knew that the Tea Party contained so many Manchurian sympathizers who have hidden their proto-internationalist agenda beneath the folds of the Don't Tread on Me flag?

As we have heard, those who would repeal the light bulb efficiency standards believe we are ''taxed enough already.'' Apparently the lowest Federal tax burden in 60 years has left these zealots with extra disposable income, and they want to spend it on inefficient light bulbs. In fact, repeal of the light bulb standards would give Americans the liberty to spend $85 extra per year on light bulbs to produce no additional light. It's hard to understand how ideologues in this House can suggest imposing $85 per year on their constituents in order to buy light bulbs which consume more electricity than necessary.

Those who are baffled by Republican support for this anachronistic incandescent bulb tax may want to refer to the legislative record of the House over the last 7 months. The Republican Party has deviated so far from its historic support for conservation that it now supports legislation that would allow air and water pollution with impunity. The new Republican Caucus supports legislation like the BULB Act, which we dealt with last night, and retrogresses to the time of Thomas Edison and the invention of the light bulb. These Republicans sound like flat earthers, and they must really mean it when they call themselves originalists.

This entire situation would be humorous but for the gravity of the threat our Nation faces, from climate change to the debt puzzle, or the opportunities that we will forgo in the Middle East because this House is distracted by a paranoid attack on light bulbs.

STOP SUBSIDIZING ETHANOL

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, there is much discussion these days about ethanol, and for far too long the Federal Government has been subsidizing ethanol production in a very big way. Three years ago, Time Magazine called ethanol and other energy biofuels the clean energy scam. Yet 3 years later, we are dumping more money than ever into the program. It is time to admit that the ethanol program has been a failure.

A study mentioned in a recent column in the Washington Times said that our ethanol policies, if not changed, will cost American consumers more than $500 billion in the 10 years from 2008 to 2017. According to Time magazine, the biofuel boom is doing the exact opposite of what it was intended to do. The article calls corn ethanol environmentally disastrous.

We went heavily into ethanol because it was supposed to be good for the environment. The very powerful environmental lobby pushed hard on this. Now we have found that it has done more harm than good, even to the environment. This just goes to show that when someone says something is good for the environment, it is usually because they are going to make money off of it or are going to increase contributions to their organization.

I have an even greater concern that hits home with every American. The ethanol program is an economic disaster. We were promised that using ethanol to fuel cars would reduce gas prices. We were told it would reduce our dependence on foreign oil. If you look at the situation today, gas prices are close to $4 a gallon, or even higher some places, and we are still at the mercy of foreign producers to supply most of our oil. The only thing the ethanol program has done is raised the price of groceries.

Hardworking Americans are paying more for milk, meats, and everyday items they need from the grocery store. This is because the price of corn has doubled in less than 2 years. In 2009, corn cost $3.30 a bushel. Today it costs roughly $7 a bushel. When the price of corn increases, it causes a chain reaction. Corn is used to feed livestock, which increases the price of beef and dairy products. Corn syrup is found in everything, from cereal to salad dressing. Nearly everything at the grocery store costs more today than it did just 1 year ago.

To turn corn into ethanol, it takes diesel fuel to run the machines, fertilizer, and months of hard work from farmers. A study by Cornell University estimates that it costs $4.50 to produce 1 gallon of ethanol. A gallon of pure ethanol has only about two-thirds the energy of a gallon of gasoline. Yet like a lot of things we tend do here in Washington, the cost is too high and average Americans are the ones paying for it. In 2010, the Federal Government spent nearly $8 billion to subsidize the ethanol program. That number is probably closer to $12 billion when you count money from State and local governments.

The bottom line is that corn should be used to fuel our bodies, not our cars.

I would like to take a moment to tell you about a friend of mine, Harry Wampler. Harry Wampler is the owner of Wampler's Farm Sausage Company in Lenoir City, Tennessee.

The Wampler family started this company in 1937, one of the great small business success stories in my district. However, in 2010, Wampler's Sausage lost money for the first time. They are now losing money every month.

