

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IS BEING
BULLIED

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the administration is bullying religions. Yes, the government has required some religious organizations to violate their tenets and provide certain health care coverage for their employees—or else.

After an immediate backlash by the American public, the administration promised that it would make some changes; but the same day that it made this promise, it finalized the original mandate as-is with no changes. The original edict is now in effect. The big announcement about a change resulted in nothing, only more words.

The administration said it had the power to issue this order because it was implementing ObamaCare. If the administration has the power to infringe upon a constitutionally protected right, what will follow? What individual freedom will be trampled next, all in the name of “we’re the government, we know what’s best”?

The Constitution is being insulted and violated. We should fear this type of unyielding power and religious persecution. After all, the Constitution was written to protect us from this type of government.

And that’s just the way it is.

TRIBUTE TO MARYLYN SCHMIDT

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Marylyn Schmidt, a resident of the State of Michigan, who dedicated her life to the goal of achieving true universal health care for all Americans.

She spent countless hours, day in and day out, organizing, mobilizing, and educating the citizens of Michigan in order to build grass-roots support for passage of a single-payer bill in Congress, H.R. 676. She passionately believed that every person in America should have access to quality, affordable, and accessible health care as a fundamental civil and human right.

I knew Mrs. Schmidt for almost two decades. I had a profound respect for her unique leadership in advocating for human rights, universal health care, and protecting Social Security and Medicare. She belonged to numerous community and social-justice organizations, including the Michigan Improved Medicare for All, the Michigan Alliance to Strengthen Social Security and Medicare, the Michigan Universal

Healthcare Access Network, and the Oakland County Welfare Rights Organization. For over 20 years, she fought for the human, economic, and civil rights of the voiceless and the vulnerable citizens of Michigan who wanted nothing more than a better life for themselves and their children.

Thank you, Marylyn Schmidt, for remaining steadfast in your belief that health care should be a fundamental human right in this country. The people of Michigan and all of those you helped and fought for will always remember your kindness, your courage, and dedication to this just cause.

□ 1710

MAKE IT IN AMERICA:
MANUFACTURING MATTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this hour with my colleagues to talk about jobs. How do we create jobs in America? We are now well over 14 months of the Republican control of this House, and not one significant bill has passed this House that would create new jobs. There are many bills to wipe out environmental laws, many bills to wipe out regulations that protect the citizens of the United States from pollution and contamination of one sort or another, but where are the jobs bills? We absolutely have to create the jobs in America.

Today, we are going to take about an hour to discuss how we can create jobs in America. One of the principal ways is to Make It in America: Manufacturing Matters. Manufacturing was the heart and soul of and the foundation for the great middle class, the rise of the middle class here in the United States. It wasn’t too long ago that manufacturing in the United States was a big deal. About 20, 23 years ago, we had almost 20 million Americans in manufacturing. It also happened to coincide with the largest percentage of Americans that were in the middle class.

Over the intervening years, we’ve seen the slow decline until we hit this period of 2000 to 2009, and we saw a precipitous drop to just over 11 million manufacturing jobs in America. That coincided with the decline of the middle class in the United States.

So what we want to do today is to focus on, how can we rebuild the American middle class? One of the principal ways of doing it is to focus on manufacturing and to focus specifically on rebuilding the great manufacturing sector in the United States. There are many, many ways to do this.

My colleague from Oregon is here to join us, and I know that there are many things that are happening in Oregon that speak directly to this, one of

which is competition between Oregon and California for the manufacturing of light railcars. I’ll let my colleague from Oregon go first, and then I’ll pound on him that California is a better place to manufacture light railcars than Oregon. But either way, they’re made in America, and that’s to the benefit of all Americans.

Please join me, and let’s see where we can take this.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you. I deeply appreciate your courtesy in permitting me to speak, and I appreciate your leadership in focusing on the need to rebuild and renew this country, putting Americans back to work, being able to not just revitalize our economy, but our neighborhoods and strengthen our families. It is true that there are some areas where there are some great opportunities for healthy competition. The gentleman may be referencing the fact that recently we have started manufacturing a streetcar in the United States for the first time in 58 years, and it’s being manufactured in Portland, Oregon. But I would note that that project, manufacturing streetcars, includes the work of subcontractors across the country, including 40 in the Midwest that had been so hard hit by some of the decline in manufacturing activity.

The point is that being able to make goods in this country, whether it’s light rail, streetcar, heavy rail, whether we’re dealing with fabricating steel for bridges and roads or rebuilding the power grid, these are all areas that are a tremendous source of family-wage jobs. I find no amount of irony that one of the major Republican candidates for President somehow thought that President Obama was being—and I’m using his direct word—“elitist” by advocating that young people have the chance for a college education or going to a community college. My goodness, how out of touch can you possibly be? I don’t know any American that doesn’t want his or her child to be able to have the opportunity for further education and training. This is part of an agenda here. I look forward to the conversations this evening.

At one point, I’d like to cycle back to the spectacle we had on the floor of the House the week before we recessed for Presidents Day where we had the most partisan transportation bill in the history of the House—narrow in focus, small in vision, dividing the various elements of transportation—that was so bad that our Republican friends were embarrassed to even have a hearing on it. Never before in the history of the House have we had a major surface transportation reauthorization that never even had a hearing.

Well, mercifully, our Republican friends have decided that that wasn’t getting them anywhere. The outcry from transit agencies across the country, from cyclists, even from the people who advocate safe routes to school, the program designed for our children to be able to get back and forth to school