guarantee. So there's a loophole we can agree on closing, hopefully.

But they are going to have to give up on this lame argument that somehow making millionaires and billionaires pay taxes at the rate of the Clinton era, when we had record low unemployment, will hurt our economy.

GRANTING PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS TO RUSSIA

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, as the Representative of a district that recorded more than $2 billion in exports last year, I know full well the significance of expanding market access for American companies and ensuring that our businesses are competing on a level playing field. That's why I believe it's important to support passage of H.R. 6156, which will grant permanent normal trade relations to Russia.

This past August, Russia joined the World Trade Organization, giving its members full access to Russia's rapidly growing market, reduced tariffs, and ensured transparency when implementing trade measures. However, while foreign competitors are currently benefiting, the U.S. will not receive any of these benefits until Congress authorizes the President to grant Russia permanent normal trade relations. Simply put, American companies, workers, and farmers are being put at a competitive disadvantage.

Last year, my home State of Michigan exported $225 million worth of goods to Russia, despite many of its best products facing tough competition from foreign competitors. With this agreement in place, farmers and producers in my district will be assured of more predictable market access for their crops and agricultural goods, while manufacturers will enjoy reduced tariff rates for Michigan-made vehicles and equipment.

As a World Trade Organization member, Russia has agreed to comply with the rule of law. Though these reforms won't happen overnight, Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization requires their compliance with all of the organization's rules and duties. This includes addressing discriminatory practices, enforcing intellectual property rights, and increasing transparency. If it does not comply, members can enforce them through dispute mechanisms.

Of further importance, this legislation includes critical human rights provisions which will hold foreign officials accountable for gross human rights abuses and prevent them from entering the U.S. or accessing our financial systems.

House Republicans have worked tirelessly during the 112th Congress to advance pro-growth legislation which provides greater certainty for American companies and helps our Nation's businesses hire more American workers. We've made great gains in advancing trade interests for the U.S. and promoting new market opportunities for our companies.

An ambitious trade agenda must continue for us to successfully lower the unemployment rate and restore our place as the global economic leader, and I'm glad we have the opportunity to pass another part of that plan today. If we're going to jump-start our economy and get Americans back to work, we have to find ways to increase global market access for American companies and to advance economic freedom.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation today.

CALLING FOR AN END TO WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues here in Congress from both sides of the aisle to call for an end to the war in Afghanistan. After more than a decade of war, with now more than 2,000 lives lost and hundreds of billions of American tax dollars spent, it's time for our troops to come home to their families.

I represent the military communities of Travis Air Force Base, and come January I will represent the community of Beale Air Force Base as well. I can tell you from firsthand experience that the men and women who serve in our Nation's military and their families are America's finest. They are not afraid of sacrifice. They joined the armed forces because they love our country and they are willing to give everything to keep our Nation safe, but their sacrifice must be for a reason. If we're going to ask them to risk life and limb on the other side of the world, it must be for a mission that is vital to our Nation's security. We can no longer say that about the mission in Afghanistan.

Our brave soldiers are continuing to die in Afghanistan for what is now a war of choice. We sent them to eliminate the terrorists responsible for the terrible 9/11 tragedy, and they did it with remarkable courage and competence. The al Qaeda training camps have long been eliminated; most of al Qaeda's top leaders have been killed or captured; Osama bin Laden is long dead.

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Terrorism remains a global threat, and we must combat it. But keeping tens of thousands of troops in a country the size of Texas is no way to achieve this objective. Rather, we must continue to use our superb intelligence capabilities and our special operation forces to root out the terrorist networks and destroy their leaderships wherever they may be.

When we do bring our troops home, we must ensure that our returning heroes receive the support that is their due when they get back. We must make sure that they have access to housing, medical care, employment, educational opportunities that they deserve, and we must take care of all of our veterans.

The war in Afghanistan has lasted 11 long years, and it must not last another. It's time to bring our troops home. And as we do so, we must turn our attention to rebuild America's economy. One way to do this is to focus on enhancing our green energy sector.

The American wind energy industry is in jeopardy. The production tax credit will end December 31, 2012. It must be extended or else 30,000 jobs will be lost and 450 manufacturing businesses will close.

Two additional measures must also be considered. First, we could apply the master limited partnership and the real estate investment tax programs to the green energy sector and, thereby, bring significant financing opportunities along with the production tax credit.

AVOIDING THE FISCAL CLIFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, while the President returned from the campaign trail last week with a slightly more conciliatory tone, his insistence on a year-end tax hike on small businesses is unchanged, and frankly, that is completely unacceptable.

It is unacceptable for more than 23 million Americans struggling for work right now. It's unacceptable for millions of middle class Americans struggling to support their families with rising gas prices and higher health insurance costs. And it's unacceptable because it will destroy jobs and hurt our economy.

Yesterday, the President said that his reelection victory is a mandate to help the middle class. He can start with helping the middle class by stopping his job-killing tax hike on small businesses.

The President continues to call for increased tax rates for the top two brackets, which hit more than 1 million small businesses and 53 percent of all small business income. That's a big problem, considering that small businesses create two out of every three jobs in America.

According to the Ernst & Young report, the President's plan will result in the elimination of 700,000 jobs.

The position of the congressional Republicans on extending current income tax rates for all Americans is far from extreme. It is actually the same exact position that President Obama espoused 2 years ago when he agreed to extend all Bush-era tax rates for 2 years on the basis that raising tax rates would hurt our weak economy.

That logic still stands. In fact, our economy is even weaker today than it