They are not losing money because all of a sudden they are no longer a great company. They are losing money because the cost of raw materials is far too high. Instead of paying 35 cents a pound for hogs like they did in 2009, they pay more than 50 cents a pound, a more than 40 percent increase in just 2 years—40 percent increase in 2 years. To keep up, meat producers like Wampler's are forced to raise prices in the grocery store.

The reason this is happening is simple. It takes a heck of a lot of corn to produce ethanol. The study I mentioned earlier by Cornell estimated that in 2009, one-third of U.S. corn was used to make ethanol.

□ 1040

That is a lot of corn, but it only reduced America's oil consumption by 1.4 percent. In fact, if we were to take all of the corn produced on American farms and convert it to ethanol, it would replace a mere 4 percent of U.S. oil production—a lot of corn with very little result.

Environmentalists shouldn't be happy with the ethanol program either. In this country and around the world, we are destroying forest wetlands and grasslands to make room to plant more corn. The program doesn't make sense for the economy or the environment, even though it was forced on us primarily by environmentalists.

A lot of politicians are afraid to admit the ethanol program was a mistake because they are afraid to offend the farm lobby, and anyone considering running for President may be afraid to offend corn farmers in Iowa. But, Madam Speaker, we can no longer afford to waste money on this program that does not work.

The Ethanol Program does not solve our energy crisis or eliminate our dependence on foreign oil. The only thing it does is drive up grocery prices for everyone in the country.

DON'T TREAD ON D.C.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor to alert Members who interfere with the local funds of a local jurisdiction, not your own, in this case the District of Columbia, that this year, it will be highlighted in your own district.

The debt limit discussions spotlight our differences, but one idea always has enjoyed the broadest support in this country and in this House. The Federal Government does not interfere with local matters, especially local funds not raised by the Federal Government.

The Framers formed a federal government only after trying a confederation, but it became clear that there were some matters of overarching concern that could be arbitrated only by a true national government. But, they were at great pains to reserve maximum freedom at the local level where people live.

Nothing is more local than the local funds a jurisdiction raises on its own from its own local taxpayers. You raise the funds, you get to say how they will be spent.

The principle applies to all. No second class citizens on local matters, especially local funds, and that includes

the 600,000 residents of the District of Columbia.

Congress ceded its power to run the District of Columbia in 1973 when it passed the Home Rule Act. It still approves the D.C. budget, but it does not change that budget.

Members of Congress, unaccountable to the electorate of the District of Columbia, have no right to use the budget process to direct spending away from matters that may be controversial to you but not to our own local jurisdiction. That is tea party doctrine; that is a principle of the Democratic Party.

License was taken to put controversial attachments on the 2011 budget deal and the world watched as the entire executive and legislative branches of the local government here were arrested in an act of civil disobedience.

This time a coalition of national organizations with millions of members are taking preventive action, and I quote from a letter all of you will receive: ''Should lawmakers continue to advance attacks on D.C.'s autonomy, we will make certain that our members in every district know how their representatives are spending their time in Washington, meddling in the affairs of D.C. residents rather than focusing on the Nation's true pressing business.''

Meddle with D.C.'s local funds, we will pull the covers off in your own districts.

Congress, this year ''don't tread on D.C.''

DEBT CEILING

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, this debt ceiling is starting to feel like déjà vu.

If you think back to 1990, President George Herbert Walker Bush agreed to $2 in spending cuts for every dollar in tax hikes. He agreed to this with the congressional Democrats, but that's not what ended up happening. All of the Democrats' tax hikes went into effect, but the promised spending cuts never materialized. We cannot fall for this trick again, and that's the same trick that we see from the people on the other side, my Democratic colleagues and the President.

Higher taxes do not lead to more government revenue. We have seen proof of this in years past. Instead of raising taxes, let's leave money in the hands of small businesses, the job creators, so that they can create jobs. More jobs means more revenue and less deficit.

Higher taxes means more people out of work and higher debt. In fact, President Obama admitted in 2009 that ''the last thing you want to do in the middle of a recession is raise taxes.''

