administration has called that a great victory.

Yet, in the midst of all of this, we knew—it was talked about back in 2010 when this bill was being passed—that there could be 18,000, 17-, 18,000 new IRS agents that would force ObamaCare upon the country. And as so many people have reported, when you get notice from the Internal Revenue Service that they are coming after you, it does not do anything to enhance your health.

KLTV, in my hometown, contacted me here today, wanting to know more about what was happening with the IRS. It has been outrageous what they have been doing across the country in their local taxpayer service assistance offices.

It was reported to us that a sign was put up by one of the IRS employees that, basically, if you don't like the long line and the bad service, then contact your Member of Congress—and fortunately, many did, so we became acutely aware of it.

And what was worse, I mean, we had an office in Longview. Some people are able to go—are required to go get documentation from the IRS in order to do

what they need, whether it is with insurance, with their employer, and they couldn't get into the IRS office. The IRS office closed in Longview, making it so much more difficult for Americans in east Texas to get the customer service they needed.

Well, this article from The Washington Times points out that the IRS has made things much more painful for taxpayers than it should have been, and that is according to the IRS' inspector general. That was in a report Thursday that accused the agency of cutting money for customer service and ignoring phone calls while moving the money over to keep ObamaCare and other administration priorities on track.

Well, what that means is the IRS would be there to bully people who had concerns about or problems with ObamaCare, which certainly would not help their health at all.

But one reporter had told me that previously they were told by the IRS that Congress cut funding and, you know, that is why customer service was cut. Yet, when we presented the actual facts of what had happened, yes, in the past 6 years, the House of Representatives—not the Senate, for heaven's sake. They haven't cut anything in their own House of Congress. But the House of Representatives cut our own budgets about 22 percent over a 3-year period, and that is pretty dramatic.

Anybody that has ever had to cut their budget by a fourth understands. Americans have had to do that across the country. We did it right here in the House of Representatives, and it has been very difficult for some of our offices to provide the care for constituents. So many areas, we are it. We are the ones that can help them stand up against the bureaucracy and demand that they get what the government is required to provide, and yet we were able to do it.

On the other hand, the IRS wasn't cut 22 percent like the House cut ourselves down to the bone. In fact, they had a substantially smaller cut over 2 years, I believe it was.

In this past year, we increased the amount of money the IRS got by millions and millions of dollars. What the IRS chose to do is not help taxpayer service, which could also help the IRS from increasing their punitive work against taxpayers that make mistakes because they didn't get proper advice or service from the IRS assistance.

But no, they moved the money. The massive increase we gave to the IRS, they moved it over to be a bigger bully regarding ObamaCare and cut out offices, like the one in Longview, and fell more into the stereotype than I have ever seen for the IRS, this as ''IRS employees ignored more than 30 million phone calls from desperate taxpayers seeking help in the run-up to the 2015 filing deadline—and those who did get through often waited a half hour before getting help.

''The IRS apologized publicly for the poor service and blamed Congress, saying lawmakers needed to pony up more money if they wanted better results.

''But Inspector General J. Russell George said the IRS cut its own funding by eliminating nearly $150 million from customer service, slashing more than 2,000 staff positions''—and that is so they could go after more enforcement of ObamaCare, as if ObamaCare wasn't doing enough damage to people's health as it was.

As my friend, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman KEVIN BRADY pointed out: ''The IRS is running out of excuses for its abysmal customer service record and poor management decisions.'' This new report is even more proof the IRS is failing the very people it was created to serve—American taxpayers.

Congress did add more money for the agency last year, just as I was saying, Mr. Speaker. This article also echoes the same thing. The IRS doubled the number of calls it was able to answer, but the agency has promised to maintain a level of service for next year.

But let's face it, the IRS has shown they will target people because of their political beliefs. They will allow themselves—not just allow themselves. They insert themselves and have allowed themselves to be political weapons. Certainly saw that occurred from what has come out from 2012.

Did they affect the election? It is hard to say. But they certainly prevented many conservative groups from being able to organize.

I have heard some who are liberal, not that smart, asking questions: Well, I don't see how that would hurt conservative groups just because the IRS did not recognize them. They could still have gone ahead and organized and done their thing.

