

from West Virginia, could become the mecca. This could become a boon to the hotel and catering industries. But the reality is that this bill is not good for West Virginia and it is not good for voters across the country. This is not reform.

VACATION OF SPECIAL ORDER AND GRANTING OF SPECIAL ORDER

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF].

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

ATTACK ON THE AMERICAN PATENT SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRABACHER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, during election years we hear a lot of people who are steamed on this issue or that issue. They are very upset about it. The fact is that many times it is just because it is an election year, and we have to remember that.

For example, the other party did control both Houses of Congress and the Presidency for 2 years just prior to when Republicans took control of both Houses of Congress. During that 2-year time period, if indeed it had been important for the Democratic Party to pass an increase in the minimum wage, they would have passed that increase in the minimum wage because they had control of both Houses of Congress and the Presidency, but they did not.

If, indeed, there is something where Republicans in the Senate are holding back on an increase in minimum wage in order to get something else that they want, I think we have to remember that if we call that holding it hostage, the liberal Democrats who controlled both Houses of Congress and the Presidency must have held the minimum wage hostage for 2 years because they had all the power in the world to do what they wanted to do.

Also, when we hear about other aspects that seem to be important now to the people on the other side of the aisle, campaign reform, for example, it should not be any surprise to anyone who is really paying attention that they could have also passed any type of campaign reform they wanted. After all, they did control both Houses of Congress and the Presidency. But they did not do that. Maybe they are upset now because they are suggesting that they want to do something that they did not do when they had the power to do it. That is sort of confusion.

Well, I would like to talk about something that I talked about long before it was a political year, something

that really does cross political boundaries, because on this particular issue there is widespread bipartisan support from people who are sincerely concerned about an attack on a fundamental building block of American prosperity.

Both Democrats and Republicans have signed on to a bill that I have to restore the guaranteed patent term to Americans. I know this sounds like a yawner of an issue. I mean, patent law, after all. But what is happening right now, and most Americans do not understand it, is that there is an absolutely despicable underhanded attack on the American patent system. We have multinational corporations that are engaged in an effort to change the fundamental law that has permitted America to be the No. 1 technological power in the world.

Yes, patent law is such a yawn. Who is concerned about patent law? Well, long ago our economic adversaries and, yes, our military adversaries figured out what America's greatest strength is. It is not that our people work so hard, because our people do work hard, but people all over the world work hard.

But our people when they work, or our defenders when they defend our country, have superior technology. That gives us our edge. It always has. We have the technological edge. That is what has secured our country's security and has secured us a standard of living that has been admired and envied all over the world.

Is it any surprise, then, that our economic adversaries and countries that do not like the United States would look for our Achilles heel? What is it that gives us that power? What gave Samson that strength but his long locks? Our secret is the fact that we have had the best technology, and we have had the best technology because we have had the strongest patent system in the world.

Now, there is an underhanded effort, an effort that has been going on for about 2 years to try to change the fundamental patent law of this country so that it will undermine America's ability 10 years down the road to outcompete our economic adversaries.

Some people, of course, who are supporting the patent changes are doing so perfectly well-intentioned, and perhaps they bought into this or that argument. The fact is, what is the driving force behind those who want to change our patent law? The driving force is an idea that we should globalize all patent law, so all of the laws should be the same, and Americans who have had the strongest guaranteed patent rights of any people in the world will just have to live with fewer rights because we need a global harmonization of law.

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Well, that concept may appeal to some people. It certainly appeals to multinational corporations and big businessmen. But that is a threat to

the American well-being. H.R. 3460 is about to be put to this floor, and it would steal America's technology. It should be defeated and the Rohrabacher amendment put in its place.

THE MINIMUM WAGE AND HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GREENE of Utah). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I am here today to talk for 5 minutes about 2 issues that I think are really crucial to the American people and that have a real chance of passing in this House and in the Senate and be signed into law by the President, if only the Republican leadership would allow the legislation to be voted on in, to be brought to the floor and voted on in a fashion that most Members agree on, whether they happen to be Republican or Democrat.

One is the minimum wage increase and the other is health care reform legislation that was originally sponsored in the Senate by Senator KASSEBAUM and Senator KENNEDY, again on a bipartisan basis.

The minimum wage hike is long overdue. I know that my colleague from California on the other side said, well, why did not the Democrats do it 2 years ago or why did not such-and-such do it whenever. I am not really concerned about the past.

The reality is that we know there are an overwhelming majority in the House and in the Senate, both Democrats and Republicans, that would vote for this very simple minimum wage hike if they were given an opportunity to do so. And once again, this week in the other body, in fact, there was a vote, and efforts by the Republican leadership over there to try to put in what I would call poison-pill amendments that would have delayed implementation of the minimum wage hike or would have excluded small businesses so that half the people who now benefit from the minimum wage would not have gotten the increase. Those amendments were defeated overwhelmingly, again, on a bipartisan basis.

The only thing that is holding up this bill right now is because the Republican leadership in the other body has decided that they will not appoint conferees and links the appointment of conferees to conferees being appointed on the health care reform bill, the other bill I mentioned today.

Well, some of you may, my colleagues certainly know but I am not sure that the public knows what we mean when we talk about appointing conferees. This is when there is basically a meeting or negotiation between the two Houses on different bills. If you do not appoint the conferees and you do not bring the bill to the floor, the bill does not pass.