

Speaker, of the benefits that humanity has enjoyed because of fossil fuel use over the last decades.

Again, I am going to pull up this chart here. The benefits are clear. The lower left graph is GDP per person in the world. It has skyrocketed, coincidentally, with the increase of energy use.

But life expectancy has skyrocketed over the last 200 years, again, coincident with increased energy use, access to reliable, clean energy.

It is no wonder. You consider how energy is deployed. Take water, for example. The tremendous progress that we have made with clean water and pumping stations and ways to pull water in and to clean it, that is all done using fossil fuel-based energy, whether it is coal, gas, oil. There has been a tremendous success over the last 200 years as humanity has looked for energy and used fossil fuels-based energy products.

Mr. Speaker, if President Obama and the unelected Federal bureaucrats at EPA had installed today's regulatory regime in the 19th century, my district and this country would look vastly different.

Access to reliable, affordable energy has improved the quality of life of people wherever it is available, which is why the Clean Power Plan is so deeply misguided.

It will also raise energy prices again by \$289 billion through 2030, fulfilling a promise that the President made in 2008 when he said electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.

But minority communities will be especially hard-hit. Again, a study from the National Black Chamber of Commerce found that the Clean Power Plan would increase poverty among African Americans by 22 percent and Hispanics by 26 percent. This is not acceptable.

In addition, the President's energy agenda constrains our energy mix and distorts the market to benefit certain politically favored technologies, regulations that reduce Americans' access to reliable, affordable energy sources, endangers our grid stability, putting millions at risk of losing power during times of peak demand.

Meanwhile, the Clean Power Plan will avert only two one-hundredths of a degree Celsius of warming over the next 85 years. That is less than 2 percent of 1 degree Celsius. It is not a fair tradeoff.

American energy policy should promote economic growth and prosperity so that we can tackle our debt. This is such an important point, Mr. Speaker.

When we have these debates and conversations about whether it is going on in Paris, whether it is going on in Congress, and we talk about American energy and coal and gas, nuclear, other forms, it is not all pain, the pain that those who are running around and saying the sky is falling, the sky is falling. Time and again, their predictions have been proved false.

It is undeniable, Mr. Speaker, that access to affordable, reliable energy

has greatly advanced humanity. And humanity can figure it out. We have made tremendous, tremendous progress with the environment over the last 50, 60 years.

Certainly we have seen that in Western Pennsylvania, and that progress is going to continue. It continues, in part, because we have access to great, reliable, abundant, cheap electricity. Fossil fuels have enabled that progress and will continue to enable that progress.

As we meet the challenges of a changing climate, Mr. Speaker, it is human ingenuity that is going to pull us through, human beings, persons, empowered to live lives freely.

Look what Holland has been able to do with the sea over the last 400 years. Before the advent of all the huge machines that can move dirt around, they have been holding back the sea and building levees and dikes. It has been remarkable what the people of Holland have been able to do, even more so now that we have access to the technologies that we have.

Mr. Speaker, we should be leading the world in heavy technology, as we address concerns with rising sea levels.

There is no reason, Mr. Speaker, to doubt the capacity of the human person and human ingenuity to overcome these challenges that may face us. But we can't be in denial about the fact that fossil fuel energy has been a tremendous boon to humanity.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, we have tremendous challenges—tremendous challenges—ahead in the coming years. We are \$18 trillion in debt as a Nation, and we have tens of trillions of dollars in unfunded liability.

We need to be growing like you have never seen before. With access to cheap, reliable energy, we will be able to pull ourselves out of debt. We will begin to have that renaissance in our economy.

We have to meet those challenges we have. But if we expect to meet those challenges, if we expect to meet the commitments we have made on Social Security for Grandpa and Medicare and meet the commitments we have made to our veterans, tens of thousands who have sustained life-changing injuries over the last 14 years, we need to be growing again.

A key access to that growth is to have access to abundant, reliable, cheap energy. We know what it has done historically: increasing incomes, lifting people out of poverty, increasing life expectancy, increasing food production, increasing water purity.

Mr. Speaker, this is a success story that needs to be told.

I yield back the balance of my time.