And, in the past, liberals in Congress have adamantly spoken out in opposition to debt ceiling increases. Then-Senator Obama said in 2006 that a debt limit increase was ''a sign of leadership failure.''

I could not agree more. It's a time for lawmakers to stop talking out of both sides of their mouths and do what is best for the economy, for our Nation, and the American people.

Over the last 10 years we have raised the debt ceiling 16 times. It hasn't worked, and now we are at the end of that road.

We need to try something new so that we can get started actually paying down our enormous debt. We must get our country on an economically viable course and create jobs in the private sector. That's why I have introduced H.R. 2409, the Debt Ceiling Reduction Act, which would lower the debt ceiling to $13 trillion, and that would force politicians in Washington to make the cuts to our budget that our economy so desperately needs and start figuring out how to pay off this unsustainable debt that we have created.

Madam Speaker, I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will cosponsor and support this legislation. It's a great way to both create jobs and to create a stronger economy.

RAISING LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I wish to raise concerns this morning that are international and domestic.

I rise today to ask the question, when will Dr. Assad, the President of Syria, begin to act in a manner that respects the human dignity of the people of Syria. It is a tragedy to watch as the Arab Spring continues in many countries that I have visited and to see one country that one had hoped would realize that a civilized government respects the dignity of its people.

Syrian Americans are crying out and reaching out to Members of Congress and leaders across the Nation to attack this horrific violence that is occurring in Syria: The mutilation of a 13-year-old boy; the slaughter of individuals in the street; and, seemingly, the absolute arrogance of the President of this Nation. Many of us have thought that Dr. Assad, the son of the former president, would recognize that the 21st century does not in any way tolerate the kind of abusive and oppressive leadership that has occurred in the past and that it is high time for the leadership to be vested in the people.

Now, we know that there has been a constant tension and brutality as it relates to Israel and the border and Hezbollah, something that has to be addressed, and I have cried out over and over that the dominance of Hezbollah and Syria must cease as well for any entity that does not recognize the existence of any other State, no matter what the State, and in this instance—Israel, it is an absolute abomination.

But now, in American vernacular, they have added insult to injury, killing their people, blood in the streets, ignoring the international calls. So I am gratified for the stance that we have taken, and I want it to be a stronger stance, a stronger position.

□ 1050

How dare you attack the United States Embassy. How dare you violate international law that allows sovereign nations to exist peacefully among themselves. How dare you confront the United States flag by means of the United States military. How dare you violate the human dignity of your people.

And so I'm calling upon world leaders, the United Nations and all of those who have the responsibility of protecting the human rights of all people to denounce the actions of President Assad, denounce the actions of those violent and abusive people in the streets who are killing their own people, and listen to Syrian Americans who have asked for a peaceful resolution. No, we are not calling for war despite the tragedies in Yemen where the president refuses to step down, the conflicts in Libya where the president refuses to step down, the difficulties in Egypt and on and on and on.

But as for the people of that region, we should take heart in America that they have attempted to create a democratic community and a nation of states. The Arab League needs to speak. And we need to denounce the President of Syria and ask him to step down.

That leads me to America's role, Madam Speaker, in this crisis that has now been made by our Republican friends. To my colleagues, America is not broke. We're not in the same posture as some of our European friends. But we are in a ridiculous posture because there's no way in the world that families who are trying to make ends meet don't also attempt to seek revenues—a new job or a raise or multiple jobs. How many of our families are doing that?

No, we are not raising taxes on the middle class. We are, in fact, trying to establish a quality of life for the middle class in protecting Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare. Don't laugh at those. Those are infrastructures that have allowed senior citizens to live. It has allowed our hospitals to stay open and our doctors to work.

And yet we have, in the other body, an individual who has a ludicrous and absolutely absurd proposal that's not going to give anybody relief—let the President of the United States sign off on the debt ceiling. We haven't even tested whether that is constitutional. In fact, we don't know if the debt ceiling itself is constitutional. And so I'm arguing and begging for leaders of consciousness to sit down and work on behalf of the American people, raise the debt ceiling and stop the foolishness.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair