

dead, that at least one party in Washington and a majority of the country still believe that the Constitution means what it says, and that there are limits on the power of Congress and of the executive branch.

I'm energized and hopeful for the future of this great Republic as I see these events unfold this week, and I'm reminded of the observation of President Reagan:

I hope we once again have reminded people that man is not free unless government is limited. There's a clear cause and effect here that is as neat and predictable as a law of physics: as government expands, liberty contracts.

THE HOUSE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today the clock is ticking here in Congress and especially on the floor of the House where people around the country would like to be preparing for the next construction season. Indeed, the most important action for the economy, for job creation, and for strengthening the livability of our communities might well be enacting the Surface Transportation Act. Sadly, so far, the news has not been good.

Later today, we debate the House Republican budget, which would slash infrastructure funding to a level less than is required simply to meet obligations for contracts that we've already entered into with people that are building roads, bridges, and transit systems. And we have an obligation to them. They're down that path and the budget sadly would not even allow the Federal Government to meet its partnership obligation.

There's more bad news as we see the Republican leadership can't come to grips with what would be required to move the transportation authorization bill forward. Last month, they offered up what has been characterized as the worst transportation bill in history. It was partisan, and it was unbalanced. It would have overturned two decades of transportation reform, undercut transit and the vital enhancement programs that communities have used to improve the quality of life and stretch their transportation resources. It even attacked bike and pedestrian programs, eliminating Safe Routes to School for our children.

Well, luckily, it collapsed under its own weight. They were afraid to even have a hearing on it before it came to the floor, and then they found out that there wasn't an opportunity to pass it. The support wasn't there in the face of united opposition around the country from people who care about transportation. At the same time, the Senate has given us a balanced and bipartisan bill. Seventy-four Members of the other body voted for it and passed it over to us.

I would hope that there is time for us to stop playing partisan ideological games with this vital transportation bill. The headlines that the Republican maneuvering has done is an embarrassment to Speaker BOEHNER and to Chairman MICA. But not just to the Republican leadership; it's an embarrassment to the House.

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I'm sorry that my Republican friends and colleagues can't seem to agree amongst themselves about a path forward. They cannot get 218 Republican votes for any bill, even the Speaker's proposal. The good news is they don't have to. There are 435 Members of the House. If they would work in a bipartisan basis, as we have done in the past, we can stop this short-term roulette; we can give the construction industry, local government, and people in the private and public sector the certainty they need for not just this construction cycle, but the next construction cycle. We can put tens of thousands of people to work, bolster the economy, and do what Congress needs to do, what Congress has done always until this point.

I hope the Republican leadership, before we leave this week, will at least allow the bipartisan Senate bill to come to the floor to be voted on. I'm confident that a majority will support it, and we'll meet our obligations to keep America moving and the economy growing.

ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, all-of-the-above energy. It's a plan first introduced by House Republicans when gas prices spiked during the summer of 2008. For the 2 years prior, congressional Democrats were following a green energy plan only, doing their best to completely eliminate the traditional forms of energy like petroleum, natural gas, and coal that account for 83 percent of our energy consumption.

When President Obama took office in 2009, he took up their flag and began pushing for his controversial cap-and-trade law that even he admitted would mean electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket. He appointed an Energy Secretary that admitted on national TV that he wanted our gas prices at European levels. Well, they're both on their way. Since then, energy costs have doubled, gas prices have skyrocketed, and we are in a crisis in this country when it comes to our energy use.

Just as we saw in the summer of 2008, when these gasoline prices spiked and our energy costs rose, the price of everything else is soon to follow. When his cap-and-trade bill failed to get enough support in a Democratic-controlled Congress, he set out to have the

EPA basically regulate the bill into law.

Over the last 3 years, the EPA has issued some of the most costly regulations on power plants in their history. By 2016, the Utility MACT regulation is expected to cost \$9.6 billion annually in direct costs, and some analysts estimate its total indirect costs closer to \$100 billion. The Cross-State Air Pollution Rule is expected to impact over 1,000 power plants across the country, and, by the EPA's own estimates, it's estimated to cost \$2.8 billion annually.

With no business experience in this administration, I don't think they realize that when the cost of doing business goes up, business prices go up; and that affects every hardworking American taxpayer at the pump. When he turns on a light at home, when he buys a loaf of bread, when he goes to buy a U.S.-manufactured product, it costs.

According to the President's own Commerce Department, the Boiler MACT regulation in itself is expected to cost between 40,000 and 60,000 jobs. The impact of these regulations is already being felt. Last month, two utility companies announced the closing of 10 of their power plants as a direct result of some of the strict new regulations—another move that will raise the price of electricity for consumers.

Yet it seemed as though the President had finally come around when he said in his State of the Union speech earlier this year, right here in this room: This country needs an all-out all-of-the-above energy strategy that develops every available resource of American energy.

It's not often that I agree with the President, but at that point I did.

Unfortunately, the President hasn't stayed true to his words. In fact, just yesterday the EPA announced their latest set of regulations that will effectively ban the building of any new coal-fired power plants by dramatically decreasing carbon dioxide emissions.

Whether the President and environmentalists like it or not, coal currently accounts for almost half of the electricity generated in this country. Effectively eliminating coal-fired power plants is only going to increase the cost of electricity to American families.

We can no longer allow the White House to say one thing and do another when it comes to energy. If the President truly supports the Republican all-of-the-above energy strategy as he claimed he did, then he needs to follow through.

It's time we start to take advantage of all of the God-given natural resources this country has and to have American-made energy, American-made power that will power this Nation.

U.S.-AFGHANISTAN POLICY IN SHAMBLES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from