OUR FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE TO PROTECT AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized

for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I don't propose to take an hour, but I do propose to bring a very important issue before the House and before the American people. Today we had our first opportunity to really move to protect Americans.

Presently, if you are on the no-fly list, which is not easy to get on—there has to be some very specific reason why you could be a threat to American citizens, to the airplane on which you might be traveling, or you might be entering this country for some nefarious reason, like terrorism.

But if you are on the no-fly list and you do happen to be in America, you can go to a gun store or to perhaps any fairground where there is a gun show and you can buy a weapon, virtually any gun, an assault weapon, a handgun, a shotgun.

And the question arises: If you are too dangerous to fly, are you not too dangerous to buy a gun?

But, under American law today, you can, indeed, be too dangerous to fly. You could be a threat to the other passengers or to a tower, to an airplane. But, apparently, you are not a threat to buy a gun.

In fact, there are some 16,000 people, a very small portion of the American citizenry, that are on the no-fly list. Since 9/11 in 2001, more than 2,000 men, probably women, who are too dangerous to fly on the no-fly list have been able to purchase guns here in the United States.

So let's see if we get this straight. You have been designated by the Department of Homeland Security and the various Federal Government agencies—TSA, FBI, quite possibly the CIA, and others—as being a threat to the security and safety of America and Americans, and you are put on a no-fly list, meaning you can't get on an airplane.

□ 1900

You are not able to buy a ticket, you are not able to travel, and yet you find some way to go down to the local gun store in those States that do not have background checks or maybe a gun show where there are no background checks, you present yourself and say: "Oh, that is a pretty good-looking AR-14. I'd like to have it."

"Sure, you got the money?"

"I got the money."

"Here is the gun."

This makes no sense whatsoever. Somehow I think the American public gets this. If you are too dangerous to fly, then you are too dangerous to be able to buy a gun in America. It is that simple. There ought to be a law, but there is no law.

Here in the House of Representatives, many of us have been trying for, actually, several years to deal with this crazy loophole in our gun safety laws; yet we have been unable to have a bill come to the House floor where 435 of us

that represent all of the American citizens will have an opportunity to vote on whether we believe that, if you are too dangerous to fly, you are too dangerous to buy a gun.

So today my fellow Democratic representatives and I—about 135 of us thus far—have signed what is known as a discharge petition so that a bipartisan piece of legislation introduced by Representative KING of New York, who is a Republican, could be brought to the floor and all of us face the responsibility of selecting whose side do we stand on. Do we stand for the safety of Americans and prevent people that are too dangerous to fly from being able to buy a gun, or do we stand with those on the no-fly list that are presumably dangerous and say: “Oh, yeah, you ought to be able to buy a gun even though you are too dangerous to fly”?

Now, for my American friends out there, all of you, voters and nonvoters, don't you think it is time for your Representatives, 435 of us, to stand before you in this House and say: “We agree that if you are too dangerous to fly, then you are too dangerous to buy a gun, and you cannot buy a gun,” or stand here before all the American public and say: “No, no, no. If you are too dangerous to fly, go ahead and buy a gun”?

So, Mr. Speaker, that is what a discharge petition will do. It will take our Republican friend's bill, Mr. KING of New York, bring it to the floor and put the issue before your Representatives, before the representatives of the American people, and cause us to make a choice for your safety or for the presumed right of a person who is too dangerous to fly to be able to buy a gun. It is pretty simple stuff. We will see what happens.

That issue is now bubbling around here on the floor. Today there were four motions to adjourn, which is a way of disrupting the normal procedures of the House—which are terribly abnormal to begin with—and causing the attention of the membership of the House and the press from the press box, or wherever they happen to be, to focus on this one—one—issue: whether those 16,000 or so people that are on the no-fly list can also go out and buy a gun. Two thousand already have.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, we ought to quickly discuss this issue of, well, there is a constitutional issue here, an issue in which these people are on a list but they have no ability to get off—no. Not so. Not so. When the no-fly list was first put together following 9/11, the issue was raised of the constitutionality of it by the American Civil Liberties Organization. It went to a Federal court, and the Federal court said: No, we disagree with you. We believe this is a constitutionally authorized protection of the American public, and there is a procedure for an individual to petition to get off the list. So this issue of constitutionality was decided some years ago by a Federal court.

So, Mr. Speaker, the arguments that you will undoubtedly hear here about this being, oh, an infringement of the constitutional right for an individual to buy a gun, no. This issue has already been resolved. If you are on the no-fly list and you think you shouldn't be there, you have got a procedure, a program underway and available to you to remove yourself from the no-fly list, and the court said it meets constitutional muster.

So, taking it a step further, we know a lot of Americans of certain classes that cannot buy a gun: criminals, convicted felons, people that in some States have been involved in domestic violence, and people that have exhibited mental health issues. Those people are barred in many cases from not being able to buy a gun. So we would add to that category people that our law enforcement agencies have deemed to be dangerous, quite possibly terrorists, or abiding and assisting terrorist organizations. If you can't fly, we just simply say that you can't buy a gun also—pretty simple.

My Republican colleague, Mr. KING, is correct. The issue is not resolved. The issue will be back before us tomorrow, the 9th day of December, for those of us that believe that if you are too dangerous to fly, you are too dangerous to buy a gun. Those of us that believe this to be the right policy will continue to push this issue for the safety of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, 16,000 people may not be able to buy a gun if this becomes law, and that is a good thing, because we know already 2,000 people that are on that no-fly list—actually, more than 2,000—have been able to buy a gun. What did they do with it? Well, maybe they went out and shot quail, or maybe—we pray not, but we don't know, do we?

So, Mr. Speaker, the issue is before us, as are many, many important issues, but I don't think there is any issue more important than the safety of the American people. We know that if somebody is thought to be dangerous, then they ought not have a gun.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that this House will see the wisdom of taking a small step and denying some 16,000 people, many of whom are probably not even American citizens, the opportunity to buy a gun.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

TERRORISM AND OUR RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there has been so much in the news, and our friends here on the floor have been raising questions about responsible, reasonable gun control. We want gun

control that does not violate the Second Amendment of the Constitution, the purpose of which is to allow citizens to protect themselves. It is not just for hunting, but to allow citizens to protect themselves.

The thing that I noticed, Mr. Speaker, in my decade as a judge, the criminals that came before me for crimes involving a gun, I can't remember any of them—I think I handled around 6,000 felony cases that went through our court. I can't remember any where they went down to a gun store and bought a gun. They stole them or they bought them from other criminals. With the 100 million guns that I understand have been purchased in recent years, it doesn't look like there will be any chance to remove guns from anyone except law-abiding citizens.

Mr. Speaker, it has been interesting. We inquired, my Republican friends, my colleagues here, we inquired over and over, and still 7 years after President Obama took office, we know that shortly thereafter there was a scheme hatched within his administration to sell guns to criminals that would get to Mexico and fall into the hands of drug cartels. They didn't adequately monitor them. There was nothing put on the guns so they could be traced exactly where they were going. We know one of them was used to kill one of our own government agents. So whether it was intentional, reckless disregard for an American Government agent's life who was working for the President to have one of the President's subsidiaries or employees provide guns in such a way that they would end up killing one American agent and, apparently, hundreds of Mexicans—and we don't even know the full extent because we can't get answers from this administration.

Eric Holder intentionally withheld evidence. He refused to provide information. I felt like he should have been impeached and thrown out of office. We never got answers about Fast and Furious, but we did see emails where, within this administration, even after they got caught, that this administration had facilitated weapons being provided and sold to people who would take them to the drug cartels of Mexico. Even after they got caught, they were still wondering if it might be possible to use the fact that these guns were being used to create violence to justify attacks on the Second Amendment and taking away Americans' gun rights.

Apparently, November was a huge month for the sale of guns; and apparently, Black Friday, in the past week, has been a record for—not a record, but just a massive number of guns being sold. I believe I saw there were 185,000 requests for gun purchases on Friday after Thanksgiving. Regardless of what the number was—that is not completely accurate—it is staggering. How many people are now in fear for themselves and their families because of the policies of this administration?

Now, because of Fast and Furious and how there were people in the administration that were contemplating the