Again, apparently they pay too much attention to the mainstream media and don't think for themselves, because when one begins to understand the power of the Internal Revenue Code in the United States, you put a group together and you pool your money into one pool to start spending as a group, somebody's going to be in trouble and going to be accounting for that money as income. I mean, there may be creative ways to handle it, but the way you are supposed to handle it is to get recognition from the Internal Revenue Service that you have a group that can come together, put your money together, and work together toward a common goal. Liberal groups have not had much problem getting that kind of approval, but conservative groups really were targeted by the IRS.

And there is a law—we didn't need to pass a new one—that, according to the facts that have come out regarding Lois Lerner and others at the IRS, it certainly appears that there is probable cause to believe crimes were committed and should have been pursued. Yet nothing was done.

Why?

Because they were groups that were persecuted, not allowed to organize, that did not support this administration; therefore, according to the Justice Department that became more of ''just us department,'' they weren't going to pursue anything like that.

And in the further category of further de-Americanization of America, this report from Paul Bedard that U.N. shipped 6 of 10 refugees to the United States, even more this year.

Then there is a list from the United Nations refugee resettlement referrals. This report just came out in the last week, less than a week. The U.N. reports that of the 134,044 refugees settled in 2015, gee, 82,491 of the 134,000 were sent to the United States, that despite the fact information came out, study done, that actually we can support 12 refugees in place in the Middle East for the same price of bringing 1 refugee to the United States.

□ 1845

In fact, this administration didn't have to use the term redline. This administration could have simply said: we are going to make sure there is a safe zone in which people can live in the Middle East in a certain area and the U.N. will assist them with food—hopefully, without raping the women and girls, because they have in some areas. We will provide them a safe zone, and their needs will be cared for there. We can handle 12 times as many for the same price as bringing 1 into the United States.

I think voters understood that, when they voted Donald Trump as President, there are so many of these refugees that simply cannot be vetted.

We know this administration has made mistake after mistake, not only with people that we have no information to use to determine whether or not they are a threat because we have no background information on so many of these, but also, once they are here, we don't know where they are, we don't know where they go. We don't know even the threat.

Then, on top of that, we find out hundreds, maybe thousands—we know hundreds—of people were supposed to be deported that this administration accidentally—instead of deporting them and getting them out of the country so they were no longer a threat, this administration accidentally granted them citizenship.

There are some things that this government could do and you would say: well, it is easy to understand. That is an easy mistake. Instead of a 1, they put an 11. Or, instead of a 0, they put a 3.

Instead of deporting people and getting them out of our country, this administration accidentally gives them citizenship and has made clear that they are not capable of protecting us from the threats that we are seeing all over Europe and other areas of the world.

A point of personal privilege, really, I would like, Mr. Speaker, a shout out to the TSA, which is underneath our

Department of Homeland Security. It was such an honor to be singled out last Friday for the two molestations. Apparently, I am attractive when it comes to TSA agents. They want to feel up and down, make sure all the parts are actually attached.

They did a very good job of that both times on Friday evening when I was flying back to Texas. So my thanks to the TSA. Job well done. It delayed me 30 minutes or so. I kept thinking the TSA agent was going to lie back and have a cigarette or something, but that never happened.

Anyway, due regards for the TSA. I am really and truly hoping that we can change substantially management of the TSA in this coming year. At airport after airport, we see two, three, four times longer lines for the TSA PreCheck than there is for the general boarding. Yet, TSA continues to encourage people to go ahead and apply. We can streamline your getting through the inspection. And yes, that does mean when you are in PreCheck, you will enjoy having hands laid on you, not in a Christian kind of sense.

Over and over, there are good TSA agents, I am finding, all over the country, but the management is atrocious. How long would any security agency stay in business if every day they had longer lines in one area that was the least threat to our security as they do in the general boarding lines that need to be more carefully monitored, we are told? Well, you would fire them. You would hire another security agency.

I haven't seen a study done on this, but, as I recall—I was watching back during my days as a judge and chief justice, and I will have to go back and look—there were so many screams from Congress, especially the Senate, especially on the other side of the aisle, that we have got to have the Federal Government take over security at the airports. We have got to. We are in such danger. We have to have that happen.

Has security been enhanced by adding tens of thousands of people to the government unions? No, it hasn't. It really hasn't.

So, what I want to go back and look at, it seems like I remember back years ago, after the Democrats were able to prevail over Republicans who were in the majority and get them to agree to federalize the security at airports so that they could get them in the government unions, I was thinking, I don't know that that is really going to help. Are we going to see a better quality of TSA agent than we had in private security? I would like to see an official number.

Maybe if somebody in Homeland Security is listening, Mr. Speaker, they could, in their time between looking the other way as people come into the country illegally, they might just look up how many private security airport personnel were not hired by TSA.

The reason for federalizing the security was so that we will get a better quality of security. It seems like there was a lawsuit back there by a couple hundred people, maybe. We are the only ones not hired by TSA. Out of the thousands and thousands, we are the only ones that weren't hired.

It seems like there was a problem in response that yeah, we really needed people that could read and had finished high school. If you couldn't read or hadn't finished high school, we really needed that level.

So, basically, it seems what happened is one group here in Congress—and it wasn't the Republicans—had their way. The security at airports was federalized. We are not seeing an increased percentage of capturing items that are coming in, but I have got to say they do a good job of feeling up and down my person.

I am not really a threat, though Homeland Security would assume that. Well, I was in the Army for 4 years. I am a strong Christian. I believe in the Bible, and I believe in the United States Constitution as the greatest governing document that was ever promulgated.

Apparently, according to the minds at the top of this Homeland Security Department, that makes me more of a threat than most anybody in the country. I was even told back in London, coming back, I believe that was from another trip to Egypt or maybe Israel, and I had to go out from security and come back through. I was told by one of the security guys: Sir, I know who you are and your position, but your Homeland Security Department tells us we have to thoroughly inspect your baggage and you personally. I got it from the British security folks as well.

Apparently, if you believe in the Constitution, you believe in the Bible, you have served your country in the United States Army, and you are a Christian then you are a big-time threat.

It will be so nice to have an administration that doesn't see the world the way this administration has seen it.

We had a lecture from the Secretary of State. The President of the United States said amen and hallelujah when he condemned Israel over and over and over. We stabbed our friend, Israel, in the back. There are reports in some sectors that not only did we abstain but we encouraged the resolution to be brought forward so that Israel could be condemned.

It apparently generated this article from Victor Davis Hanson from National Review. He said:

''Secretary of State John Kerry, echoing other policymakers in the Obama administration, blasted Israel last week in a 70-minute rant about its supposedly self-destructive policies. Why does the world, including now the U.S.''—I would submit, Mr. Speaker, not for much longer—''single out liberal and lawful Israel but refrain from chastising truly illiberal countries? Kerry has never sermonized for so long about his plan to solve the Syrian crisis that has led to some 500,000 deaths or the vast migrant crisis that has nearly wrecked the European Union. No one in this administration has shown as much anger about the many thousands who have been killed and jailed in the Castro brothers' Cuba, much less about the current Stone Age conditions in Venezuela or the nightmarish government of President Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, an ally nation.

''President Obama did not champion the cause of the oppressed during the Green Revolution of 2009 in Iran. Did Kerry and Obama become so outraged after Russia occupied South Ossetia, Crimea, and eastern Ukraine?

''Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power was never so impassioned over the borders of Chinese-occupied Tibet, or over Turkish-occupied Northern Cyprus.

''In terms of harkening back to the Palestinian 'refugee' crisis that started in the late 1940s, no one talks today in similar fashion about the Jews who survived the Holocaust and walked home, only to find that their houses in Eastern Europe were gone or occupied by others. Much less do we recall the 11 million German civilians who were ethnically cleansed from Eastern Europe in 1945 by the Soviets and their imposed Communist governments. Certainly, there are not still 'refugee' camps outside Dresden for those persons displaced from East Prussia 70 years ago.

''More recently, few nations at the U.N. faulted the Kuwaiti government for the expulsion of 200,000 Palestinians after the liberation of Kuwait by coalition forces in 1991. Yet on nearly every issue—from 'settlements' to human rights to the status of women—U.N. members that routinely violate human rights target a liberal Israel.''

□ 1900

''When President Obama entered office, among his first acts were to give an interview with the Saudi-owned news outlet Al Arabiya championing his outreach to the most nondemocratic Islamic world and to blast democratic Israel on 'settlements.'

''Partly, the reason for such inordinate criticism of Israel''—well, the article says ''sheer cowardice,'' but that might be inappropriate for a Member to say about the President, so I am not even going to read that part. ''If Israel had 100 million people and was geographically large, the world would not so readily play the bully.

''Instead, the United Nations and Europe would likely leave it alone—just as they give a pass to human-rights offenders such as Pakistan and Indonesia. If Israel were as big as Iran, and Iran as small as Israel, then the Obama administration would have not reached out to Iran and would have left Israel alone.

''Israel's supposed Western friends sort out Israel's enemies by their relative natural resources, geography, and population—and conclude that supporting Israel is a bad deal in cost/benefit terms.

''Partly, the criticism of Israel is explained by oil—an issue that is changing daily as both the U.S. and Israel cease to be oil importers.

''Still, about 40 percent of the world's oil is sold by Persian Gulf nations.''

And I might add parenthetically, when we have a new President, that will drop even further because the United States will begin to produce more of the energy that we have been blessed with. There will be more nations in the world that will not have to go begging to Russia, which supposedly those on the left are so concerned about these days. Well, if they are so concerned, let us produce more west Texas oil, more east Texas natural gas, more oil and gas from around the country, and, boy, we will be energy independent. And as smart people have pointed out for a long time, it is a whole lot easier to take on terrorists who are throwing rocks than terrorists who are launching nuclear weapons.

Back to this point being made here in National Review: ''Partly, the criticism of Israel is explained by oil—an issue that is changing daily as both the U.S. and Israel cease to be oil importers.

''Still, about 40 percent of the world's oil is sold by Persian Gulf nations. Influential nations in Europe and China continue to count on oil imports from the Middle East—and make political adjustments accordingly.

''Partly, anti-Israel rhetoric is due to herd politics. The Palestinians—illiberal and reactionary on cherished Western issues like gender equality, homosexuality, religious tolerance, and diversity—have grafted their cause to the popular campus agendas of race/class/gender victimization.

''Western nations in general do not worry much about assorted non-Western crimes such as genocides, mass cleansings, or politically induced famines. Instead, they prefer sermons to other Westerners as a sort of virtue-signaling, without any worries over offending politically correct groups.

''Partly, the piling on Israel is due to American leverage over Israel as a recipient of U.S. aid. As a benefactor, the Obama administration expects that Israel must match U.S. generosity with obeisance. Yet the U.S. rarely gives similar 'how dare you' lectures to less liberal recipients of American aid, such as the Palestinians,'' for example, ''for their lack of free elections,'' not to mention their lack of paying, encouraging, immortalizing people who are suicide bombers who are successful in killing innocent victims.

The article says: ''Partly, the cause of global hostility toward Israel is jealousy. If Israel were mired in Venezuela-like chaos, few nations would care. Instead, the image of a proud, successful, Westernized nation as an atoll in a sea of self-inflicted misery is grating to many. And the astounding success of Israel bothers so many failed states that the entire world takes notice.

''But partly, the source of anti-Israelism is ancient anti-Semitism.

''If Israelis were Egyptians administering Gaza or Jordanians running the West Bank'' as they did for 20 years or so, ''no one would care. The world's problem is that Israelis are Jews. Thus, Israel earns negative scrutiny that is never extended commensurately to others.

''Obama and his diplomatic team should have known all this. Perhaps they do, but they simply do not care.''

Then we find out this administration, we see what happens when there is yet another terrorist attack in Israel. What does this administration do after such a powerful chastising of our dear friend Israel?

Nothing. But ''a Palestinian who may be linked to ISIS rammed his speeding truck into a group of Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem Sunday, killing four people and wounding 15 others before being shot dead in one of the deadliest attacks in a year-long campaign of violence.''

Now, even that, from friends at FOX News, is not as accurate as it could be. Yes, they were soldiers that were killed. They were on a sight-seeing tour, and apparently the insidious radical Islamist sat parked and waited for them to be in a vulnerable position, not in a position to use weapons, not fighting. They were sightseeing. As this radical Islamist saw these people getting off the bus, that is when he moved and became the murdering, blood-thirsty, radical Islamist that he was.

Mr. Speaker, might I inquire how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FASO). The gentleman from Texas has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to finish talking about this issue that has been raised about the Russians being such a big threat to our elections. Some of us have been screaming here on Capitol Hill that we need to have security of the Internet. And as part of that, one of the last things we needed to do was give control over Web site determinations to the international community. That was created as an American entity, the Internet. We had control over ICANN, the organization controlling the Web sites, and this President did irreparable damage to our security. Oh, I know he thinks he didn't, so I am not accusing anything untoward, but irreparable damage was done by giving over that power to the so-called international community.

