

aid, and other more powerful, peaceful ways of engaging with the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all of my colleagues will take note of Friday's anniversary and realize that now is the time to turn the tide on our policies in Afghanistan. We need to end this war. We need to do it now. We need to promote peace through democracy. We need to promote peace through diplomacy and development. We must bring our troops home.

THE EDA ELIMINATION ACT

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

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, since coming to Congress 9 years ago, I have sadly relearned that the government in Washington D.C. only grows and grows and grows. When Democrats and many Republicans, too, come to the floor of the House and talk about spending cuts, they are often talking simply about slowing the rate of growth of government. There is seldom, if ever, any real discussion about cutting the size of the Federal Government or about eliminating an entire program or agency. But today, with \$14.8 trillion in debt, we can't continue to simply slow the rate of growth. We've got to cut it, and we've got to get rid of some things.

As a first step this week, I will proffer a bill that will eliminate the Economic Development Agency. It's part of the Department of Commerce and was established in 1965 as an element of President Johnson's Great Society. For over 45 years, the EDA has spent billions on local projects, not national projects, trying to pick winners and losers amongst various projects by region, industry, and community. Much like a stimulus bill or earmarks, the EDA provides loans and grants to pet projects of the administration in power.

In 2008, the EDA spent \$2 million on the Harry Reid Research and Technology Park at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Just last year, it spent \$25 million on the Global Climate Mitigation Incentive Fund. This year, the agency will spend almost \$300 million of taxpayer dollars. Now, this might not sound like a lot of money sometimes here in Washington, D.C., but in Newton, in Independence, in Wichita, and in Goddard, Kansas, that's still a lot of money.

I want to take just a minute to talk about the EDA. Most folks in Congress and most folks back in Kansas will have never heard of it. I had not before I entered Congress. It provides these grants and loans to projects it selects all over the country. At its very core, the EDA is nothing more than a giant wealth redistribution machine. It takes money from people in one place and at one time and redistributes it all across the country for inherently local projects.

For example, it gave \$2 million to the "culinary amphitheater," wine tasting

room, and gift shop in Washington State. It gave \$350,000 to renovate a theater in Colorado. In 2011, it gave \$1.4 million to build infrastructure development so that a steel plant of \$1.6 billion could be built in Minnesota. Like the vast majority of projects, that steel plant would have been built without Federal taxpayer dollars. It was a \$1.6 billion project helped by the Federal Government to the tune of only \$1.4 million.

Our even bigger problem, however, is with EDA. It's duplicative. It's just one of at least 80 Federal economic development agencies. HUD and Ag and HHS all have economic development grants as well.

Second, it's ineffective. It typically provides a very small part of any given project. The GAO reports that most of its financing did not have any significant effect on the success of projects and produced, at best, inconclusive results and, in some cases, may even detract from a more flexible workforce.

Third, this is an incredibly wasteful agency. It was identified by GAO as one of the agencies that ought to go away. Indeed, a recent inspector general audit of 10 projects totaling \$45 million showed that 29 percent of the grant money had been wasted due to various violations of EDA grant requirements. Four of the 10 projects EDA funded in that group were never completed.

Finally and perhaps more importantly, this is not the role of the Federal Government. As the Cato Institute has written, the Federal Government has no business trying to direct economic activity through politicized subsidy vehicles like the EDA. We've seen that with bad outcomes, like with Solyndra, only too recently.

Every great journey starts with a single step. This is a small agency, but it's time for the first time in decades that we eliminate an entire program, an entire agency, so that it cannot continue to grow and grow and grow as part of our Federal Government. I would ask my colleagues to support the EDA Elimination Act.

POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as one of the founding members of the congressional Out of Poverty Caucus, I rise today in my ongoing effort to sound the alarm on poverty.

As you may know, the census released data showing that 46.2 million Americans lived in poverty in 2010. The data also revealed that the poverty rate for whites was 9.9 percent in 2010. Worse, the poverty rate for African Americans was 27.4 percent. For Latinos, the poverty rate was 26.6 percent. For Asian Pacific Americans, the poverty rate was 12.1 percent.

These statistics come on the somber anniversary of the 10 years of the war

in Afghanistan, which was a blank check that should not have been written and that, of course, I could not support. In many ways, this war has significantly contributed to these staggering statistics, which we know are not just numbers but are human lives. We must create jobs. We have to create a way to maintain our social safety net.

So today I am here to ask my colleagues to join 47 Members of Congress and me in a letter to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, asking them to protect vital programs that comprise our social safety net, including but not limited to Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security, as well as the programs that provide the economic security and opportunity to millions of Americans.

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None of us envy the work of those members on this Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, as they will have to make tough choices that affect the lives of millions of Americans.

However, we should all recognize that for the last 25 years, when we have come to deficit reduction agreements, these agreements have, for the most part, protected low-income programs. We absolutely cannot balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable, those people facing or living in poverty. This is really a moral obligation that we cannot ignore.

These programs assist the over-46 million Americans living in poverty in 2010—men, women, children, young and old alike from all backgrounds—in obtaining or maintaining their access to basic, mind you, and I am just talking about basic human needs, including food, shelter and health care. These vital safety net programs both support and create consumers, which results in increased demand and job creation. This, of course, reduces our deficit by enabling people to participate in this economy.

And not only that, many of these programs do provide pathways out of poverty and opportunities for all. More and more Americans are struggling to find work and struggling to make ends meet. And until we create jobs, and we have a way, a pathway where people clearly can be provided these opportunities, we have a real moral obligation to protect these programs. Anything short of this is really un-American.

In times like these, it's unconscionable to consider cutting programs that help those most in need like our Nation's seniors and our Nation's children. Asking the Joint Select Committee for Deficit Reduction to protect these vital human programs is, though, not enough. We have to do more. The most effective anti-poverty program is an effective jobs program.

So while I ask my colleagues to join me on the letter to the Joint Select Committee, I am also here to ask Speaker BOEHNER to move the American Jobs Act as soon as possible to

begin to create jobs and put Americans to work. Americans want to work and they need to work; and yet the House leadership is really focused, as an example, on the dismantling of environmental regulations. This is not a jobs program that puts Americans to work. It's a cynical, opportunistic move in order to attack the environment.

So we have to have as our priority efforts to create jobs that give Americans economic security and that grow our economy. Our economy will not recover quickly from this Great Recession and, of course, Great Depression in many communities of color, including the African American community and for those living in poverty, unless we really do provide a pathway out of poverty.

We need to target these programs in areas that need it the most. Many of these areas are communities of color, where the poverty rates are three times higher than the poverty rate for whites. The unemployment rates are also higher in communities of color: 16.7 percent of African Americans are unemployed, 11.3 percent of Latinos. And these are just the reported statistics. It's clear that we must address these disparities as we work to create jobs and opportunities for all.

So I am asking Members to join us in this deficit reduction letter and urge the Speaker and leadership of this House to move the American Jobs Act as the first step in jump-starting this economy and putting Americans back to work.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MAX BAUCUS,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN KERRY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES CLYBURN,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. XAVIER BECERRA,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. DAVE CAMP,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. FRED UPTON,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JON KYL,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. PAT TOOMEY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROB PORTMAN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROB PORTMAN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON DEFICIT REDUCTION: We are writing to request that you protect vital programs that comprise our social safety net, including but not limited to Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security, as well as the programs

that provide economic security and opportunity to millions of Americans.

Vital safety net services and programs support those people hit the hardest by the Great Recession. These services help people and families maintain housing or find shelter, keep food on the table, assist in access to health care, and support those looking for employment, including the long-term unemployed. Examples of federal programs that provide such services include programs which assist disabled veterans to find an accessible home, ensure seniors receive food to eat, help people access our health care system, connect people seeking jobs with employment, give shelter to homeless families, and ensure that children get meals in school.

It is imperative that we protect vital safety net programs and programs that provide economic security and opportunity to millions of Americans, including those facing or living in poverty. The Census Bureau released data on September 13, 2011, revealing that 15 percent of Americans—46.2 million people across this country—lived in poverty in 2010. This is the largest number of Americans living in poverty since the Census started collecting this data 52 years ago. For our nation's children under 18, 22 percent lived in poverty in 2010. That is 16.4 million children who do not know where their next meal is coming from, where they might be sleeping that night, and who are anxious overall about their well being and that of their parents.

According to the recent Census data release on poverty, the poverty numbers would have been worse had it not been for key federal programs like unemployment insurance, food stamps, and Medicaid (Census Bureau slide 25 located at http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/2010_Report.pdf).

For the last 25 years when we have come to deficit reduction agreements, these agreements have protected low-income programs. Beyond that, we have a moral and an economic obligation to care for our nation's most vulnerable, those facing or living in poverty. We respectfully implore that as you work through ways that our nation can reduce the deficit that you sustain our nation's safety net programs that assist people in obtaining or maintaining their access to basic human needs including food, shelter, and health care, and that provide ladders to opportunity for struggling families. These programs both support and create consumers, which result in increased demand and job creation. In the end, this reduces our deficit by enabling people to participate in our economy.

Again, we respectfully implore that as you work through ways that our nation can reduce the deficit that you sustain the vital human needs programs found across the federal government and accomplish deficit-reduction in a way that does not exacerbate poverty or inequality.

FREE TRADE AND JOBS

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, just last week I had the opportunity to host a manufacturing roundtable to hear firsthand from job creators in the 10th District of Illinois. These business leaders spoke about the challenges that they are facing and how decisions made right here in Washington, D.C. impact their ability to create jobs and put Illinois back to work.

The entrepreneurs I met with expressed their concern with the uncer-

tainty in the marketplace and spoke about the difficulties they face when competing in a global marketplace. From trade to excessive regulations, it is clear that much work needs to be done right here in Washington, D.C.

Despite the problems that our country and businesses face, I am optimistic about the future. Just yesterday, the President sent long-anticipated trade agreements to Congress for approval.

We heard the President talk about his Jobs Act; and while there may be some disagreement about the Jobs Act, certainly I think that there are areas where we can agree, and I think that we ought to move those aspects forward. Certainly when we talk about the trade agreements, I would argue that's one of the areas that has broad bipartisan support, and we should move it forward for the American public.

We have 650 manufacturers in Illinois' 10th Congressional District representing 80,000 jobs. Fifty thousand of those jobs rely upon exports, and I would argue that our ability to open and expand markets will create that demand.

Seventy-three percent of the world's purchasing power is outside of the United States. Ninety-five percent of the consumers are outside of the United States' borders. We want to make sure that we have an agreement, an arrangement where we can knock down these barriers where we can allow the American worker to compete on a level playing field.

If we are able to do that, the American worker will win. We know that for every billion dollars that we increase in trade, we create 6,250 jobs right here at home.

We know that it would add, just with South Korea alone, would add \$10 billion to our GDP. This is a step, certainly, in the right direction.

In Illinois, manufacturing accounts for 93 percent of our exports, and these exports support 25 percent of the manufacturing jobs in our State, a State that's lost 750,000 manufacturing jobs over the last decade.

Small businesses are also a big part of those exports. By ratifying the pending trade agreements, we are empowering manufacturers, small business owners, and entrepreneurs. This is exactly the type of bipartisan action we need to be taking in these tough economic times.

While there is much more work that needs to be done, we should be encouraged by the movement on the trade agreements and use this as a stepping stone to continue working together and finding common ground. When we come together for the American public, we can create an economic certainty that allows small business owners all across the land to be able to forecast, have some more certainty, invest in their business and create jobs.

There are 29 million small businesses in our Nation. If we can create an environment here in Washington, D.C.