

Five, we need to stop excessive and redundant Federal regulations on small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to immediately consider my bill that has passed the Government Reform Committee and would help prevent Federal agencies from imposing unnecessary regulations that suffocate small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, let's fully demonstrate our commitment to small businesses by passing these legislative solutions to help small businesses in New York's Hudson Valley and all over the Nation.

TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, sadly, the war in Iraq is escalating daily. In the first 6 months of 2006, more than 350 American soldiers were killed in action and over 2,400 wounded. This means the United States lost the equivalent of five battalions' worth of ground forces during the period Iraqi political leaders squabbled over how to form a government.

And while forming a government was a positive step, it has made little difference in the daily lives of most Iraqis. Violence has escalated and claims more and more Iraqi lives. According to the U.N., over 14,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in the first 6 months of 2006, including 5,800 in May and June alone. States of emergency, curfews and military operations have not stabilized the country. There are more insurgents, more foreign fighters and more attacks. The signs of sectarian and ethnic cleansing are everywhere. President Bush has said he is going to deploy more troops into Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, 2006 was supposed to be a year of significant transition in Iraq. But the U.S. remains on the defensive, caught in a civil war.

Mr. Speaker, this war is a miserable failure. It is time for a new direction in Iraq.

□ 1230

SUPPORT OUR SCOUTS ACT

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the Boy Scouts of America is one of the most wholesome organizations in this Nation's history, which is why it has earned the Congressional Charter. The Scouts have provided a way for children from the inner city and the country to learn more about themselves, their environment and their role as citizens through active engagement in outdoor and service activities.

Unfortunately, the city of Philadelphia is considering a move that would

seriously hinder scouting in southeastern Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Mayor John Street has told the Cradle of Liberty Council, which serves 87,000 inner city and suburban Scouts, to either pay market value for or vacate the headquarters it has used rent-free since 1928.

Mayor Street has chosen to focus on the differences of opinion he has with the Boy Scouts, rather than embracing and fostering greater cooperation on the issues we can agree on. This is an unfortunate turn of events for the scouting community in my district and the Philadelphia region, especially when the city is in crisis; violent crime and drug use are at all-time highs.

I call on Mayor Street to work with the Scouts to work out an equitable solution to their dispute, and I call on my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 1337, The Support Our Scouts Act, which will reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to scouting.

PREPAREDNESS FIRST ACT

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, America needs to be prepared. Whether it is for a commuter train attack or a hurricane, it is clear America must get serious about all hazards preparedness, and that is preparing for all emergencies, whether they are natural or manmade.

Today I am introducing the Preparedness First Act to authorize critical grant programs that our State and local governments already depend upon for all hazards emergency preparedness. The premise of this bill? To ensure that States and localities will have a basic level of preparedness so that they can protect their citizens, communicate with each other and work with the Federal Government during any type of emergency, from earthquakes to terrorist attacks.

Under this bill, all States would receive a base of preparedness funding. This would guarantee that the Federal Government would have an able partner in every State to coordinate preparedness activities. Additional resources would then be made available to address the unique risk and man-made disasters that are posed in each area.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and put all hazards preparedness first for all Americans.

ISLAMIST PRESENCE IN SOMALIA

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

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, recently the subcommittee on international terrorism and nonproliferation that I chair held a hearing on the growing Islamist terrorist threat in Somalia. The country's unsecured borders and proximity to the Arabian Peninsula

provide a potential transit point and safe haven for terrorists there. Especially worrying is the powerful presence of the Union of Islamic Courts, which took over Mogadishu last month.

This group is headed by a known associate of al Qaeda and aims to introduce Sharia law throughout Somalia. Mr. Speaker, we are living in an age in which threats in faraway places can hit us at home.

The events unfolding in Somalia mark a critical point in our struggle against Islamist terrorism. Afghanistan is the lesson. I remember those on Afghanistan that said that the Taliban offered stability in that country because the country was deeply divided.

I remember testifying that the Taliban and their support for terror training could lead to more World Trade Center-style attacks on America. That was 11 years ago. Now Somalia demands our focused attention.

IRAQI GOVERNMENT'S TROUBLING COMMENTS ON ISRAEL

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, do not think there was an epiphany this morning when the leader of Iraq, duly elected, met at the White House to say that he would join, his country would join with other Arab states condemning terror. You would have thought the word "terror" was invented this morning. The audacity for him to look at us and say, for those who are skeptical about the war on terror, there is nobody skeptical in this House, either side, about the war on terror.

But when his legislature condemns Israel, "we need to stop the Israeli criminal aggression," and they voted on that unanimously, you come into our house, as we would say in the Bronx, even though I am from New Jersey, and think that we are supposed to forget everything.

There is terror in Iraq, and there is terror in Israel. And if you think Hezbollah is the Guardian Angels, you are quite mistaken. And we need to understand what is going on in this House. Turn the country back around again. Sixty-five percent of the American people say we are going in the wrong direction, and we continued this morning.

