

we cut down on the massive expenses ObamaCare is causing, we can get rid of that and get back to real health care reform. Because even if you save \$100, \$200 a month, that would get you a vacation that people have not gotten this year.

There is so much we can do for America if the government of this country, the people at the top of the government, will just finally realize the American people have more answers than we do, and then they will show us.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

U.S. ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) for 30 minutes.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, today, I want to talk about the United States economy. I want to talk about the number one thing that politicians talk about when they ask you to support them when they are on the campaign trail, and that is that we want to put America to work.

I know what it is like to put America to work because I am very proud to say that, before I got elected to office, my full-time job was to put Americans to work. I owned a business, and there were dozens of families who depended on me as the leader of that business, as the owner of that business, to make sure that we were successful. So I had to do my job so that dozens of people could go to work and do their job.

Every year, millions of Americans go to the polls and hope and pray and think and expect that their elected people are going to focus on putting America to work. But unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, the leadership of this House under Speaker JOHN BOEHNER has been delinquent in doing one simple thing, and that is to focus on bills that create jobs. In some cases, it is bills that move government out of the way to make sure that people can put people to work in private industry. In some cases, it is about changing laws that are broken and old and just don't work for today's economy, changing those laws to make sure that Americans can go to work.

Democrats have made jump-starting our economy a priority, and I believe in that priority. Since I have been elected to Congress, I have been fighting for that priority to try to get bills heard in our committees that will create jobs, that will move America forward, and that will move Americans who are hard-pressed and want to get off of the unemployment lines back into work. I have been trying to get them through committee and eventually to the floor of this House so we can have the debates and we can cast our votes for America. Unfortunately, those bills just languish, sitting somewhere in the corner, and don't see the light of day.

For example, the biggest bill to ever pass either the House or the United States Senate since this 113th Congress has come into session was a bill that was passed by the United States Senate with bipartisan support. There are 100 United States Senators, ladies and gentlemen, and 68—Democrats and Republicans—voted “aye,” voted “yes,” voted affirmatively for that bill. If this House would have taken up that bill, or H.R. 15, a bill that looks just like it, that would have boosted our economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, you hear people all the time right now today on the campaign trail saying, “Reelect me,” or, “Elect me,” and they are talking about the economy and talking about deficit reduction. That one bill was analyzed by a third party. It was not analyzed by the Democrats, not analyzed by the Republicans, not even analyzed by the Independents. It was analyzed by a third party whose job is just to call it like it is. That bill, if passed by Congress and put on the President's desk, would give us an opportunity to have a deficit reduction of at least \$900 billion. But that bill doesn't see the light of day—not in this House.

That bill has not been taken up in this House. Speaker JOHN BOEHNER has said over and over: I'm not going to take up that bill. I'm not going to take up that issue. I'm not going to support the American economy with that bill. I'm not going to do the right thing by America and give the economy of the United States of America the biggest boost we could ever see coming out of the actions of the United States Senate and this House of Congress.

It has been sitting here in this House in the corner collecting dust while too many Americans are having their unemployment run out, while too many Americans are losing their homes, while too many Americans are telling their children: I'm sorry, son, we can't afford to continue to send you to college. We don't have any money because we don't have a job.

The United States economy can do better, but unfortunately, it is because this Congress chooses not to do the right thing that the United States economy moves along slowly, picking up just a little bit. That is not good enough. That is not right.

What I am doing here at this moment tonight and the reason why I came to this floor, the reason why I asked the Speaker to give me some time to speak on an important issue—the economy of the United States of America—is because it tears me apart to know that the lack of leadership in this House and the lack of leadership of Speaker BOEHNER is crippling our economy.

We have \$900 billion of deficit reduction wrapped up in one bill, and that bill has sat in this House and has not heard a debate in any committee. It has not heard a debate on the floor of this House. The people that you elected have not had an opportunity. The 435 Members of the United States Congress have not had an opportunity to stake a

claim on whether or not they believe that we ought to put Americans to work, that we ought to get out of the way and fix a law that is broken, a law that does not work, a law that should have been changed a long time ago; but we can change it at any moment on any given day in this House, and this Speaker refuses to allow that to happen.

What is going on right now in the United States Congress is just like what happens in your home or sometimes in a workplace. Let's say you have a family and everybody in the family has been assigned their chores, their responsibilities. Let's say you have a workplace where everybody has their job duties and their titles.

In the United States Congress, we have our chores and we have our responsibilities. Our job is to pass laws to help America move forward and to make sure that all the different dynamics of the number one economy in the world can flourish. That is our job. But the United States Congress, this House, has refused to do its job.

