

to the majority, it isn't worth passing a simple payroll tax cut without eviscerating Americans' health care. In this warped, parallel universe, payroll tax cut extensions must be accompanied by gratuitous measures to punish Federal employees and civil servants like Border Security agents and FBI agents. And, of course, the majority seems singularly incapable of writing any bill, especially at this time of year, Christmas, that doesn't contain several special provisions to benefit the Koch Brothers and Big Oil giveaways.

Sadly, this bill is consistent with the Republican pattern of extortion on behalf of an extreme special interest agenda. After almost shutting down the government, furloughing FAA employees, and blocking the appointment of a director to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and other agencies, now, believe it or not, they are holding tax cuts hostage.

President Obama sent a simple legislative package to Congress: Extend the payroll tax cuts, saving the average American family \$1,500 a year. Extend unemployment insurance benefits to create 1 million jobs and add 1 full percentage of growth to the economy. This very proposal received a majority vote in the Senate but, of course, was blocked by a Republican filibuster. It did what the Republicans say they want to do—cut taxes and grow the economy. Too bad their actions don't match their words.

Based on their rhetoric, one would think that Republicans would support a simple tax cut. That is, after all, their solution to every economic challenge: Cut taxes, especially for millionaires and large corporations. Yet when presented with a simple tax cut bill targeted to help the middle class in America, Republicans rebel and reject it in favor of a piece of special-interest sausage so laden with lobbyist giveaways and ideological poison pills that it would make the author of "The Jungle," Upton Sinclair's, nose turn blue.

The bill before us today slashes unemployment benefits for Virginians in my home State by 38 percent, and it increases Federal employee pension contributions by 63 percent while reducing total pension payments. Federal employees, in other words, will pay more and get less retirement security after a lifetime of public service. For good measure, it extends public servants' pay freeze for a full 5 years. It contains a costly special interest policy rider that will increase oil exports to China and raise American gas prices. It repeals part of the Clean Air Act, allowing polluters to spew forth mercury, arsenic, and other toxic pollutants from industrial boilers. In fact, repeal of this Clean Air Act public health standard will burden the American economy with \$20 billion to \$52 billion in additional health care costs every year.

We must remember what a perilous state the economy is in. Thanks to the

successful Recovery Act and expansionary monetary policy, unemployment has fallen now to 8.6 percent. It would be 8.25 percent except for the fact that Republican policies have led to the loss of over a half-million public sector jobs throughout the United States. The number of underemployed and long-term unemployed Americans has fallen as people have found steady, full-time jobs, and private-sector job growth has been growing every month for 21 consecutive months. We're not out of the woods, but we are making progress.

The Congressional Budget Office, McCain campaign adviser Mark Zandi, and Barclays Bank all estimate that extending unemployment benefits will increase the economy by a full 1 percent and add 1 million jobs. That's because unemployment benefits have a multiplier effect—they are spent as soon as they are gotten. The payroll tax cut, in addition, will provide Americans with an average of \$1,500 per worker, creating some \$250 billion in economic activity and adding 1 full percentage point to the GDP.

The Speaker controls which bills come to the floor of the House. Let's junk this bill and come up with a clean payroll tax extension and unemployment benefits for all Americans, creating jobs and growing this economy.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, at the end of last week, I was able to take to the floor with some of my colleagues to talk about high-level nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain. Part of that time, I wanted to make sure, as I have each week, to highlight certain locations around this country where high-level nuclear waste is stored. Because of time constraints, I wasn't able to do that, so I take to the floor this morning to highlight a nuclear power plant in Florida called Turkey Point.

And the way I do this, Mr. Speaker, is I have this poster in front of me, and I compare the location of high-level nuclear waste at Turkey Point to the defined-by-law location for a single repository in this country, Yucca Mountain.

So look at what we have here. At Yucca Mountain, we have currently no nuclear waste on site. At Turkey Point, there's 1.074 metric tons of spent fuel on site. That's quite a lot of fuel. If we had waste stored at Yucca Mountain, the waste would be stored 1,000 feet underground—Yucca Mountain is a mountain. At Turkey Point, waste is stored above ground in pools. Now why is that an important point to consider? The nuclear catastrophe in Japan, the Fukushima Daiichi plant, part of the major disaster was because of high-level nuclear waste stored in pools. The earthquake occurred and either the water that was there boiled

out or there were cracks in the containment valve and it spilled out, and then the nuclear waste heated up, and hence you have a very dangerous situation still in Japan.

At Yucca Mountain, the waste would be stored 1,000 feet above the water table. But here, at Turkey Point, which is in Florida, the waste is on Biscayne Bay at sea level. So it is at sea level, not in a mountain in a desert.

What we've done also is look at if you are at Yucca Mountain how far are you away from really the largest body of water, which would be the Colorado River? Yucca Mountain is 100 miles from the Colorado River. Turkey Point and the nuclear waste stored there is 10 miles from the Everglades—10 miles from the Everglades.

So we passed—I wasn't a Member of this Chamber at this time—a Federal law called the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982. When we passed that law, we defined Yucca Mountain as the national repository—a single repository for not just nuclear waste from our nuclear power fleet, but also the nuclear waste from our Department of Energy locations from around the country.

Obviously, we are very close, but this administration, along with the NRC Commissioner, has delayed, postponed, and tried to stop any movement on Yucca Mountain. And that's why I take the floor. As the subcommittee chairman of the Energy and Environment Subcommittee, part of my jurisdiction is high-level nuclear waste, and that's why I come to the floor weekly to address this issue.

Now, this is very timely this week, as Chairman Jaczko and the NRC Commissioners are up here before our Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Chairman Jaczko, in an article dated September 7, said, "I welcome debate, I welcome discussion, I welcome criticism." But a letter sent to the Chief of Staff of the White House, Mr. Bill Daley, by the other four Commissioners, bipartisan—two Democrats, two Republicans, three appointed by the President—says this about Chairman Jaczko: He's intimidated and bullied senior career staff to the degree that he has created a high level of fear and anxiety resulting in a chilled work environment. They also say he ordered staff to withhold or modify policy information and recommendations intended for transmission to the Commission. He has also ignored the will of the majority of the Commission, contrary to the statutory functions of the Commission. And he has attempted to intimidate the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards.

This is part of the problem of our not having a national policy to move high-level nuclear waste to a centralized location in a desert underneath a mountain, Yucca Mountain. We have Senators who have voted for that in this area. The two senators from Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama all support it.

UNITED STATES
 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION,
 Washington, DC, October 13, 2011.
 Hon. WILLIAM L. DALEY,
 Chief of Staff, The White House, Washington,
 DC.

DEAR CHIEF OF STAFF DALEY: As individual members of an independent regulatory commission, we all took oaths to execute this agency's nuclear regulatory mission and to uphold the institution's values, including its Principles of Good Regulation. Our obligation is not only to the agency and its staff, but also to the American people. It is from that foundation that we write to express our grave concerns regarding the leadership and management practices exercised by Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Chairman Gregory Jaczko. We believe that his actions and behavior are causing serious damage to this institution and are creating a chilled work environment at the NRC. We are concerned that this will adversely affect the NRC's essential mission to protect the health, safety and security of the American people.

In a long series of very troubling actions taken by Chairman Jaczko, he has undermined the ability of the Commission to function as prescribed by law and decades of successful practice. Since this current Commission was formed some 18 months ago, after the President nominated and the Senate confirmed the three newest members, we have observed that Chairman Jaczko has:

Intimidated and bullied senior career staff to the degree that he has created a high level of fear and anxiety resulting in a chilled work environment;

Ordered staff to withhold or modify policy information and recommendations intended for transmission to the Commission;

Attempted to intimidate the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, a legislatively-chartered independent group of technical advisors, to prevent it from reviewing certain aspects of NRC's analysis of the Fukushima accident;

Ignored the will of the majority of the Commission; contrary to the statutory functions of the Commission; and

Interacted with us, his fellow Commissioners, with such intemperance and disrespect that the Commission no longer functions as effectively as it should.

Recently, on October 5, 2011, Chairman Jaczko appeared as an invited guest at a periodic meeting of the agency's Executive Director for Operations and other senior career executives. According to multiple reports, his comments reflected contempt for the Commission itself and open disdain for the Internal Commission Procedures, a document that embodies governing principles from the NRC's organic legislation—the Energy Reorganization of 1974 and the Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980. These procedures guide the conduct of the work of the Commission.

Over the last 18 months, we have shown Chairman Jaczko considerable deference. Moreover, for the sake of the agency, its staff, and public confidence, we have strived to avoid public displays of disharmony. Unfortunately, our efforts have been received only as encouragement for further transgressions.

We are committed to conduct the work of this agency to the best of our ability and despite the items highlighted above and numerous other troubling actions taken by Chairman Jaczko, we have carried out the work before us and will continue to do so. However, Chairman Jaczko's behavior and management practices have become increasingly problematic and erratic. We believe his conduct as Chairman is inconsistent with the NRC's organizational values and impairs

the effective execution of the agency's mission.