This article from John Fund, who had a great book about election fraud, points out, and he quotes from a former colleague, Rahm Emanuel: '''You never want a serious crisis to go to waste,' Rahm Emanuel, Obama's just-named chief of staff, told a Wall Street Journal conference of top CEOs in November 2008 while his boss was still President-elect. Since then a slew of constitutionally dubious executive orders, presidential emergencies, and rushed legislation have characterized the Obama presidency. Now he is leaving office by issuing a blizzard of 'midnight regulations' and edicts.

''One of the most troublesome came last Friday and gave the federal government the power to begin centralizing our election systems. The Constitution explicitly gives states the power to set the 'times, manner and places of holding elections.'

''But Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson used the excuse of Friday's release of a report on Russian hacking of the Democratic National Committee to declare that state and local voting systems will be designated as 'pieces of critical infrastructure' so that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security can protect them from hackers.

''His move—coming just 15 days before President Obama leaves office—led many experts to question both its wisdom and its constitutionality. 'While the Federal Government has the general power to protect the nation's cyber infrastructure, it cannot intrude into areas of state sovereignty without clear constitutional mandate,' John Yoo, a law professor at UC Berkeley, told CNSNews.com.

'''There is no federal power to control or secure elections. Each state administers its own elections, restricted only by constitutional protections for voting rights,' agreed Illya Shapiro, senior fellow in constitutional studies at the Cato Institute. 'It may make sense for states to request federal support here, but it would set a dangerous precedent for a federal agency to unilaterally take over state electoral processes.

''Secretary Johnson's decision sparked outrage among many of those who are most knowledgeable about our election system—the 50 secretaries of state who, along with local officials, run the election process. Even Johnson admitted that 'many of them are opposed to this designation.'

''Secretary of State Brian Kemp of Georgia, told me in an interview that Johnson's action 'uses security as an excuse to subvert the Constitution and establish the basis for Federal encroachment into election systems.'''

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to pause and look at what happened in this last election. Now, there have been some people saying, as I heard down at the Senate in the Kennedy Room at JEFF SESSIONS' hearing this morning, there were 17 intelligence agencies that agreed about the Russian hacking. Well, I am not sure. They must have seen something I didn't, but I had understood there was, like, three, and that we have been told actually they had these conclusions, but people have admitted—no, actually, they didn't hack our election system. They didn't hack any voting machines. Clapper even admitted that. Of course, he has said: I have testified very falsely. He has admitted under oath that he has not been truthful under oath to the Senate before.

So as a law professor once asked: If you have admitted lying, well—he

would say—are you lying now or were you lying then? If you admit you are lying, which one is really the lie?

We don't know. Is he lying now or lying then?

You have said—you have told us you are a liar. Which one is it?

What we find among smart juries, once they found you lied to them, is that they are not going to trust you about anything else. I think that contributed to the voting results we had.

But Conservative HQ had an article: ''Russian Hacking Story A Twofer For Obama And the Left.'' Say, gee, they get to blame the Russians and they get to take control of the voting system.

□ 1915

Well, all that has come out is somebody hacked John Podesta's emails—most likely an unprotected server like Hillary Clinton was using—and we lost secrets we may never know. But it was unprotected. Podesta's was at least protected. And people saw published what Democratic people participating in the Hillary Clinton campaign had said about Christians, Catholics, the duplicity of trying to bring down BERNIE SANDERS, the duplicity at debates, the if it is not illegal, the certainly rule-violating strategies of revealing questions before a debate.

Shockingly, when the truth was revealed and certain people in the Hillary Clinton administration, or in their campaign, were exposed as lying about so many things, those people are now saying: Hey, when America found out we were lying, they voted against Hillary. They hurt our election. They affected our election because we were exposed as liars and it cost us votes. That is grossly unfair. The American people should never have known the truth that we were lying about so many things, that we were conspiring to bring down BERNIE SANDERS and defeat him unfairly. The American people weren't supposed to find those things out and, doggone it, those Russians need to be punished.

Well, I don't know where it came from. And I also know, as a fact, that some intelligence personnel have lied to the chairman of our Intel Committee in the last Congress. I know it is a fact. I don't know who it was, but they did.

When you have Clapper say, Yeah, I came in here and testified about a bunch of stuff that wasn't true, you wonder wouldn't it be a good idea to take those incredible individuals in our intelligence agencies that have been faithful to our country, served our country, not their political agenda, and done great things for America, let's get them in the positions of authority in the intelligence agencies. And since they have been working there, they will know what to do; they will know who to trust, who not to trust.

As you find out, if you ever sit on the bench as a felony judge very long, it doesn't matter what area of life you are in, there are people that are not honest. Fortunately, in law enforcement, intelligence agencies, homeland security, places like that, in my opinion, there is a much higher number of good, honorable, honest people that care about providing for the safety of the American people. That is where we need to go. Find those people in those departments and put them in positions of leadership.

We have a great opportunity now before us, and if you are agnostic or atheist, you should believe it was all a roll of the dice. This kind of stuff happens. Hey, even a pragmatist agnostic would probably say: Well, if I am honest, somebody—Julian Assange said it wasn't the Russians. Indications were it may well have been an unhappy Democratic operative in the party that provided. But wherever they came from, information was provided to the American public showing the terribly unfair and untruthful things that have been said or done, and they voted against the party that had apparently done the unfair, untruthful things.

So I think we need to look, as Shakespeare would say, not to our stars, but in ourselves. Personally, I think we were mercifully given another chance to give back to the American people the power that this Congress and the executive branch has used for far too long and let America be America, not the evil parts—the KKK, the lynchings, the horrid things that mar our history—but the goodness, the part of America that would say, ''I don't care about the KKK. I am going to take you into my home. I am going to protect you''; the parts of America that said, ''I don't care what color your skin is. We are fellow human beings and we have got some good ideas and we are going to work together and we are going to raise this Nation to heights it has never seen before.'' I am hoping and praying that is where we are headed.

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

WHO GETS THE BREAKS FROM REPEALING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT? THE SUPERWEALTHY

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, indeed, we do have an extraordinary country. Down through the last 230 years, this Congress has met, has discussed, decided, voted upon, and set in place policies that advanced our country. And we are so very fortunate, all of us Americans, to be living here with all the promise that this incredible history has given us.

But at this period of time, we also have some profound questions about where this country is going. We wake up and we say: What is happening here? What is happening in the international scene? What is all this about Russia hacking? What is all this about trying to influence the American election? Did they really, and did it really happen, and was it effective?

Well, we know it really happened. The American public is scratching their head and they are saying: What is it?

And then all this talk about change, all this talk about we are going to change things; we are going to repeal ObamaCare, and we are going to replace it with something great. Hmmm. I wonder what that might be. And I suspect all across this Nation there are men, women, families that are also wondering: What do they mean it will be great? What is it that is great?

Well, if you were to go around the Capitol, if you were to talk to Members in the House of Representatives or over in the Senate and say: So it is gonna be great; what is it?

Well, we will tell you tomorrow or we will tell you later, but it will be great.

Maybe, maybe not.

Right now, the Senate is working on a piece of legislation that will set the stage for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act—and some would derisively call it ObamaCare. Repeal it.

Oh, yeah, get rid of that thing. But not to where it is going to be great as soon as it is gone.

Really? I don't think so.

I know that in my part of California, a lot of people—in fact, more than 20,000—don't think it is great at all. They are going to lose their health care. And there are a whole lot of seniors in my community that are going: Wow, it is going to be great.

Really?

But I will lose my annual check-up. And that awesome drug doughnut hole that was so frightening just years ago is going to come back? That is not so great.

I drove into town or into the Capitol today. I don't live so far away, but it is 20 degrees, and I decided I would rather drive than freeze. So I drove in and an advertisement came on the radio, and it said: You are going to get a trillion-dollar tax cut. Wonderful. The middle class will have a trillion-dollar tax cut. I said: Well, that is not what I saw last night when I read the statistics about the great repeal of the Affordable Care Act. In fact, I read something quite different from the tax committees, from Americans, various people.

Let me put something up here. Here it is. Who gets that trillion-dollar tax cut? Who is it? Is it the middle class? Well, I don't think so, because when you look at the numbers, it goes to the very wealthy. They are the ones who are going to get the tax cut with the repeal of ObamaCare.

When the Affordable Care Act is repealed the way it is presently going, the bill that is over in the Senate will require that the taxes that were put in place to support the Affordable Care Act and to provide insurance for 20 million people—that is both the government insurance, the Medicaid, Medi-