

I have stood up to defend the Puerto Rican Bar Association, a clear voice for justice that has been attacked by the ruling party and their legislature and their allies on the Federal bench.

I have spoken on the House floor and leaders have spoken on the island about the environmental emergency the ruling party has brought on to Puerto Rico. The government declared an energy emergency to avoid routine fact-finding and licensing procedures so that it could build a 100-mile long, \$500 million gas pipeline on a tropical island that is designed more to help wealthy insiders than the people of Puerto Rico.

While actions in Wisconsin and Ohio and other States that threaten workers' rights are discussed routinely in the U.S., the fact that the Governor of Puerto Rico has fired tens of thousands of public employees and canceled labor agreements, all contrary to contract promises, is largely unknown.

But Tea Partiers don't rejoice: he has also doubled the property taxes on everyone.

Even the courts are under attack on the island. This Governor has packed the Puerto Rican Supreme Court with activists of the ruling party. He created two new positions on the supreme court in order to add two new judges to a court that already had a majority of the ruling party. He did this, of course, despite the fact of having denounced Hugo Chavez when he believed he was doing the same thing in Venezuela.

Just 2 weeks ago, the ruling party yet again changed the law so they could fire the island's ombudswoman for the elderly, who had years left on her 10-year appointment, because of her independence and vocal disagreement with the ruling party.

And because I have spoken out against the ruling party of Puerto Rico, I have earned a resolution of censure from the ruling party's legislature. I have earned a full-page ad in Roll Call condemning me for using my right to speech.

Only the ruling party of Puerto Rico would respond to complaints about free speech and civil rights abuses by officially passing a resolution condemning someone for speaking. Should any of my colleagues not believe this absurdity, you just need to come to my office where I display proudly these documents. I invite you to come and see them.

I ask my colleagues today: please pay attention to what is happening in Puerto Rico. If it were happening in Illinois, New York, Texas or Wyoming, or any of the States of our Union, this Congress would have great concerns.

One meaningful first step would be to join me in urging the Department of Justice to complete the investigation that they have initiated and to police abuses in Puerto Rico that started in 2008 and promptly release the results. I would also ask my colleagues and their staffs to attend the congressional briefing organized by the ACLU next Tuesday, July 12, at 10 a.m.

And, finally, I ask my friends and colleagues to do what we do whenever we see regimes that refuse to treat people fairly: please speak out for the values that define us as Americans. Please join me in standing for liberty and justice for all.

#### THE VOTE TO INCREASE DEBT LIMIT

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today the United States Government owes close to \$14.3 trillion. It's estimated by the Congressional Budget Office that by the year 2021, the government will spend 100 percent of every dollar raised in revenue on entitlements. And yet we are being asked to raise the debt limit to \$16.3 trillion. That's a \$2 trillion increase, or 14 percent increase. In 2010, our national GDP was \$14.6 trillion. Raising the debt to \$16.3 trillion means our debt ceiling will surpass our country's GDP.

And yet for the 81st time since 1940, we are being asked again to raise the debt ceiling. In 2002, our debt stood at \$6.2 trillion. Now, not even 10 years later, we are asked to raise it to \$16.2 trillion. That's a 250 percent increase, or an average of 16.7 percent increase per year. Obviously, continuing on this path next year, it is likely we will be asked in this Chamber to raise the debt ceiling to \$19 trillion. That's staggering.

In keeping with this 70-year tradition, we are certain to force our Nation's spiraling and out-of-control debt onto the backs of our country's children and grandchildren. Raising the debt ceiling today without reform will merely lead to a new call, a new call to raise the debt again tomorrow.

Is the United States disciplined enough to solve this debt problem through austerity and productivity? I think it is. Yet I believe we can, but only if we break this tradition of continued spending.

Now recently a constituent of mine wrote a simple letter to the editor of my hometown paper and this what is he said: "If you and your wife haven't made a budget for the last 2 years, and now you have maxed-out the \$14,300 credit limit on your Visa card, do you: A, expect Visa to raise your limit to \$16,700; B, print counterfeit money to cover your debts; C, borrow more money; or, D, sell the Cadillac."

Responsible Americans would sell the Cadillac. It's time for the Federal Government to do the same thing: reduce spending or sell unneeded assets.

We must begin to closely scrutinize our bills and eliminate wasteful and fraudulent programs, sunset some of them. As we negotiate the upcoming vote on the debt ceiling, we should ensure that any cut in spending exceeds any increase in the debt limit. Selling the Cadillac is meaningless when you continue to max out on your credit

card. The point here is to make a difference in our debt, not to merely provide a vehicle to continue Washington's spending addiction.

Moreover, any future spending must be restricted. We cannot sell the Cadillac this year only to buy a Mercedes Benz next year. Again, we must begin to live within our means.

I know that leadership is working tirelessly to ensure that a compromise can be reached and the Republicans' demands can be met, and it appears we are making progress.

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But, the President has in one breath asked both parties to leave their rhetoric at the door, but then in the same next breath he accused Republicans of refusing to cut tax loopholes for the rich in order to curb the debt problem. But that alone won't do it. Beyond being contradictory and self-serving, these accusations demonstrate that Democrats continue to misunderstand the real problem. CBO has nailed it. They recently revealed that it is runaway spending, not a lack of revenue, that is driving our debt today. According to CBO's long-term budget forecast, even with a tax increase that raises revenues from its historic 18 percent of GDP to 23 percent of GDP, the national debt will continue to grow unless we have the spending reductions.

Everyone here in Congress understands how important this vote is, but surely after the CBO analysis, we must confront the fact that spending is growing relentlessly and needs to be placed under control. Therefore, to move the debt ceiling up another \$2 trillion, we need to see corresponding spending reductions regardless—regardless—without tax increases. Now is the time to do it. It can be done. And it must be done today.

#### WHAT DOES \$10 BILLION A MONTH BUY?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, since 2005, I have spoken from this very spot 399 times. On nearly every occasion that House rules allow, I have stood to deliver a 5-minute special order speech highlighting the moral outrage of the United States' continued military engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan and now Libya. I speak of the need also for a new Smart Security to keep America safe.

Today will be my 399th speech. I look forward to reaching number 400 next week, and I will continue this drumbeat until my last day as a Member of Congress, which gives me approximately 18 months, 1½ years, time to bring our troops safely home.

During this week, the week that the House is debating defense appropriations, I thought it would be fitting to focus on war spending, on the staggering costs that taxpayers are being