

passed that have made a real difference in people's lives. When I am home, I often hear about the positive impact of our work, the role our office has played in the district, the difference our efforts have made in individual lives.

I am proud of the progress we have made as a country, but we need to keep this momentum going. As we all know, cooperation and progress is not always easy, but it is what we are sent here to do and it is what we must do, regardless of partisanship. We are here, each one, because we believe in the role of government to make the lives of everyday Americans better, and that has been my guiding light both as a Member of Congress and as a nurse before.

As I have said, I may be retiring, but I do not want to consider myself retired. I prefer to say I am graduating to continue working locally on issues that have defined my time in Congress.

Our work is cut out for us, but I am deeply optimistic about what the future holds. I trust that the next Congress will hold healthy debates about how to build a better country for our children. I urge my colleagues to remember that, even during the most trying times, as my husband Walter often said: There is much more that unites us as a people than that which divides us.

Now I want to take one last opportunity to thank my staff, the people who have become family to me both here in D.C. and in the district. And I want to thank you, my colleagues, for your camaraderie, your hard work, and the friendship that has lasted over 18 years. It has meant the world to me.

And finally, thank you. Thank you, truly, to the people of the central coast for trusting me as your Representative, for inspiring me every single day with your passion and your dedication for our Nation and for California's 24th District. You make our community a place in which I have been proud to raise my children and my grandchildren now, one I am proud to call home.

8-YEAR ASSAULT ON AMERICA'S COAL INDUSTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mark the end of a long, harsh, partisan, politicized campaign, unprecedented in American history. I am not talking about the recent election. No. We are finally at the end of the Obama administration's 8-year assault on Kentucky's and America's coal industry.

In two terms, President Obama's policies have successfully put thousands of coal miners and utility workers into the unemployment line. In 2008, then-candidate Obama pledged that any company looking to build a coal-powered electric plant would be bankrupted. The combined regulations of the EPA, the Army Corps of Engi-

neers, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, and several other bureaucracies have turned that pledge into a reality, choking off investment in new state-of-the-art, clean-burning, coal-fired electric generation; and it led to the premature closing of existing plants.

If we continue on this path, the other promise made by candidate Obama will also come to pass: electricity rates will necessarily skyrocket. And that would be a disaster for consumers, for whom energy prices are often the second or third largest line item in the family budget.

I also think about industrial consumers and the many manufacturers in my district and around the Nation who depend on affordable, reliable energy that will face skyrocketing costs if we fail to act and reverse these administration policies. However, it is a new day; and voters—particularly in the Rust Belt and Appalachia—turned out in November to close the book on this legacy of job-killing regulation and to seek a new path forward.

President Obama said that elections have consequences, and this is true; but his administration ignored every electoral outcome since 2010, doubling down on failed policies while the American people called for a different approach.

The inverse is also true: consequences drive elections. The consequences of the Obama administration's unilateral decisions decided last November's election, and no place in this country felt those consequences as acutely as coal country.

National coal production is at its lowest level in 35 years. Pike County, the long leading coal producer in Kentucky, until losing that title in 2012, is down 89 percent since its peak in 1996. Nationwide, consumption of coal has dropped nearly a third since 2007.

In Kentucky, coal employment hit its lowest level in 118 years. To repeat, coal employment in Kentucky is now at its lowest level since 1898. In 2009, 18,850 people were employed by coal. About 73,000 jobs were indirectly supported by that economic activity. Today, only about 6,500 Kentuckians now work in the coalfields, and those losses have rippled throughout the economy. Yet this is the legacy that this administration will earn as it leaves office.

Never in the history of our country has an administration singled out and targeted a lawful industry—in this case, an industry that has provided jobs and opportunities for American workers for generations, an industry that has literally powered America, and, through that overregulation, crushed an entire sector of our economy.

Now, Obama administration apologists will say that depletion in Appalachian coalfields and new competition from natural gas are the primary factors in those job losses, but they don't give the regulators enough credit. The

turnaround in natural gas production on State and private lands has been dramatic, to be sure, but relative price parity with coal does not explain two-thirds of mining jobs in Kentucky disappearing in 7 years.

The administration has targeted coal supply and demand, prohibiting production leases, rejecting mining permit applications, stretching the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts against congressional intent, prohibiting new and existing plants from using coal—the list goes on and on.

Many of these rules have been halted or overturned by the courts, and several more remain subject to challenge by the States and industry; but since the President could not get Congress' support for his agenda of banning the production and use of coal, most of these regulations can be unwound by the courts or the next administration.

I urge the incoming Trump administration to do just that and to engage with Congress in a bipartisan fashion on our Nation's energy and environmental policies. The livelihoods of people in the coalfields, of those working in the manufacturing and rail industries, of families trying to keep their homes warm and their lights on must never again be the collateral damage in partisan warfare.

I must address the issue of climate change. Let the last 8 years serve as a lesson to all of us. Let's never again attempt to solve problems through central planning by punishing innocent Americans whose paychecks put food on their table. Instead, let's address problems like climate change the American way: not through central planning or government, but through innovation, science, technology.

While it will be a tough road back for coal country and it may never be the same after 8 years of regulatory attack, I do look forward to a new day dawning in the coalfields.

ROBERT LEVINSON STILL MISSING IN IRAN

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

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is upon us. We are getting ready to head home to spend time with family and friends, yet I rise today with a heavy heart.

For the family of my constituent Robert Levinson of Coral Springs, Florida, these weeks are a painful reminder of another Thanksgiving, another Christmas—their 10th, in fact—without their father, grandfather, and husband.

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Bob has been missing in Iran for 3,561 days. He disappeared from Kish Island, Iran, on March 9, 2007. Late that year, Bob's wife, Christine, and his oldest son Dan traveled to Iran to learn as much as they could about his whereabouts.

It was a brutal 3-year wait for the first proof of life, a video of Bob