

They just say we're going to do it all in cuts. It's an impossible task.

But I worry even though they say they've exempted Social Security that that's not really their game plan. Because for the first time this year, we will borrow money to put into Social Security. Never been done since the program was created. It's always been funded by its own tax.

But this year, the Republicans cooked up an idea—which President Obama bought into lock, stock, and barrel—to reduce the Social Security tax under the guise of giving people back their money and putting people to work. Every Member of Congress will get over \$2,000 in tax breaks this year because of that one provision. Every millionaire and billionaire will get over \$2,000 in tax breaks. Working people will get a tax break, too—and they can use a tax break—but there are better ways to do it, less costly ways to do it, and ways to do it without jeopardizing the future of Social Security.

So part of the borrowing this year, a couple of hundred billion dollars of that borrowing this year is going to be from China, the government will borrow, to reinject into the Social Security trust fund.

So I fear the Republicans are going to say, "Well, wait a minute. We can't subsidize that Social Security thing. And oh, by the way, you can't restore the taxes and run Social Security on its own income." So they're creating some impossible scenarios here.

I'm hopeful the President will chart a better path, one that doesn't go after Social Security. Social Security didn't create, until this year, one penny of the debt of the United States but this year it will create \$200 billion of debt for the United States. A very bad precedent set by a bipartisan problem—the Republicans and President Obama and some few Democrats.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Let's get real about the deficit.

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, as one who is firmly in the camp of not just supporting the benefits but the necessity of government regulation, I nonetheless welcomed the President's recent op-ed in the Wall Street Journal and his executive order to review the regulations we have in place.

This is a unique opportunity to reframe at least part of the regulatory debate to satisfy both sides and better serve the public. The area of opportunity lies in creating a new generation of environmental protections that are performance based. Pioneering efforts to protect the environment, like the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, were regulatory based that

worked well for their time. Public health requirements, citizen expectations have evolved. Subsequent efforts have become more difficult, expensive, and time consuming.

Having these agencies dictate specifics is not necessarily providing the most innovative, timely, nor cost-effective solutions.

There is an alternative to rules-based procedures, command-and-control rules process. Such a model would give latitude to parties on how they comply with the standards for protection as long as they met or exceeded the requirement.

In Oregon, we were able, some years ago, in partnership with the EPA and the State Department of Environmental Quality, to work with a major industrial presence in our community, Intel, on a plant expansion where latitude was granted for air quality compliance. The company made an enforceable commitment to the requisite clean air and environmental regulations, but the environmental agent regulators did not micromanage how the company complied. The result? Clean air with less cost and time.

There are countless opportunities for this principle to save time, money, and create innovation, and importantly, the potential to reduce opposition to the regulatory process itself: building trust and confidence, partnerships between the regulator and the regulated with more control, more flexibility, producing a cleaner, safer environment.

This requires first and foremost an administration that can be trusted to act in good faith because too often, regulatory reform is a tactic of those who are simply opposed to the regulation in its first instance.

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This approach will only invite fierce opposition to watered-down protection. The Obama administration has established its environmental credentials and should be able to avoid, or at least lay to rest, that sort of concern.

There are two other necessary elements. The standards must be clear, and the parties must be both responsible and have the capacity to be held accountable. Nothing must allow the protection in question to be undercut. Indeed, it may be reasonable for performance-based approaches to require higher standards and environmental protection. And we certainly don't have to suspend current rules or regulations. Just give an alternative path for compliance that we can always fall back upon if people fall short.

Once it's clear that we can produce the environmental or other desired protections on a performance basis, perhaps we can tackle redundant regulatory processes. For instance, California has arguably more stringent environmental regulations than the United States Government itself. Can we figure out a way to apply that single, more stringent standard rather

than forcing individuals, government agencies to comply with both?

In sum, it's always helpful for an administration to make sure our efforts at government regulation are effective and relevant. By all means, eliminate the unnecessary or the ineffective. What is more important, however, is to usher in a new era of performance-based protections to improve regulations, save money, and protect the public welfare.

THE BUDGET AND SUSTAINABLE DEFENSE

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

Mr. KUCINICH. As we begin this great debate over what our priorities are, it's worth reflecting on an article that was written nearly 3 years ago in the Sunday Times of London by Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and his associate Linda Bilmes. Here is what they write:

"The Bush administration was wrong about the benefits of the war"—talking about the Iraq war—"and was wrong about the costs of the war. The President and his advisers expected a quick, inexpensive conflict. Instead, we have a war that is costing more than anyone could have imagined.

"The cost of direct U.S. military operations—not even including long-term costs such as taking care of wounded veterans—already exceeds the cost of the 12-year war in Vietnam and is more than double the cost of the Korean War.

"And, even in the best case scenario, these costs are projected to be almost 10 times the cost of the first gulf war, almost a third more than the cost of the Vietnam war, and twice that of the First World War. The only war in our history that cost more was the Second World War, when 16.3 million U.S. troops fought in a campaign lasting 4 years, at a total cost, in 2007 dollars, after adjusting for inflation, of about \$5 trillion."

They go on to write that, "With virtually the entire Armed Forces committed to fighting the Germans and Japanese, the cost per troop, in today's dollars, was less than \$100,000." That's in 2007 dollars. "By contrast, the Iraq war is costing upward of \$400,000 per troop.

"Most Americans have yet to feel these costs." This was written almost 3 years ago. "The price in blood has been paid by our voluntary military and by hired contractors. The price in treasure has, in a sense, been financed entirely by borrowing. Taxes have not been raised to pay for it—in fact, taxes on the rich have actually fallen. Deficit spending gives the illusion that the laws of economics can be repealed, that we can have both guns and butter. But, of course, the laws are not repealed. The costs of the war are real even if they have been deferred, possibly to another generation."