

adjacent to U.S. forests. I earlier referenced a New York Times article covering this extraordinary development pressure that's on these lands.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman yield?

Mr. POMEROY. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. CANTOR. I would ask my good friend from North Dakota, what is the date on that article in the New York Times?

Mr. POMEROY. October 17, 2007.

Mr. CANTOR. So clearly, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the gentleman, I would imagine that the economic times surrounding that article 6, 8 months ago certainly may have been different than they are today. We have been on the floor all day, and will continue to be on the floor tomorrow, talking about the housing crisis and the plummeting real estate values.

Let's face it. If you have got 40,000 acres of land today, and that land was scheduled for development and sale of parcels, that land is not worth what it was in the fall of 2007.

Mr. POMEROY. Reclaiming my time.

Well, my friend, I think we are talking about a different section of the economy. In fact, economic analysis of the functioning economy shows that there has been extraordinary wage growth of the wealthiest 1 percent, top 10 percent, consumptive patterns have continued unabated at the peak earning levels in our economy. And it is those people that are the customers for this land. This isn't your average Joe deciding, hey, Ma, let's move to Montana and buy a little forest land. No. There's no jobs there other than former timber industry jobs. The economy is in transition there. These are wealthy people that want to have essentially recreational property in areas we can't imagine.

One of the individuals referenced in that article has invested about \$125 million in Montana. It talks about his not liking what a logging company was doing. They began logging too much of the view in front of his yard. So he bought the land. He bought all the mountain that they were mining on. That's the kind of guy that we are talking about.

They talk about another guy here. They quoted a man named Michael Carriarte who bought an 800-acre property in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, in 2005. He has got the place bordered on three sides by Federal land. And he is now asking \$23.5 million for it.

This isn't the kind of property that is involved with our earlier discussion about the housing crisis. This is quite a different deal entirely. And it is for those reasons that I think it is important that we act to preserve the public interest.

We are in a recession. But it is not a recession that is diminishing the devel-

opment pressure on forest lands. And we are not going to be in a recession forever. And that pressure, especially as baby boomers age and have this disposable income, is only going to continue. In fact, they talk about the pressure being extraordinary. And again, in Montana, more than 1 million acres are under threat alone.

So basically this provision has been fashioned, and if you think about it, a 40,000-acre minimum, it is entirely protected by Fish and Wildlife plans. Now my friend, Mr. MCCREY, cites that as a negative thing. I think essentially if the goal of this is to try and preserve property, it might be a good thing. And of course there is a provision for a perpetual conservation easement. So really the aim of this, and I think it will achieve it, is to make certain we don't have private development, little lots with great big houses chunked into the pristine forest. We would like to preserve this. We would like to actually expand the holdings of the U.S. Forest Service and have the land adjacent to it protected under perpetual conservation easement.

So all in all, there certainly is a sound rationale behind this proposal. It was included in the negotiations back and forth between the House and the Senate. And again it certainly invites the kind of questions and scrutiny that this provision has been put under tonight. But I think when you think about the importance in this country of preserving for general public use and enjoyment, we certainly come down on the right side as compared to dividing this into little lots and having that kind of development in this area.

So I think that we have covered the area. Is the gentleman ready to close? If so, I will wrap up now or I will reserve the time.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I just have one additional comment to make.

Mr. POMEROY. I think that we have discussed this at the end of a long day. I will reserve the balance of my time, but if the gentleman's comments are in the nature of a close, then I'll yield back without saying anything further.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman. And I admire him for his valiant effort to defend this provision in the Senate-passed farm bill. He did a great job.

Mr. Speaker, I just still believe that if we were serious in wanting to preserve land adjacent to Federal forest and parkland, we would have a provision here, maybe not in the farm bill, but a provision in a program authorizing some legitimate awarding of bonds, wherever the program deemed appropriate, not so narrowly drawn that the \$500 million could only be used to purchase one particular parcel.

I think anyone looking at this would have to conclude that the aim was to afford the current landowner the ability to sell the land in this difficult climate.

So Mr. Speaker, the Plum Creek Forest and the bond programs associated therewith is plumb wrong. This is a "bridge to nowhere." This is where America, once again, will be let down by the actions of this House if this provision is allowed to stay in.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 2315

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110-109)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004, and expanded in scope in Executive Order 13399 of April 25, 2006, and Executive Order 13460 of February 13, 2008, authorizing the blocking of property of certain persons and prohibiting the exportation and re-exportation of certain goods to Syria, is to continue in effect beyond May 11, 2008.

The actions of the Government of Syria in supporting terrorism, interfering in Lebanon, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and missile programs including the recent revelation of illicit nuclear cooperation with North Korea, and undermining U.S. and international efforts with respect to the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq

pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect the national emergency declared with respect to this threat and to maintain in force the sanctions I have ordered to address this national emergency.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 7, 2008.

AGREEMENT WITH CZECH REPUBLIC ON SOCIAL SECURITY—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 110-110)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95-216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)), I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Czech Republic on Social Security, which consists of two separate instruments: a principal agreement and an administrative arrangement. The Agreement was signed in Prague on September 7, 2007.

The United States-Czech Republic Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the lost benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Czech Republic Agreement contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4).

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Agreement, along with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the principal agreement and the related administrative arrangement. Annexed to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, which describes the effect of the Agreement on income and

expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Agreement. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Agreement and related documents to me.

I commend to the Congress the United States-Czech Republic Social Security Agreement and related documents.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 7, 2008.

FORECLOSURES AND CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, we were discussing very important legislative initiatives dealing with the Neighborhood Stabilization Act that would give \$15 billion to reclaim foreclosed homes, and an important legislative initiative, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act that would revise a number of the GSEs like Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, all to help the American people.

In my discussion on the floor of the House, I indicated that we are moving toward a recession and a depression. The gentleman who was then managing the rule, H. Res. 1175, indicated that we as Democrats must stop telling untruths. To that I asked the gentleman whether or not he was calling me a liar.

I wish to read into the RECORD that when that inquiry was made, the gentleman responded, as I said, I assume that he was not suggesting that I am a liar. The gentleman said "I did not suggest that at all."

It is important to note that America is suffering. Between 7,000 and 8,000 people a day are filing for foreclosures and that consumer confidence is down. We are moving toward a recession and maybe a depression.

LET MEMBERS HAVE INPUT IN THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

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

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express to the House my concern about the fact that Chairman OBEY and Speaker PELOSI are very, very busy these days. If news reports are to be believed, it's apparent that they're going about doing all of the work of the Appropriations Committee as well as the House almost all alone with almost no input from Democrats or Republicans from the House.

Because of that busy schedule, I have been writing to Mr. OBEY of late. I have

sent him three letters altogether. Last Thursday, I sent him a letter that was signed by the entire Republican membership of the Appropriations Committee urging him to have regular order and full hearings on the supplemental that is before us that represents a huge portion of our spending, and yet there has been no hearing whatsoever.

Just in case Mr. OBEY hasn't seen this letter because his staff is very busy, I know, working on these projects, I would like to submit that letter for the RECORD and urge the House to urge the leadership to allow us to have public hearings so that Members can have input regarding their districts' needs on this very, very important part of this year's work.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,

Washington, DC, May 1, 2008.

Hon. DAVID OBEY,

Chairman, Committee on Appropriations,

Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In the absence of any response from you to my April 21st and April 24th letters, and recognizing Senator Byrd's immediate response to the Republican Senators from his Committee, we are writing to once again express our grave concerns over media reports that your leadership plans to unilaterally, and without Member input, write and take to the House floor the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill under a closed rule and bypass full Appropriations Committee consideration. Such action would be an historical and unprecedented abdication of responsibility for the House Appropriations Committee and would be viewed by many in both parties as a shameful power grab by House and Senate leaders.

Senator Byrd, who recognizes the slippery slope involved in circumventing the well-established rules and precedents of the Appropriations Committee, has scheduled a frill Senate Appropriations Committee markup for the week of May 5th. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to follow Senator Byrd's example and schedule a full Committee markup in the House at the earliest possible date.

It is only right and fair that you allow Members of our Committee—Republicans and Democrats—to do the work they were elected to do. We are extremely troubled by the fact that under this scheme no Member of the House will be afforded the opportunity to offer amendments in full Committee or on the House floor while Senators in the other body will be given the opportunity to let their constituent's voices be heard. We must act expeditiously to move through full Committee and onto the floor a clean Emergency Supplemental, free of extraneous funding and policy provisions, to address the urgent needs of our troops and their families.

On October 20, 2006 then Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi wrote in a letter to then-Speaker Hastert: "We must restore bipartisanship to the administration of the House, reestablish regular order for considering legislation, and ensure the rights of the minority, whichever party is in the minority. The voice of every American has a right to be heard."

Again, we urge you and Speaker Pelosi to stand by those words. Historical precedent and tradition dictates that this legislation be fashioned in an open and transparent