

Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2011.

First and foremost, I was glad to hear my colleague on the other side of the aisle recognize that lowering taxes, be them payroll taxes, income taxes, or whatever taxes you want to refer to, lowering taxes is a job creation policy initiative that should be supported by both sides of the aisle.

Now, I'm concerned about the payroll tax cut that is continued in this payroll tax bill today because these are the revenue sources for Social Security. But I have come to the conclusion that allowing all Americans to keep more money in their pocket, rather than allowing it to come to Washington, D.C. and to fuel the beast that has been created here in Washington and that is causing the national debt crisis that we now face and the out-of-control spending of Washington, I believe allowing Americans to keep more money in their pocket is a better policy position to take once and for all. And so I support the extension of the payroll tax rate where it is at.

This is not the time, in this economic climate, to take money out of hard-working American families and small businesses and their financial resources that they have to work on as they go forward putting people back to work. So I support the extension of the payroll tax cut.

But I would have to be very sensitive and clear with all Americans that this type of tax policy must be offset by a reduction in the spending that is the root cause of the crisis that we now face in Washington, D.C., so we must offset these tax cuts, and we will do and have done that in this bill.

I also am glad to see that our unemployment reform measures that are set forth in this bill have the opportunity to go into law. Right now we are at 99 weeks of unemployment. The President, in his own proposal, says we need to reduce those weeks of unemployment by 20 weeks. We, in this bill, want to go further, and we'll reduce the number of weeks to 59.

Why? Not because we're cold hearted, not because we're mean spirited, but we are being open and honest with the American people and saying that there is a cost to this indefinite unemployment extension policy that is coming from the other side of the aisle. What we have to do is realize that we have to live within our means once and for all.

And so, what this does is it lowers those numbers of weeks, it puts in commonsense reforms by making it a requirement that people are looking for a job. It gives the States the flexibility to implement drug testing and drug screening to make sure that the workforce of America has the ability to go back to work when those jobs are available.

I have been back in my district, and we do town halls all the time. And what I've heard from small business owners across our district is that one of the main reasons that they cannot

hire individuals is because they simply cannot pass a drug test.

□ 1110

This commonsense reform that's contained in this bill will allow us to develop the workforce of America in a stronger and a better fashion so that people can be put back to work once and for all.

The other issue in this bill that I've been supportive of is the doc fix. Now, our health providers in America are being faced with major cuts, be it through ObamaCare, the Health Insurance Care Act, the Affordable Care Act, whatever you may call it. We're also seeing it in the possible sequestration that we're going to face next year.

But what we're doing in this bill is we're giving some certainty to our providers that over the next 2 years they'll know what their reimbursement rates will be. That is critical to the future of our health care industry, and therefore we support it. But we cannot be satisfied with this temporary solution. We must come up with a permanent fix to the doc fix so 2 years from now we are not right back in the situation we find ourselves today.

The final point that has caused me to support this bill as vigorously as I will today is that it is a jobs bill. The Keystone pipeline piece of legislation that is attached to this is being used as a political football. The President has said we can't wait to put people back to work. Well, in this bill with a stroke of a pen, the President will be able to put 20,000 families back to work with one signature—his signature. To me, that's what we should be doing in this Chamber. That's why I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

PAYROLL TAX EXTENSION

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

Mr. COHEN. Over the last 3 years, much progress has been made in an effort to recover from the economic fall-out, the Great Recession that the President inherited from the previous administration. More needs to be done to stabilize our economy and create jobs for the millions of Americans still out of work.

That progress may get derailed this week if the Republican majority refuses to extend tax cuts for 160 million Americans and unemployment benefits for 1.3 million Americans.

You'd think congressional Republicans who routinely label Democrat as the "party of taxes," which is something Oliver Wendell Holmes said was the price we pay for civilization, that's what taxes are, would eagerly support tax cuts for 160 million Americans; but they don't. I'm buffed.

But you listen to the other side, they've got all kinds of reasons. They've got extensions. They've got all kinds of riders. The bottom line is it's a political fight to defeat the President

of the United States. It's been their agenda since he was elected.

Every day my Republican colleagues come to the House floor to call for lower taxes, particularly for the millionaires. They call them the job creators. Yet, when the time comes to support a Democratic payroll tax proposal that lowers taxes and creates jobs, Republican support is not found.

Under the Democratic proposal, a family making \$50,000 a year and struggling would save \$1,500 next year.

But this tax cut does more than put money in the pockets of more than 160 million hardworking Americans and ensure they won't see a tax increase. It also creates jobs. Mark Zandi, the previous Republican Presidential candidate JOHN MCCAIN's economic adviser, said that expanding the payroll tax cut for employees would create 750,000 jobs. Conversely, he said the failure to do so would cost a million jobs.

But, apparently, tax breaks for those people, 160 million Americans, and creation of those jobs is not enough for my colleagues on the Republican side. They need more enticement to support a payroll cut.

So what's the red meat that gets them to do this?

They have to break their pledge. They made a pledge to America. They said they wouldn't put extraneous legislation together with other legislation to pass a mass bill. It would circumvent the will of the people. They promised to advance major legislation one issue at a time, but Republicans violated this pledge this time by stuffing anti-environmental riders into a must-pass payroll tax bill.

