

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 17, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I, Jenifer Megan Bel Miller, have been served with a subpoena for testimony in a criminal trial issued by the United States District Court for the Western District of New York. This criminal trial is in relation to alleged threats made against Congressman Steve Scalise and his family, received through Congressman Scalise's official government office.

After consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with the privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

JENIFER MEGAN BEL MILLER,
Chief of Staff.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring about next week's schedule.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, the House will meet at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business, with votes postponed until 6:30 p.m.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate and noon for legislative business.

On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business, and last votes of the week would be expected no later than 3 p.m.

We will consider several bills, Madam Speaker, under suspension of the rules. The complete list of suspension bills will be announced by close of business tomorrow.

The House will also consider H.R. 397, the Rehabilitation for Multiemployer Pensions Act, commonly referred to as the Butch Lewis Act.

The 10 million Americans who have paid into multiemployer pensions deserve to know they will receive the benefits they have earned when they retire. The bill will help ensure a secure retirement for these workers and retirees.

In addition, Madam Speaker, the House will consider H.R. 2203, the Homeland Security Improvement Act. This legislation introduced by Congresswoman ESCOBAR will ensure that the Department of Homeland Security addresses border issues in a responsible and humane manner. The bill fosters greater accountability when it comes to the handling of children and migrant families at all levels within the Department of Homeland Security.

The House is also expected to consider additional legislation, Madam Speaker, related to the current humanitarian crisis on the southern border.

Members are advised that additional legislative items are expected. As we know, it is the last week before we adjourn, and there is an effort to try to get things done that can, in fact, be done within the timeframe we have available to us.

It is my sincere hope that an agreement is reached to raise budget caps and the debt limit. The Speaker and Secretary Mnuchin and others have been working very hard on this objective, and I am hopeful that they will reach an agreement that we can agree on as a House and as a Senate. Assuming an agreement is reached, we will consider that as soon as they reach it, and hopefully, that will be next week.

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for giving that update on the schedule.

I know that we have been in talks on a budget caps agreement. I met with the Vice President earlier this morning, talking through some of the things that may be included.

Obviously, there is no final agreement. We would hope that those talks go on, and we, hopefully, reach an agreement where we can give real certainty, especially to our Department of Defense, that we will look at what sequestration would do to defense. We have been able to rebuild our defense over the last 2 years. We would like to see that progress continue.

A lot of other issues are at stake there, and we encourage those talks to move forward. We will be ready to move if there is an agreement reached between all the parties, including the White House.

I did not hear mention of anything regarding the BDS legislation. We have heard that there might be some movement on standing up against the BDS movement.

I know that when we looked at a number of bills, there are some resolutions that are out there, some good, some bad. As we know, there is time for talk, and then, there is time for action. The resolutions are only talk.

The legislation, H.R. 336 by Mr. MCCAUL, is the only bill out there. S. 1 moved through the Senate with a large, overwhelming bipartisan vote. It is similar legislation that would actually have teeth, not just words, which are important, but words followed up with action, real teeth to help not only this country but our States that are also standing up against the BDS movement, to give them some muscle, some ability to stand up to the BDS movement.

Madam Speaker, I would ask the gentleman, is there any indication that there might be movement on H.R. 336, to follow up the words with real action against the BDS movement?

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. In response to my friend, Madam Speaker, I will tell him

that the committee did, in fact, mark up bills this past Wednesday, yesterday, and those bills are being looked at to possibly move to the floor.

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, specifically, if I could ask my friend, H.R. 336 was not one of those bills that was marked up. The only bills that were marked up were resolutions.

Again, while some of those resolutions might have some good language in them, there are no actual teeth. There is no policy. There is no change in law to give us more tools as a country to stand up to the BDS movement, to defend our friend Israel.

As we know, the BDS movement really is rooted in anti-Semitism to undermine Israel's economy, which none of us should want to see. I know my friend doesn't want to see Israel's economy undermined, but there is a movement to do that. If we are going to truly stand up against it, words are not enough. We need action.

H.R. 336, again, reflects similar legislation that passed the Senate with an overwhelming vote, Republicans and Democrats coming together to give real tools to stand up to this movement and support our friend Israel.