CREATIVE FEDERALISM IN HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, everyone understands that we have a real challenge in health care with over 45 million Americans without adequate insurance coverage. And Washington is in a logjam with a national solution elusive.

Yesterday, we took a great step in meeting this challenge with the introduction by a bipartisan group of a significant measure to help cover the uninsured. As a physician, I understand that one-size-fits-all does not work in health care.

Our bipartisan working group respects greatly the principle of federalism. And our proposal will empower States to develop methods that best suit their unique populations.

H.R. 5864, the Health Partnership Through Creative Federalism Act holds real promise to increase the number of Americans with health insurance coverage. By empowering States to develop methods that best suit their unique needs, we are putting patients first which should be the foundation of any reform. This bold initiative takes this inherent knowledge into account and gives States the flexibility to find solutions to cover the uninsured.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides to sign on as a cosponsor and support this innovative solution.

REPUBLICANS IGNORE RISING ENERGY COSTS

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, gas prices are once again at record highs. According to the Bush administration's own Energy Department, the average national price at the pump is now over \$3 a gallon. We are facing the biggest price rise since Hurricane Katrina 11 months ago.

Yet this Republican Do-Nothing Congress, this Do-Nothing Congress is prepared to leave at the end of the week for a 5-week recess without passing any legislation that will help consumers with prices at the pump. What is the holdup—beside the giant heist of American people?

Why will House Republicans not work with us to hold Big Oil's feet to the fire for any price gouging that is now going on? Why will these House Republicans not join us in repealing \$20 billion in tax breaks and subsidies that they gave Big Oil last year? Why won't they join us in taking that money and investing in new energies of the future so we can end our dependence on foreign oil?

The answer, I think, has everything to do with their cozy relationship with Big Oil. It is no wonder that most people think that the letters GOP mean Gas, Oil and Petroleum.

Mr. Speaker, Americans have dealt with high gas prices all summer long. It is time this House started listening to their needs rather than the needs of the special interests in the gas and oil industry.

DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, the Republican do-nothing Congress is unwilling to tackle the issues of importance to the American people. At a time when hardworking Americans are finding it more and more difficult to make ends meet, at a time when a weak economy is creating very few jobs, at a time when gas prices are at record levels, the Republican do-nothing Congress has frittered away scarce time on meaningless and divisive proposals that were never even intended to become law.

No wonder the American people are so disgusted with Washington. There is so much that this Congress should be doing, and yet the House Republicans refuse to act. We could raise the minimum wage for the first time in 9 years and give 7 million Americans a pay raise.

We could give the Federal Government the ability to negotiate prescription drugs on behalf of America's seniors in order to fill the gap in coverage that millions of seniors will soon face in their drug coverage. We could finally go after Big Oil and guarantee the American consumer is not to be gouged at the pump.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot we could do. The problem is Republicans are out of ideas. It is time we lead America in a new direction.

OIL PRICES ARE A NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUE

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

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, Congress cannot afford to wait another day to address our Nation's energy crisis. Record gas prices are not only causing pain for American consumers every time they pull up at the pump, but high prices are also seriously threatening our national security.

Consider \$5 a barrel increase for a barrel of oil. That translates into \$85 million that goes directly to Iran every week, which can then be sent to Hezbollah or to support the escalating sectarian violence in Iraq.

Neither the Bush administration nor congressional Republicans have done enough to wean us off foreign oil. For 5 years now, we have refused to come up with bold new ideas. Instead, their answer last year was to give oil and gas companies \$20 billion in tax breaks and subsidies.

The former top aide to Secretary of State Rice told The New York Times yesterday, I do not think any of us have done a terribly good job of thinking through, and how far behind the eight ball we are on these issues.

For 5 years now, Washington Republicans have been unwilling to think outside of the box for fear that they will irritate their special interest friends in Big Oil. I think it is time that we lead America in a new direction.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

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

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, as millions of Americans struggle to get by making the lowest real value minimum wage in 50 years, Republicans in this body are preparing to adjourn the House for a 5-week summer vacation without providing them with any financial relief.

Despite numerous attempts by the Democratic Members, Republicans still refuse to increase the minimum wage to a living wage. It is time for a new direction.

Six million people who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage deserve better than a Congress that rewards the wealthiest while punishing those who need assistance the most and are willing to work for it. Eighty-six percent of Americans support increasing the minimum wage, because they know, just as Democrats in this body know, that it is simply wrong for a full-time worker with a full-time job to live in poverty in this great Nation.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

NATIONAL SECURITY FOREIGN INVESTMENT REFORM AND STRENGTHENED TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2006

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5337) to ensure national security while promoting foreign investment and the creation and maintenance of jobs, to reform the process by which such investments are examined for any effect they may have on national security, to establish the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5337

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Security Foreign Investment Reform and Strengthened Transparency Act of 2006".

SEC. 2. UNITED STATES SECURITY IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENTS; CLARIFICATION OF REVIEW AND INVESTIGATION PROCESS.

Section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. App. 2170) is amended by striking subsections (a) and (b) and inserting the following new subsections: