

high as those during President Clinton's second term, then maybe Republicans would have a better argument. Of course, President Clinton's second term also saw significant job growth and expanding economy, and the only Federal budget surpluses since 1969—four in a row. But to complain about Federal deficits and then immediately call for cutting taxes on the highest income brackets—even lower than the current 31-year low under President Obama—shows significant hypocrisy or a lack of basic addition and subtraction skills.

So as today's Republicans try to spin a tax fairy tale, where the lowest Federal tax rate in 31 years under President Obama is somehow too high, while ignoring the higher rates through the eighties and nineties, perhaps it's time once again to ask: What would Ronald Reagan have done?

Republicans, even those who profess to idolize President Reagan, of course, won't ask because they don't want to hear the answer. Following the significant initial tax cuts in 1981, President Reagan subsequently signed into law a host of taxes to try to bring the budget back into balance. Five times he raised taxes in his 8 years.

Madam Speaker, as Congress debates the extension of the current tax burden, comprehensive tax reform, and overall budget deficits, I again feel compelled to ask my colleagues: What would Ronald Reagan do?

GOVERNMENT IS THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, recently I heard from Jacqueline, a small business owner in southeast Texas, and here's what she said:

Business owners who want to succeed put their heart and soul into their business. They are the ones who get there at the crack of dawn and leave after everyone else is long settled in for the night. I've been a small business owner, and I know a great many others like me, and nobody did anything for us, we did it for ourselves, and the only thing that the government did for us was tax us.

Apparently, this President disagrees with Jacqueline's statement. According to the administration: "If you've got a business, you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen." So the President is inferring, I suspect, that government should get the credit for the success of entrepreneurs. He is wrong, Madam Speaker.

People are the reason for American success—not government. Americans have the vision, creativity, and audacity to pursue a dream—not the government. Americans risk their life savings, not knowing what profit they will get back in return for their labor. Government doesn't risk anything. Americans spend long days, sleepless nights, and working on weekends away from their family in order to keep their

company afloat and pay their employees. Americans battle through discouragement and criticism in the hope for better days ahead. It is Americans who give up their home in order to pay for a store. And it's Americans who pay all those taxes and expensive government regulations that they're forced to pay.

Government isn't there when a decision is made to get a business started, to take a leap of faith, make a hire, sell first goods, or tally bills. People pursue their own American Dream without government holding their hand.

Those believers in Big Government say that Americans can only be successful if government controls their lives. Madam Speaker, government isn't the answer; government's the problem. America is not great because of government programs. It's great because of Americans, individuals with the spirit and desire to make their lives and this country better. Government doesn't assume the risk in business, individuals do.

Starting a business is not easy. Business is driven by American ingenuity, creativity and, yes, hard work. Those who have been successful didn't wait around for someone else to help them with a government handout. The reality is that government actually makes it harder to do business now, not easier.

When I ask Texas businesses what Washington can do for them, their answer is always the same: get out of the way. Businesses cannot afford to hire others and give them jobs because of the costly, unnecessary regulations imposed by government.

□ 1020

According to the World Bank's 2012 "Doing Business in a More Transparent World" report, the U.S. now ranks 13th in the world in places to start a business. We trail countries like Belarus, Macedonia, and Rwanda. Now, isn't that lovely?

America should not be a place where people wait for a government handout check. Instead, they should get a paycheck for working.

Individual achievement used to be celebrated in this country, but the administration seems to punish success. And what does the government do when individuals are successful? The government punishes them with taxes.

According to the collectivists, business wealth was created by government, and so it belongs to everybody. Sounds a lot like statism to me, Madam Speaker, the idea that citizens should be beholden to the government for everything and government is worshipped as the savior of us all. That is not the American philosophy, I know.

So the policy is, under the statist, tax people to death. Madam Speaker, you've heard that statement. If something moves, regulate it. If it keeps moving, tax it. And then if it stops moving, subsidize it. Government is doing all of the above to businesses in

this country. And government is also overtaxing those small businesses, keeping 23 million Americans from finding jobs.

Madam Speaker, small businesses create most of the jobs in this country. You see, when a small business is successful it can expand by hiring people. Government doesn't create jobs; people and businesses do.

So what next? Are the good days of American exceptionalism behind us? No. Americans are as exceptional as ever before, and it's the government that is our problem.

Where I come from, we teach our kids that, in this country, no matter who you are or where you came from, hard work and personal responsibility will pay off. In the America I know, people earn their paycheck and don't sit around waiting for a free government check.

Small business owner Jacqueline is correct. Individuals, American ingenuity, and free enterprise create success, not Washington. That is the American Dream, Madam Speaker. And when you see the President, tell him he's wrong.

And that's just the way it is.

WE NEED PNTR NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEKS. Russia, with some of the world's most sophisticated consumers and a rapidly growing market, will join the World Trade Organization by summer's end. After 18 years of negotiating with the United States and the World Trade Organization, after improving their trade laws and reducing tariffs, yes, very shortly Russia will be a member of the World Trade Organization.

For the United States, this could mean improved market access for our exports of goods and services. It could mean protections if Russia violates international rules. It could mean a trade boost, an additional 50,000 jobs or more right here in the United States of America, and all of this, if the United States and this Congress lifts the Cold War relic, the Jackson-Vanik amendment, and authorizes permanent normal trade relations. We've waived Jackson-Vanik for over 20 years. We now need PNTR, and we need to do it now.

Our competitors will have access to that market. We will then fall behind them.

We can compete with anybody in the world. This is the greatest country in the world. Let's not lock ourselves out of the market in Russia. Let's not put ourselves behind our competitors. Here's an opportunity for us to come together.