We provided Chairman Jaczko our concerns in the attached memorandum.

Sincerely,

Commissioner KRISTINE L.
 SVINICKI.
 Commissioner WILLIAM D.
 MAGWOOD, IV.
 Commissioner GEORGE
 APOSTOLAKIS.
 Commissioner WILLIAM C.
 OSTENDORFF.

UNITED STATES
 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION,
 Washington, DC, October 13, 2011.
 Memorandum to: Chairman Jaczko.

From Commissioner Svinicki, Commissioner Apostolakis, Commissioner Magwood, Commissioner Ostendorff.

As you know, many of us have, on occasion, taken issue with your interpretation of the relative role of the Chairman and the Commission, the role of the Chairman and the EDO, and your approach to working with the Commission to lead this agency. Over the past year, these issues, linked with your troubling personal approach to interacting with us and the senior staff, have intensified. This is a matter of serious concern. We have responsibilities relating to the Commission and the NRC staff, and we are accountable to Congress and the American people. It is from this foundation that we write to express our grave concern that your leadership and management practices are causing serious damage to this institution.

First, with respect to your relationship with the Commission, it is not uncommon to have some degree of tension between a Chairman and the members of an independent regulatory commission. But in the present case, your intemperate and disrespectful behavior and conduct towards fellow Commission members is completely unacceptable. A few recent examples include your outburst of temper demonstrated by storming out of an agenda planning meeting while a colleague was speaking, yelling at fellow commissioners on the phone, and termination of an NRC staff detailee's assignment to a Commission office without any advance discussion with the affected Commissioner. Although your relationship with Commissioner colleagues has been a serious problem for some time, it has gotten worse in recent months.

Second, your intimidation and bullying of the NRC staff to do things your way has resulted in a work environment with a chilling effect. While you are a champion of openness in Commission deliberations, you have taken steps to discourage open communication between the staff and the Commission. There are a number of recent examples where you or your office directed the staff to withhold certain views from the Commission or strongly criticized the staffs' views. Two recent examples include your direction to the EDO to withdraw the SECY paper on the Fukushima Near Term Task Force Report as well as your strong, ill-tempered criticism of the senior staffs' recommendations in the post-Fukushima "21 day" report. While you have communicated to us that your primary motivation in seeking to remove the EDO is based on his lack of communications with you, due diligence with numerous senior staff indicates that your motivation stems from instances where the EDO did not follow your view on what to present to the Commission as the staff's policy position. This impairs the ability of the Commission to function effectively; furthermore, your view of the role of the EDO is fundamentally contrary to that of the Commission and the way the NRC has functioned over the years.

Third, we are shocked to have received numerous reports from NRC senior staff about your remarks at the October 5 Senior Leadership Meeting. Your comments have been interpreted by those present not only to reflect your disdain for the Internal Commission Procedures, but also your contempt for the Commission. Your remarks to the NRC senior staff undermine the entire Commission. This conduct is of grave concern to us and is absolutely unacceptable.

In response to this persistent situation, we have decided to transmit the attached letter to the White House Chief of Staff to notify him of our serious concerns. We recognize that this is an extraordinary step, but do not believe that you have left us with viable alternatives.

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THE MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2011

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition of H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. This bill is yet another example of Republicans bringing a partisan bill to the floor which has no chance of becoming law.

At this critical time in our economy, Republicans are continuing to pursue their own ideological agenda. Time and again, Republicans continue to choose brinksmanship over constructive engagement with Democrats. Allowing these extensions to expire would have a devastating impact on our economic growth and job creation.

Republicans must put aside partisan differences and work with Democrats so that we can assist millions of Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Putting money in the pockets of American families should be one of our top priorities. It just seems like common sense.

Although H.R. 3630 extends the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program until January 2013, it also lowers the amount of time benefits are provided from 99 weeks currently to 59 weeks. Furthermore, the bill also would allow States to require a high school diploma or being enrolled in classes for a GED to be eligible for benefits. The bill also offsets the cost by freezing Federal employee pay for another year through 2013.

Although recent data has shown that the national unemployment rate has dropped to 8.6 percent, the African American unemployment rate rose at the same time from 15.1 percent to 15.5 percent. High African American unemployment rates are a direct result of the high job loss in the public sector. During the past year, while the private sector has added 1.6 million jobs, State and local governments have shed at least 142,000 positions.

Because traditionally there has been racial discrimination in employment, blacks have relied on government jobs in large numbers since the Reconstruction era. As a matter of fact, one of the