Madam Speaker, I would inquire of the gentleman, would that bill be considered? It was not part of the package of bills that were brought up in committee this week. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, again, I will tell my friend, as he has articulated, that bill has not been marked up in committee. There are two bills that were marked up in committee, and there is a possibility that we will consider those, but the other bill was not marked up.

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, I would encourage that we go back and look. This committee can do better. If we are going to stand up against this movement and support our friend Israel against this attempt to undermine their economy, we need real tools.

H.R. 336 is the only instrument out there. It is similar to S. 1. We would love to see S. 1 passed. There have been questions about whether or not it has an origination problem, so that is why H.R. 336 was filed.

But, again, H.R. 336 has the same language that passed with 77 votes in the Senate, overwhelmingly, Republicans and Democrats coming together. I would encourage us to follow that lead of bipartisanship, standing with Israel.

I am disappointed that it is not included in the package. It moved out of committee. I would hope we would go back and consider bringing that bill to the floor.

Again, words are nice, but words without action don't give us the tools we need to stand with our friend Israel against this undermining attempt known as BDS.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

□ 1215

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. Unfortunately, of course, three of the component parts of the bill, to which the gentleman refers, we are strongly for. Unfortunately, they were held up in the Senate, as the gentleman may know.

We want to see the MOU for Israel assistance package, which we strongly support, which was negotiated by the Obama administration and which we strongly support in terms of the amount of money, available not only on a general basis, but also a specific basis, for support of Israel's defense against rockets and other munitions that would be sent into Israel.

We also support the Syria sanctions and the Jordan MOU, so we hope, at some point, they will move. I will reiterate, however, there have been two bills marked up, and the possibility of considering those for next week is there.

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, clearly, if there are issues that need to be worked out, differences that might exist between the chairman and the lead Republican on the committee, that work needs to be done. There have been no indications given to us of some counteroffer, some different way to do it, some better way to do it, than what is in H.R. 336.

But again, the language in H.R. 336 is the same language that was in S. 1, which passed the Senate with a 77-23 vote. It doesn't mean that the Senate has the best idea, but it shows there was a way that Republicans and Democrats could come together to stand with Israel against this movement.

If there is a better way to do it, we would be more than happy to work through those better ideas. None of those better ideas have been presented to us. They just shut down that bill. They shut down the ability to have a bill come to the floor to actually put teeth in law to give us more tools.

I would urge that if there is a better alternative, that the chairman of the committee or the leadership on your side has, please present that and let's negotiate it, but none of that has been presented up until now.

So, I would just encourage us to do better as we try to give more support to our friend Israel against this growing movement.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask about the agenda as we have seen it so far in the decorum. The agenda we have seen this week alone, multiple pieces of legislation—whether it is targeted at the President, we had a resolution on the President's tweet. There was a resolution filed to impeach the President of the United States. There was a resolution to hold Trump officials in contempt of Congress with no basis for that contempt. There were multiple resolutions just this week to target and harass different policies of the administration—there is so much legislation we ought to be on this floor

debating to do things that would actually help real families.

There is a crisis at our border, and there has been no bipartisan legislation. The bills that are going to be coming to the floor next week, that the gentleman mentioned, dealing with homeland security are known by many in the homeland security field as the open borders bill, not a bipartisan approach to solving our problem at the border. We need a secure border. We need to solve the crisis at the border.

Fix our broken asylum laws. We want to encourage asylum to work. There ought to be a way to apply for asylum. But, in all honesty, if somebody goes through other countries and turns down asylum in those countries and comes here and just reads a script, because they know there is a loophole in our law, we ought to work together to fix those broken loopholes and the things that are causing an overwhelming crisis at our border. That has not been done.

Bills to lower drug prices. We had a bipartisan agreement in the Committee on Energy and Commerce, to lower drug prices, and yet that was abandoned when that bill came to the floor and sent in a way that became a partisan bill. These shouldn't be partisan issues.

I would hope that we would move away from the harassment agenda and get back to an agenda that is focused on Republicans and Democrats working together, not in a partisan way to say, hey, we passed some bill out of the House, that everybody knows is going nowhere because it was a partisan approach.

Look at what the Senate has done to move bipartisan bills through their Chamber. We can do the same. We can do better than the Senate, but we are not.

When the Speaker breaks the House rules, when you see this break down, it just raises the ire because there is not that attempt to work in a bipartisan way to solve these problems. And there are a lot of good ideas that are bipartisan to solve these problems. The disappointment is that we don't see those coming to the House floor.

The bills that deal with real policy coming to the House floor are only brought, by and large, from a partisan perspective, and the bipartisan approaches are being discarded.

BDS is one clear example where there is a way to solve the problem, where Republicans and Democrats came together. Even from the gentleman's acknowledgement, there is no indication that it is going to move out of committee any time soon. It ought to be out of committee and it ought to be on the House floor, so that we can not only debate it, but pass it, and get a bill to the President's desk to allow us to stand up more against the BDS movement in support of Israel.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

First of all, let me say two things:

We are confronting, in my view, an unprecedented refusal of an administration to cooperate with the Congress in the exercise of its constitutional duties. I refer specifically to the issuance of subpoenas, either for testimony or for documentary evidence, so the Congress can properly exercise its oversight responsibilities under the Constitution.

I have been here for some almost four decades, and I have never seen any administration, essentially, direct across the board no response to the Congress of the United States or to its committees. So, yes, we are pursuing.

The gentleman referred to the contempt citation dealing with Mr. BARR and Mr. Ross. Now, the issue at the center of that, as the gentleman knows, is the administration ultimately decided it would not pursue the policies that were the subject of that investigation. However, it is not about the specific, but it is about the general constitutional responsibility that this Congress has to the American people.

We ask for information not on behalf of ourselves individually, but on behalf of the American people, so they will know what their government is doing, there will be a transparency to the operations of government, and they will be able to determine whether or not any administrative official, or the administration generally, is acting on its behalf personally or whether it is acting on behalf of the American people.

So, from that perspective, I think the resolutions that we have offered, of which there, essentially, have been two dealing with this issue, and maybe more, the refusal to cooperate with subpoenas has continued.

I hope the gentleman will understand that we are trying to protect the responsibilities and authority of the Congress of the United States, the people's body, the article I body, to do its duty properly.

Secondly, yes, we did have a very difficult day yesterday. But I will tell my friend from Louisiana that I think it is the absolute responsibility of this body to respond if it sees things that are being done by the administration or by others that it perceives to be contrary to the ideas of this country, contrary to the declaration that we believe that all men and, yes, all women are created equal; contrary to the extraordinary wrenching war that we had among the States to determine that all were equal. And a construction period.

And then, as I grew up in the 1950s and the 1960s, looking racism in the face and saying, we reject it, that we reject racism, we reject prejudices, we reject simplifying if people are a certain color, a certain race, a certain nationality, or a certain gender, that somehow, they are less than other Americans. I think it is our responsibility to confront that.

That is what we did yesterday. It was difficult, I understand. I was sorry that it was not a bipartisan vote, because I

don't believe that Members on your side of the aisle want to tolerate racism any more than we want to tolerate racism. And if we see it, I think we have a responsibility to speak out, to stand up, and to say this is not right in America, this is not America.

So, yes, we had a resolution yesterday that the gentleman refers to in response to a tweet. It was not the tweet, it was what the tweet said, what it implied, what it diminished in terms of America's sense of decency and equality and tolerance and inclusion for our people.

Now, let me go to legislation. As the gentleman knows, we have passed substantial pieces of legislation.

We passed H.R. 1. No Republicans voted for that, but it seeks to make it easier for people to vote in America, make sure their vote is protected and counted.

It made sure that we have transparency in the financing of campaigns.

It made sure that our redistricting was fair to our citizens and that we politicians were not drawing the districts, but that the districts are drawn in fairness to the American people.

It also demanded ethics performance.

But then we passed an anti-hate resolution. It was just words, but it said no to hate: 173 Republicans voted for that. It overwhelming passed bipartisan.

We passed a Land and Water Conservation Fund that made that fund permanent, a very important bill for a State like Louisiana and, quite frankly, my own State of Maryland, who are all surrounded by water, have a lot of water. That bill got 133 Republicans. It languishes still in the Senate.

We passed the SECURE Act, which makes it easier for people to get retirement security. That was supported by 187 Republicans.

We passed the violence against women reauthorization. Unfortunately, it didn't get overwhelming votes, but it got 33 Republicans voting for it. It languishes in the Senate.

We passed a provision that said we want to protect preexisting conditions in the Affordable Care Act. We got 8 Republicans. I would have wished we had gotten more.

We passed disaster relief. The gentleman knows a lot about disaster relief, important to his State. Unfortunately, we only got 34 Republicans, but it was a bipartisan bill.

We have also passed background checks, which are supported by 90 percent of the American people, to try to make gun violence lessened in the United States of America. For that bill, we only got 8 Republicans.

But those two bills, supported by 90 percent of the American people, languishes in the United States Senate, the majority leader not bringing up that legislation.

We passed a national emergency resolution, which said, Mr. President, you can't take money that we appropriated for X and just send it over to Y. That was, I thought, a protection of our con-

stitutional authority. The Constitution says we raise, and we spend money and we direct the executive—we direct the executive—how to do that. That got 13 Republicans supporting it, a major piece of legislation.

We passed a Dreamer legislation. We have been asking for that legislation for almost a decade, or at least 6 years, I should say. And that legislation got no vote over the last 5 years. It got a vote this year. We got a number of Republicans—7 to be exact—to vote for that.

Now, I could go through a number of other pieces of legislation, including, lastly, the minimum wage bill. This was about capitalism, not socialism. We are capitalists over here. We believe in the free market system over here. And any assertion to the contrary, Madam Speaker, is absolutely false.

It is a good political tactic, it is a scare tactic, Madam Speaker, but I reject it out of hand. We believe in the free market system. We believe the free market system has been the system that has provided the most benefits for the broadest number of people.

□ 1230

We believe that is one of the great facets of our democracy, our free market system. And I will tell my friend, Madam Speaker, that it was Democrats in the 1930s that saved the free market system. It was Democrats in December of 2007 that came in and made sure that the free market system did not crash after 8 years of Republican leadership.

I would hope that the gentleman would not make the assertion that surely he knows is not true, Madam Speaker, that we on this side are looking to support a socialist agenda. We are promoting and continue to promote a socially sensitive agenda for the American people to make sure that they have healthcare.

Medicare was called a socialist program, Madam Speaker, when it was adopted. That is a program that millions and millions of Americans rely on and have been brought out of poverty. Medicare was a called a socialist program when it was adopted. That program, combined with Social Security, has millions of Americans having a sense of security, a sense of independence, a sense that they are not going to fall through the cracks.

So we ought not to be debating, I say, Madam Speaker, this phony shibboleth of socialism.

The minimum wage is simply saying, in America, we value people who work, and we want to ensure that people who work are not living in poverty and have some ability to support themselves and their families in a decent way. We passed that bill today. We are proud of passing that bill.

Very frankly, for 10 years of Republican control of the House of Representatives, we pleaded with them to bring a minimum wage bill of whatever number to the floor, and they didn't

bring a single cent raise in a decade, the longest time since the minimum wage was adopted in the 1930s, to make sure that Americans were lifted out of the deepest recession that this country has ever had.

So I say to my friend, we have done a lot. I wish the Senate would move it.

Let me close in terms of this response. I am very proud of this. We have passed 10 appropriations bills out of 12, the most since 2006.

Now, in 2006, the Republicans were in charge. I don't refer to the gentleman personally, but the Republicans were in charge, and they didn't bring the Labor-Health bill to the floor. I am not sure why, but I had offered a minimum wage increase in that bill, in the Labor-Health Subcommittee, and they never brought it to the floor.

It passed in committee, even though the Republicans were in charge and the majority of Members in the committee were Republicans. That minimum wage increase passed, but they refused to bring it to the floor. I can only conclude that they are not for increasing the minimum wage.

We disagree with that position. We believe that in America, if you are working, playing by the rules, and making our economy grow, then you ought to be paid a wage that you can survive on and, better than that, live on.

And so I am proud of the legislation that we passed, and I am proud of the 10 appropriations bills, which, by the way, fund 96 percent of the government.

Our colleagues in the Senate, Madam Speaker, have not passed a single appropriations bill through committee, not one.

So we are doing our job, Madam Speaker, and we are addressing the issues of the American people.

I agree 100 percent with the minority, with the Republican whip that we need to deal with drug pricing. We have pledged to do that. We are working together. The President says he wants to do that. Hopefully, we can get to a consensus.

I agree with the gentleman from Louisiana, Madam Speaker, we haven't gotten there yet. Hopefully, we can get there. Hopefully, we can strengthen the Affordable Care Act so that people will have the confidence that it will be available to them.

I know that was a relatively—maybe not relatively—a long answer, but I think we have done a lot of work. I am very proud of the 6 months that we have had.

We spent the first 35 days trying to open up the government. This is the first Congress in the history of the United States in which the government was shut down when the new Congress started. It has been shut down before, but this was the first time when we started. It took us 35 days to get it open. And when we did get it open, we started on an agenda of which I am proud.

Do we have more work to do? We do. Madam Speaker, we intend to continue on an agenda that does that work.

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, there is clearly a lot to cover there. Let's start with the big debate, and that is what the gentleman alluded to, and that is government control versus freedom, because that is going to be the debate over the next year where there is already a Presidential primary debate process going on.

When you see every candidate for President on one side saying that they want to give free healthcare benefits to people who are here illegally, yet many of them embrace a plan that would literally end private insurance for families that enjoy the healthcare plans they have in the private marketplace, the Medicare for All proposal, there are so many different areas where we see this debate about government control versus freedom.

And, yes, to the gentleman, there are some on his side who refer to themselves as socialist Democrats. And so if they want to call themselves that, then at least own the things that go with socialism and recognize the damage that is done by socialism.

To think that any one party has some kind of ownership of capitalism in the free market system, I would be more than happy to see us engage in a debate about capitalism, because there are some on the other side that attack it on a regular basis.

But if you look at how Republican policies have gotten us to where we are with the most booming economy in the world, our economy is the envy of the world. People's wages are rising. Low-income people, in fact, are benefiting the most. And we are seeing the increase in the rebuilding of our middle class that was evaporating.

For 8 years in a row under the previous administration, every single quarter, our economy had less than 2 percent growth. The economy wasn't even that bad during the Great Depression that the gentleman cited.

So when we came in with the Republican majority and the Republican President, we were able to pass actual policies like the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, like reversing so many of the radical regulations that we saw that had nothing to do with health and safety but had to do with carrying out an agenda to shut down industries in this country like the fossil fuel industry and so many others that are providing not only jobs, lower carbon emission, dominance in the world, helping our friends around the world, and lowering energy prices for families in America.

Those policies have actually been increasing wages for lower income people, not government-controlled prices as passed today where the government is going to try to come in and set artificial rates for what people ought to make as opposed to letting this great market that is working incredibly well raise wages for families.

We have seen the studies. We have seen the University of Washington

study, which was cited today, where we can look at real examples of communities that have had artificially high minimum wages, like Seattle, where they put in place a \$15 minimum wage. It sounds great. The government is going to set everybody's rates and tell everybody how much they are going to make, and what it resulted in is over 5 million hours lost for workers.

In fact, the lower income families in Seattle were hurt the most by that policy by a margin of 3 to 1. It damages low-income families.

Again, it might sound good that the government is going to tell everyone what they can make, but most of us who believe in the free market system reject that idea that we should set policies that are crushing jobs in America.

There is a bar in New York that was closed because of the increase in the minimum wage that one of our colleagues used to work at. It was closed because of an artificially set price, minimum wage, in the city of New York.

So when you look at jobs that are fleeing some communities and going to other communities, that ought to tell you how those policies are working.

But we have a growing economy, not because we had a lot of government control out of Washington, but, in fact, because we allowed freedom. We allowed people to keep more of what they earned. We allowed people to make their own choices. And it is a successful formula. We want to see more of it.

Now, if we can get into the issue of the harassment agenda, the subpoenas, the finding people in contempt, let's talk about Secretary Ross and the work that was done to comply with the committee's request.

If you look, and this is reading from a document sent by Secretary Ross and Attorney General Barr to the committee, it says:

The Department's engagement with the committee is a good faith accommodation process, rooted in the separation of powers. As part of that process, both Departments have made multiple witnesses available for voluntary, transcribed interviews and have produced more than 30,000 pages of documents to the committee.

Before the committee abruptly and prematurely terminated the accommodation process last month, the Department of Justice intended to provide a significant number of additional documents identified as responsive to the committee's subpoena.

They go on to talk about how they were complying with the committee, producing over 30,000 pages of documents just related to the Census. And then the committee abruptly decides they just want to hold him in contempt because there were some documents they wanted that the Attorney General would have actually broken the law if he turned them over.

So you saw a Department complying and going overboard to ensure that the separation of powers and the oversight that existed would continue.

Of course, when we were in the majority and the previous administration

of the other party was there, we had a lot of oversight hearings, exercising our Article I powers as we all should, but we didn't go week after week.

Just this week alone, there was a resolution condemning the President's tweets, an impeachment resolution, a resolution to hold two Cabinet Secretaries in contempt, and three resolutions of disapproval on policy. That was just this week.

The American people don't want to see us fighting over power. They want to see us fighting for their needs, the needs of hardworking families.

Again, I identified so many things.

Just to finish up on the resolution that was discussed earlier, the gentleman said we need to respond to things that violate this country's principles.

First of all, we reject racism wholeheartedly. We reject hate. We reject anti-Semitism.

There have been comments made by Members of the gentleman's party that have not been addressed on this floor that violate those principles.

We can all bring resolutions broadly stating things, but if the intention is to identify people by name, it is, to us, rather conspicuous that, when people of the other party say those things, they are not addressed on this floor by name. And so we know that happened.

Again, the way that the Speaker violated the rules of the House, and then a vote was brought to this floor to basically say that those rules don't apply to the Speaker.

If the rules don't apply to the Speaker, then who do they apply to? They ought to apply to all of us equally.

If any of us break the rules of the House and are called out on it and are found by the Chair to be in violation of the rules, then we ought to accept that. We ought not have the vote on the House floor to say, well, the rules apply to some people, but not everybody.

If the rules are in place, they ought to be in place to be enforced equally, not that some in power have an exemption and have a free pass to break those rules.

So if we are going to talk about what we reject, let's be fair and equal about it.

I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I want to go back to this free market and the minimum wage.

The gentleman, Madam Speaker, projects that: Let the free market operate.

We do not allow employers to hire people under a certain age because we want to protect children. I suppose that is interfering with the free market because we know that, throughout the world, we have 8-, 9-, and 10-year-old children being asked to work 10-, 12-, 14-hour days at rudimentary tasks.

□ 1245

Perhaps he believes that we ought to have people work 80, 90 hours a week trying to manage their families and their lives and not have a 40-hour week because of the free market. After all, individuals can decide whether they are going to work 80 or 90 hours a week. We have known that in our history.

Perhaps we ought to have a free market that doesn't worry about whether workers are safe on the job. Whether it is in a mine or a factory, we require places to be safe so that we can protect workers.

We don't believe that undermines the free market system. We think that improves the free market system. So there are rules.

Mr. SCALISE. If I could interject, we share that. That is not an us versus them issue. We agree with those. Obviously, there are some that we disagree with. The ones that the gentleman mentioned are things that we agree with.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, my point to the gentleman is, yes, we think people ought to be paid a decent wage, and we know there are people in our workplace and in our community who have no bargaining power whatsoever. They don't have fancy college educations, and they don't have fancy skills, but they are needed in our economy. They are needed to do things that the community needs done. When you go to a hotel, you hope that bed is made up. You hope the bathrooms are clean. When you go to the grocery store, you hope that the peas and corn have been picked.

We believe that those folks are necessary for our community and need to be paid a decent wage, just as we think they need to be safe. I am glad the gentleman agrees on that. I thought he did.

But my point, Madam Speaker, is that there is an analogy here to safety, to hours, to working conditions, and yes, to wages.

I don't know that the party that the gentleman represents has ever offered an increase in the minimum wage. I am going to check on that. I don't know. Since I have been here, they have not. It has always been us offering the increase.

President George Bush, to his credit, signed the Fair Minimum Wage Act in 2007, which was still less than it was in 1968. As a matter of fact, it is 40 percent less today than it was in 1968. Workers are being paid 40 percent less.

Lastly, I will say, Madam Speaker, one thing our party agrees with is that men and women have a right to come together and bargain collectively for their wages, their working conditions, and their benefits. They need to be on some degree of parity because we know that with big employers, and even small employers, individuals are not on parity. They either do this or don't,

and if there are no rules, then people are subjected, in my view and in my observation, to unfair tactics that they have no defense against other than us.

I say to my friend, I think he and I agree on hours, hopefully, the age at which people can work certain hours, and on safety conditions in workplaces. I am not sure about bargaining collectively in unions. I think they are critical to the creation of a middle class and the maintenance of a strong middle class. We also very strongly believe in the free market system.

I could pick out one or two of your Members who may have some differences of agreement. I won't mention any names, but I can think of some names on the gentleman's side of the aisle. I am sure the gentleman can as well and, in fact, does disagree, from his perspective, with some people on my side of the aisle. But we intend to continue to be very supportive of building jobs.

My friend knows that I have an agenda. I call it Make It In America. It is about growing jobs, growing enterprises, helping entrepreneurs, and making sure that people have good wages and a good future through the free enterprise system.

Mr. SCALISE. Clearly, Madam Speaker, if we talk about what makes this country great, it is the freedoms and the economic success that we have seen for families, businesses, and everybody. It is the reason people come here from all around the world. What we have done to create this great free market system has unleashed potential for anybody to come here and be anything they want to be.

I have been proud to help pass policies that have actually increased wages for families not through government price controls but through economic growth and through giving people more of their money back instead of their having to come to Washington to get an amount or come to a union boss to get the amount that they can earn. They can actually go do it on their own.

It is playing out in reality, not in theory, but in reality, where we are seeing the lowest-income workers benefiting the most from our policies of cutting taxes, not by telling people how much they can make but by letting them go out and make even more on their own.

They are doing it. It is the lower-income people who are benefiting the most from those policies. We ought to encourage more of that.

The unemployment rate amongst African Americans and Hispanics is at the lowest rate in our country's history not through government controls but by cutting taxes and letting them have more of their money, by seeing businesses grow, and by hiring more people.

We are seeing more job openings today than there are people looking for work. That is what is so exciting.

We see that women-owned businesses are up 20 percent over the last few

years because of these conservative policies that I have helped pass.

Yes, when I support right-to-work laws, if a person wants to go work for a company that happens to be in a union-based industry or a union-based State, and they say they don't want dues forced out of their paychecks, to give dues to somebody who believes in things that they don't agree with, they shouldn't be forced to do that. In many places, they are.

I want more individual freedom. I want more ability for people to go out and live that American Dream, to start up their own business in their garage and then one day maybe become a billionaire because there was that opportunity provided to them, not our telling them how much they can make, but our allowing them, in a safe way, the ability to go be the best they can be.

I will use an example because I know the gentleman and I share the belief that people need to be safe in the workplace, and we need to do all we can to ensure that. Look at deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, which is based out of parts of my district. Port Fourchon in Louisiana is the hub of all that deepwater drilling that we saw.

There was the horrible tragedy, the Deepwater Horizon. People died, and the environment was polluted. That was done not because there weren't enough laws in place but because a company broke the laws. A company went around those safety standards that we put in place.

We went and hammered them. We fined them. I passed a bill out of this House in a very bipartisan way called the RESTORE Act that ensured that they pay billions of dollars back to fix the damage that they had done and to hold that company accountable for what they had done. Its purpose was not to shut the whole industry down, because every other company that was out there had done things the right way.

What we saw from the previous administration was a rule that came out called the Well Control Rule that wasn't rooted in safety. After industry did an even better job to put well containment in place so that, if something like that ever happened again, they could quickly move to stop it, instead of government working to help expedite that process, government sat back and waited until industry came up with a better way to solve that problem on their own. Then, it came up with a rule that actually would have undermined the new safety standards they put in place. It would have made it difficult because Washington would have been able to tell them how to manage a well in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico instead of understanding that pressure changes instantly and that they have to be able to respond to it.

Government was setting a standard that would have undermined safety. Luckily, we reversed that Obama-era rule that would have made things less safe.