You heard earlier this morning my friend and colleague, DAVID DREIER, bringing folks together, talking about how we can do this together with the President of the United States, who has an export initiative, to create more jobs.

Here we can demonstrate to the American people that we're concerned about creating jobs, and that we're going to make sure that we take advantage of that opportunity by bringing PNTR for Russia immediately, getting involved, and trading with them to create jobs right here in the good old United States of America.

TAX CLIFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Madam Speaker, it has been 41 months of unemployment above 8 percent, and the President is calling for higher taxes on small businesses. That is the devastating reality currently facing 13 million unemployed Americans.

America's in the midst of a jobs crisis unlike anything this country has seen since the Great Depression. And the President's most recent answer to this crisis? A tax hike on small businesses to feed Democrats' insatiable appetite for more wasteful, ever-expanding government spending.

This past week, the President followed up his recent call for higher taxes by scolding entrepreneurs. And I quote: "If you've got a business, you didn't build it. Somebody else built that."

His disdain for American enterprise truly underscores that he not only doesn't know what it takes to start and run a business, but he is clueless about how jobs are created.

If the President gets his way, instead of small businesses creating more paychecks for more workers, they will be paying more taxes to the Federal Government. I wonder if the President has considered the fact that small businesses create two out of every three new jobs in America? And that means, for the majority of the nearly 13 million unemployed Americans, their best hope of being able to provide for their family hinges on small businesses' ability to hire more people.

The administration's onslaught of new regulations and ObamaCare's costly taxes and mandates have already placed a huge burden on our Nation's small businesses. The President now wants to add insult to injury and siphon away 201 billion more dollars from the American job creators.

Now, a new study released yesterday from Ernst & Young confirms what many Americans already know: the President's latest tax hike plan would destroy 700,000 jobs and further weaken our struggling economy.

The House is scheduled to vote in a couple of weeks on legislation to extend all of the current Federal income tax rates while, at the same time, laying the groundwork for making our Tax Code simpler and fairer by lowering rates and closing loopholes. Pro-growth tax reform is needed to help create the climate for job creation and to ensure more jobs stay right here in the United States.

The most recent unemployment report shows that the number of people leaving the job market to go into Social Security disability outnumbers the number of people who are going back to work. Let me repeat that. The most recent unemployment report shows that the number of people leaving the job market to go on Social Security disability outnumbers the number of people who are going back to work.

So, regardless of one's political ideology, it's truly unconscionable for the President or any Member of Congress to be calling for tax hikes on Americans when millions are out of work and the economy is still treading water.

But, to make matters worse, this week many Democrat leaders in the Senate have said that they are willing to allow these taxes to increase for all Americans if they aren't able to get their way and raise taxes on 1.2 million small businesses. Now, every day the President and the Senate Democrats continue with this political posturing and class warfare nonsense while the economy suffers and small businesses suffer, and ultimately, the American people suffer.

The question is, will the President and the Senate Democrats who run Washington work with the House Republicans to stop this huge, job-killing tax increase from hitting small businesses and every American who pays an income tax? Or will they continue to insist on higher taxes to pay for wasteful government spending and bailouts for political allies?

□ 1030

INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. This Sunday, the International AIDS Conference is going to be held in our Nation's Capital. It was some 30 years ago that this serious disease became known in our great country and spread from other parts of the world. Since that time, we've lost over a half a million people, yet we have not found a cure for this deadly disease.

I have introduced legislation, H.R. 1462, with Senator GILLIBRAND, to see whether or not we can have more national attention focused on the fact that we can do a lot more than we are doing.

The major thrust, of course, of what we have to do is to educate people that, although it used to have great stigma, there are so many different ways to come in contact with the disease. Education is one way that we can help people. Prevention, of course, is another, but I would like to emphasize the need for testing. So many people are walking around with the virus and have no idea that they have it. Even though there have been efforts made by com-

munity organizations for free testing, this is one of the exciting things about the President's Affordable Care Act.

There is no question that after we get finished with the political circus that we are forced to go through because of the coming election that more and more Americans will understand the benefits they are receiving even now from this universal coverage, which so many people need, and the dramatic decrease in cost when people are able to get preventative care. Preventative care is one of the major parts of the President's Affordable Care Act. What it means is that people can now go to doctors for regular checkups and can find out things in time to prevent them from becoming more serious.

My mom had three kids. When I was a kid, someone told her that she was going to the doctor with us, and we were not sick. Well, that was something that we didn't think was a luxury we could afford. Now, in seeing how important it is to contain serious illnesses and to reduce the costs of health care, it is so important that preventative care be a part of our national health system, and the quicker we get on with the implementation of this great bill, the more lives and the more dollars we will be able to save.

So, remember, if you have any interest at all, take a look at what is going to be happening in September. The Congressional Black Caucus, during our legislative weekend that month, will have professionals come in to talk with us, to teach us, to tell us what we can do to extend this education process throughout our great country.

GRANT PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. I rise this morning to express my support for the Russian accession to the WTO and for our need here in this Chamber and in Washington, D.C., to grant Russia PNTR status so that we can establish a strong, forward-looking trade relationship with Russia.

Madam Speaker, it's simple. American trade opportunity, as represented by the Russian market, equals American job opportunity here on our soil, and I am proud to support this need to get PNTR trade status for Russia.

I am also joined this morning by a good friend from North Dakota to whom I would like to yield, Mr. BERG.

Mr. BERG. Today, I rise to urge Congress to grant permanent normal trade relations, also known as PNTR, with Russia. Russia will soon join the World Trade Organization. This will increase trade with Russia, and it will create significant export opportunities. However, before we can take advantage of these trade benefits, we must grant permanent normal trade relations with Russia.

This is a great opportunity for our State of North Dakota to increase