While cutting taxes for 160 million Americans seems like something Republicans would unequivocally support, the GOP leadership felt they had to violate that pledge and cram divisive riders into the bill to get support from people who want to put a potentially dangerous line in environmentally sensitive areas of pipeline that has shown repeatedly a failure to be done in an appropriate way, something that has been said would be a carbon bomb being set off and the end of the global warming fight. It would end the game.

Despite their claims that the riders would create jobs and stimulate the economy, reality doesn't align with those arguments. The reality is they would destroy our economy, our environment, and the lives of thousands of Americans.

The Boiler MACT provision in the bill would delay air toxin rules for at least 3½ years. That would result in 28,350 premature deaths, 17,000 heart attacks, nearly 19,000 hospital and emergency room visits, more than 1.2 million days of missed work, and 150,000 cases of asthma attacks.

The health benefits of these regulations are estimated to save up to \$67 billion and save all of those lives. It's astonishing the Republicans would consider delaying a public health rule that

would prevent 8,000 premature deaths a year and save up to \$67 billion, the sweetener that was needed to try to get these tax breaks for 160 million Americans.

I urge my colleagues to see the folly of their ways and pull these harmful riders out of the bill, to stop their effort to just defeat President Obama, and do what's right for the American public—to create jobs and to help people on unemployment, which will stimulate our economy.

In their Pledge to America, they describe what they called "circumventing the will of the American people." That's what they're doing today. The will of the American people is not to have deaths and injuries, health and environmental policies destroyed, but to create jobs and to help people through this difficult recession.

I would ask that we defeat this bill, come back, work together, and do what's right for the American people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 16 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

On this day we ask Your blessing on the men and women, citizens all, whose votes have populated this people's House. Each Member of this House has been given the sacred duty of representing them.

This is a season of hope for many in our Nation—for some religious hope, for some celebratory hope, and for others hope for greater blessings in their lives. We ask that You might listen to the hopes of our Nation.

We ask Your blessing as well on the Members of this House, whose responsibilities are heavy as the first session of this 112th Congress nears its completion. Give each Member the wisdom to represent both local and national interests, a responsibility calling for the wisdom of Solomon. Grant them, if You will, a double portion of such wisdom.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HAHN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HAHN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

SOUTH CAROLINA WINS THE FIGHT AGAINST THE NLRB

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last Friday the National Labor Relations Board announced that they had approved the requests by the International Association of Machinists to withdraw its complaint against Boeing. For the past year, the President's National Labor Relations Board has played the role of a Big Labor bully by threatening the jobs of hardworking South Carolinians by stalling the second line of the 787 Dreamliner production in Charleston.

Boeing chose to locate in South Carolina due to its welcoming business climate due in large part to its right-to-work laws. Instead of rewarding unions for their political investments, I urge the current administration to enact policies protecting the rights of workers and allowing for growth of small businesses creating jobs. The lesson of this NLRB intrusion is clear: do not locate your facilities in union States because if you enter, like a roach motel, you cannot leave.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th in the global war on terrorism.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EXTENSION

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

Ms. CHU. Over 13 million Americans are looking for work. That means for every one job opening in the United States, there are four Americans actively seeking employment. Another 10 million people have given up looking for a full-time job altogether because companies just aren't hiring.

These are real people. They are more than just numbers. Ellen Andrews lost her job last year. She's been supporting herself and her 1-year-old son Henry with her unemployment benefits. They help her keep the lights on and keep food in the house until she can get a job.

But the Republican plan will change all that. It will cut 40 weeks of Federal benefits out from under people like Ellen; and it will force partisan policies, like the controversial Keystone XL pipeline, on to a bill that should be all about helping American families.

With the holidays around the corner, Congress should be about giving America hope and security, not playing partisan politics.

JOB CREATION

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

Ms. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on December 10 Pamela from Greenwood Lake, New York, in our beautiful 19th District, sent the following letter to me: "Stop any more Federal spending. Less is better. Europe is a lesson for us. We live in the greatest Nation on Earth."

And, Pamela, you're absolutely right. If we are going to spread the blessings of the greatest opportunity society in history, then as we enter this holiday season, we need the promise of growth.

Your House of Representatives, Republicans and Democrats alike, have as of today passed 27 bills, job-growing, growth-promoting bills that protect American workers and job creators from tax increases, roll back burdensome regulations, and end the Federal spending that suffocates the economic engine of enterprise. And we keep them listed on a card so everybody knows.

I urge the Senate to act now to put those bills to work and put our people back to work and give every American good reason to look forward to a happy new year in this land of liberty.

PAYROLL TAX CUT

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today the House will debate extending the payroll tax cut. I strongly urge extending this tax cut. If we don't, tens of millions of New York families will see an average tax increase of \$1,000 next year, and as many as 400,000 jobs could be lost nationwide.

But, frankly, it is ridiculous that we are considering this legislation on the floor today. With so many unrelated riders attached to the bill, we know it is dead on arrival in the Senate. This charade will create anxiety among middle class Americans that their taxes are about to go up, and it will create economic uncertainty during the holiday season when so much of