What is going on is just like that example I gave you. Let's say in your home one member of your family chooses not to do their part. You know what happens? Something good eventually happens. Somebody in that house, somebody in that home, somebody in that workplace sees that that job is not getting done, even if it is not their primary responsibility, and they think of the bigger picture. They think of the whole family, the whole house, the whole home. That person in the workplace thinks of the whole body of workers there and says: Somebody ought to take that job and get it done, even though so-and-so isn't doing their part—and that is their job.

Congress is not doing its job. It is not passing this law. But you know what happens eventually? Somebody walks over there and does it themselves, even though it is not their primary responsibility. But we ought to be grateful that there are people like that in every community, in every household, in every business, in every work environment. But not in this House, not as long as JOHN BOEHNER, our Speaker, chooses not to allow us to have a debate, to do our job, to have a vote. Maybe it passes, maybe it fails, but our job as Members of Congress is to legislate, put ideas, good, bad, and otherwise, before the Members of this House and vote up or down, “yea” or “nay”, “yes” or “no,” to move America forward and let the votes fall where they may.

There is a bill that has been languishing in this House for close to a year and a half, and the bottom line is we have not taken up our duties and our responsibilities. As a result of that, in another branch of government there is that one person—not 435, not 100—that says: I want to move the economy of the United States of America forward. I want to fix a broken system. I want to see it fixed. I want Congress to

put this on my desk so that I can do my job and sign it and watch Americans go back to work. All of a sudden, the one person who says: Since you won't do your job, I will go over there and to the best of my ability, to the extent that I legally can, I am just going to have to do as much as I can, lift as much as I can and do the heavy lifting because Congress won't, and he gets criticized.

□ 1815

That is a shame, ladies and gentlemen. That is a shame.

When, in the workplace, or somebody's household, somebody decides to step over and say, you know what, since you won't do it, and it is the right thing to do, I am going to do it. And then they criticize that person. He is the bad guy.

No, no, no, ladies and gentlemen. The bad guy, the bad person is the one that says, I know I have duties, I know I have responsibilities, I just don't want to do it because I can say I don't want to. And if I don't want to, it doesn't get done, at least not in this House.

That is what is going on, ladies and gentlemen. The United States Congress is sitting on a bill that will supercharge the economy of the United States of America, to the tune of deficit reduction of as much as \$900 billion with one bill, one vote of this House. And our current speaker, the Republican leader, does not want to let that happen.

The President of the United States is another branch of government. The President of the United States is part of that balance of power. But when one branch of government is delinquent, is derelict in their duties, there comes a time where that person has to say, hey, what can I legally do? I want to step up. I want to put America to work and, as a result of that, has to take action.

Now, to me, that is a duty bestowed upon every single one of us elected officials, and I am so disappointed that I got elected to a Congress that has been labeled as a do-nothing Congress. I got elected to a Congress that the statistics, not just opinions, but the facts show that this Congress has passed so few laws that people can actually legitimately say that we are do-nothing Congress.

That is a shame. We have responsibilities to this country. When we act responsibly, we make our country what it is, the best country on the planet, and when that happens, the whole world is a better place. But that has not been this 113th Congress, not under this Speaker, not now.

But the most important thing that I want to get across today, that could change. That could change tomorrow morning. We could have that bill on the floor of this Congress tomorrow. We could have it on this floor next week, and we can unleash what Americans go to vote for, and that is action.

Let the votes fall where they may, ladies and gentlemen. Our duty, as

Congress, is to hear bills on this floor, have the debate from the left and from the right, from the center and all, come one, come all, Members of Congress, and then the Speaker says, open the roll, and there go the votes, green ones, red ones, "yea," "nay."

But just on that one bill, ladies and gentlemen, more Americans will go to work as a result of one piece of legislation than any other thing that this Congress has been poised to do in this 113th Congress.

So right now, as the clock ticks, as Congress might adjourn in just a couple of weeks or so, it is going to be left for another branch of government to decide to move this economy forward, to put Americans to work.

That is a shame. That is not the way it should be. That is not the way it was designed to be.

But the Constitution of the United States, you have all heard it, everybody who has taken government class, it is called the balance of powers: executive branch, judicial branch, the legislative branch.

But when one of those branches is derelict in their duties, as this House has been derelict in their duty to put Americans to work, it takes a committed American, it takes a brave American, to step up and say, "I will do it"; to be careful about how it is done, to be doing it in a way that is legal and does follow the Constitution of the United States of America.

But more importantly, ladies and gentlemen, to get the job done, to put America to work, to break a broken system, to break a set of laws and renew that into a law, into action that will actually put America to work and allow us to continue to be the great Nation that we have become.

But, unfortunately, there is a piece of our government, this House, that is not living up to that greatness. It is not living up to its responsibilities. It is not living up to its duties, this House, this do-nothing Congress.

When I say do-nothing Congress, that is so painful to me. I am the son of parents who used to wake me up, sometimes before the sun came up, to go to work in my father's business. And what my father used to tell me—I was 5, 6 years old when he had me working with him—he used to say, son, the work is not done. We have got to keep working.

Sometimes, so much that my hands would bleed, and I would put on my best crying game and I would say, Dad, look, my hands are bleeding. Can I sit in the truck?

My father was a handyman. We used to clean fields and clear out houses or whatever odd job that people had for us. He would take me to work with him. And I remember the first time I thought I was going to be able to sit it out and not do my part because my hands were bleeding. I had blisters, they turned into—they busted, and then they turned into blood, and I showed them to my dad and I tried to give him my best sob story.

And he told me, son, the work is not done. We have got to get back to work. Now get back to work.

Oh, I hated him for it.

That is a leader, someone who can look someone in the eye and say, you need to be what you need to be right now. And that is someone who gets the job done, not someone who looks for excuses, not someone who tells stories, not someone who tries to get off the hook. You need to be the person that gets the job done.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, this House is not the House that gets the job done. It hurts for me to say that. I hate saying it. But sometimes the truth hurts. That is not my opinion, ladies and gentlemen. I am just restating the facts.

I hated my father when he taught me that lesson. But it wasn't until I grew up, and it wasn't until I had to put food on the table for my family, it wasn't until I grew up and ran my own business, that I realized that it is not about the easy way out. It is not about quitting. It is not about being derelict in your duties. It is about accepting your responsibilities, acting out on those responsibilities, working through your responsibilities, not making up stories, not holding press conferences and hoodwinking the American public into thinking that it can't be done.

No, no, no, ladies and gentlemen. We can take care of business on this floor from today to tomorrow and get a bill to the other House, or take a bill from the Senate, take it through this House and get it to the President overnight.

So any time some Congressman or U.S. Senator tells you, no, no, no, there is not enough time, as long as there is at least 1 day, 1 day of legislation left—oh, as a matter of fact, both Houses have the authority to call back their entire House and say, our business is not done. We can get it done tomorrow. Call every Member of Congress, call every Member of the United States Senate to their Chamber, and say, we have got work to do.

There is no time off for us. There is no time away from these Chambers, we are going to get the work done.

But this House chooses not to do its job.

Some people might think, well, this Congressman, this Congressman CÁRDENAS, he is kind of talking a little strong about this House. You better believe it. We are the Congress of the United States of America.

There have been moments in this House where we have been applauded by America for the kind of bravery and the kind of work that gets done in this House. That hasn't happened much lately, not in the 113th Congress.

One bill, ladies and gentlemen, one bill has been sitting in this House, languishing, collecting dust, while millions of Americans are out of work. That is a shame. That is a shame.

I wish there were more Members of this Congress like my father, who knew how to get the job done, who knew how

to focus on the people that depended on him, who had a “don’t quit” attitude.

My father was a man of few words. Few words. But when he spoke, he was serious, he was forthright, and he got the job done. And he had the guts, he had the fortitude, he had the character to know that sometimes, when it meant him getting the job done, it meant that maybe he wasn’t going to be too popular, even with his own son.

I am so glad, so proud to be the son of a man and a woman, Maria and Andres Cárdenas, who taught me how to go to work every single day, and whatever my duties were, whatever my responsibilities were, it wasn’t about me, it was about the work that I committed to do and to get it done.

Every week I leave my family in my district in California, in the San Fernando Valley, and I kiss them goodbye, and I hope and pray that they put me to work, that I get to do the work that I was elected to do. But that hasn’t been happening in this House.

And I am not alone, ladies and gentlemen. I talk to a lot of Members of this House and they feel the same. They want to move America forward. They want to get this economy up and running the way it should be, the way America deserves to be.

□ 1830

This House refuses to help make that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I really do hope and pray that we can put America to work, that we can pass a bill that will create \$900 billion of deficit reduction opportunity. I hope and pray that we can do that. Unfortunately, it is not up to me. I am not making excuses, ladies and gentlemen. It is not up to me. I do not have the authority or the ability to put a bill in the House of Congress.

I have introduced bills. That is my right—I can introduce bills, and I do do that—but the only person who has the authority to decide if a bill will be heard by this House is the Speaker of this House, and he is elected Republican JOHN BOEHNER. He is the man. He is the person who refuses to put a bill on the floor of this House, so that every Member of Congress can have the opportunity to do his job and help put America to work.

I am a proud American, and I am so honored and privileged to be a Member of the United States Congress, to represent the 29th District in California, the place that I was born and raised in and the community that I love. It is just a microcosm of what this great Nation is about, what it is, and my hands are tied. I am not making excuses, ladies and gentlemen. I am just telling you the truth.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. BOEHNER, please, please put that bill on this floor. Put it in motion. Do your job, so that we can do our jobs, so that Americans can have jobs, so that we, as Members of this Congress, can put America to work.

We have a broken immigration system, and one bill can fix that. We have

a broken system in this country, and that one bill will put \$900 billion toward deficit reduction for America. That one bill will unleash our economy and create hundreds of thousands of opportunities for Americans to go back to work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REAUTHORIZE THE ZADROGA ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) for 30 minutes.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow will mark the 13th anniversary of the terrorist attack of 9/11. It is a day for us to remember and mourn those we lost, to comfort those who suffer still, and to honor those who responded on that day with courage and determination.

In New York on those dark days, there were thousands of anonymous civilians and first responders who, without a second’s thought, gave their aid. They ran into burning buildings to save the lives of others. It is a day on which we lost 3,000 people, and thousands more lost their health in the wake of 9/11.

In response to the health crisis that the responders and others faced, this Congress came together in a bipartisan way and introduced the Zadroga Act. The Zadroga Act would provide health care to those who risked their lives to save the lives of others.

Whenever we talk about 9/11, we have to acknowledge the heroes and heroines of 9/11, some who lost their lives that day and those who are still sick and dying from the injuries and illnesses related to 9/11. As a Congress, we came together in groups all over America to comfort one another, and we stood together in our Nation’s capital and vowed that we would never forget.

Never forget means that we don’t forget next year or today, but we are always there to honor and to provide the health care to those who risked their lives to save the lives of others that day.

We came together this week in New York with a determination to put forward a reauthorization of the Zadroga Act for 25 years, which would continue this program, so that the certainty would be there, so that the services and health care would be there for the first responders, the victims, the residents, and others who became ill.

That vow of never forget comes with an obligation on the part of Congress, which is to ensure that we as a country remember, honor, and care for those who are now sick and for those who may still become sick from exposure to the deadly toxin mixes down at 9/11, mixes of fuel and glass and toxins and all kinds of chemicals that they breathed that day.

A major piece of that promise was the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and

Compensation Act. This legislation established the World Trade Center Health Program to provide medical monitoring and treatment for 9/11-related illnesses and reopened the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund to provide for economic losses and harm incurred from the aftermath of the attacks.

We know that there are thousands of individuals with at least one 9/11-related illness or injury. That includes over 2,900 people in the World Trade Center Health Program who have been diagnosed with cancer.

We know that more than 800 New York Fire Department members and more than 550 New York Police Department personnel are struggling with serious 9/11-related illnesses.

We know that we have already lost over 70 firefighters and 60 New York Police Department officers who have died from their 9/11-related illnesses since 9/11. These are people who got sick while working at the pile, and they have died because of their exposure.

We must continue to provide the specialized medical monitoring and care these heroes received through the World Trade Center Health Program and continue to provide economic compensation for the terrible costs they have borne by caring for those who cared so much for us.

As it stands, the Zadroga Act is set to expire in October 2015, yet the medical and economic crises of sick 9/11 responders and suffering survivors will not end in 2 years. They will only get worse over time. Research shows significantly higher rates of cancer among the 9/11 population, a disease with a long latency period. Diseases can take decades to manifest themselves.

That is why I plan to introduce, along with PETER KING, JERRY NADLER, the New York delegation, and many others, legislation that would reauthorize the Zadroga Act’s program for 25 years.

Named after Detective Zadroga, who was the first to die from 9/11-related injuries, many others have been helped through this important program. It would continue the specialized Centers of Excellence, the national health program, the research into new medical conditions, and the victims compensation fund for those who may develop 9/11 illnesses later and suffer related economic damages.

This is not just a New York issue, and I would like to share this map with my colleagues to demonstrate how widespread it is. This map shows that there were first responders and volunteers who came from every corner of America.

They returned to their hometowns, and that is why we have Centers of Excellence across this country to serve the responders and the volunteers who came to 9/11. Many of them are now sick from the toxins that they were exposed to at Ground Zero.