

Finally, it is critical to remember that the end of the Iraq War does not mean we are a Nation at peace. The war in Afghanistan lingers on, violently and senselessly, still undermining our national security and weakening our country. We must, Mr. Speaker, move more quickly than ever to end that conflict.

It is time to bring our troops home, all of our troops, safely home, now.

ADMINISTRATIVE OVER-REGULATION

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to follow my friend and colleague from California who's retiring at the end of the Congress, which is another year. Even though we disagree probably too many times to count, no one questions her passion and her commitment, and her moral consciousness of doing the right thing. So give me a chance to publicly state that, and I look forward to serving with you in the final year together.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to read a letter from a businessman in southwestern Illinois who is closing up the business.

But even more timely than that was a Wall Street Journal editorial today. I mean, I was bringing the letter down anyway, so then I decided, looking at the Wall Street Journal editorial. And it's titled, "Regulation For Dummies." The White House says its rulemaking isn't costly or unusual. The evidence shows otherwise.

First paragraph. "The White House is on the political offensive, and one of its chief claims is that it isn't the over-regulator of business and Republican lore. This line has been picked up by an impressionable columnist, so it's a good time to consider the evidence in some detail." So they go through the analysis.

It ends up by saying the evidence is so overwhelming that the Obama regulatory surge is one reason the current economic recovery has been so lackluster by historical standards. Rather than nurture an economy trying to rebuild confidence after the financial heart attack, the administration pushed through its now famous blitz of liberal policies on health care, financial services, energy, housing, education, and student loans, telecom, labor relations, transportation, and probably some other industries we've forgotten. Anyone who thinks this has only minimal impact on business has never been in business.

Now, the column was dated December 14. This letter was dated December 7.

"You are the finest customer that we have served or you are one of the finest professionals that have served these customers.

"After 61 years, of which 58 were wonderful years in the construction business and having been associated

with the greatest of people, it's with much sadness and disappointment that we have to announce that we will be closing December 31, 2011.

"You all know that we served the private sector. We've enjoyed working with industry, aviation, and all private businesses and entrepreneurs. We always felt that you were the pulse of the whole USA. It's sad to say that, through no fault of yours, that this pulse has slowed to a level that can no longer sustain the quality of service we have always felt obligated and more desired to provide.

"Our government is wonderful in that it provides for our common defense, our highway infrastructures and a few other worthy endeavors. However, they are, in fact an expense, an expense that we should enjoy funding. Though when they lose sight of the true fact that we in the private enterprise pay the bills and do not support an environment in which we can flourish with the fruits of our hard work, the funding will soon cease to exist.

"Government cannot produce revenue or prosperity, but they, like us, could enjoy both if they look at themselves as any other hired service organization that has to be worth the money they are getting paid. That's the way all of us have to operate and what gives us pride in what we do.

"God bless you. Thank you. And we pray that we all find American leadership to restore the pulse and pressure of the great private sector and the American Entrepreneur again. You are the Heartbeat of America. Again, God bless you."

And so, these two written, one column, one letter, occurring simultaneously almost, highlighting the point that it is this regulatory regime pushed on by the executive branch that is, if not outright destroying jobs, it's making it very difficult for jobs to flourish. That's why in the bill last night we moved the Keystone XL pipeline, connected with the Boiler MACT. That's why we've done some other bills to, at least legislatively, put barriers into the excesses of the regulatory regime here from the executive branch.

Mr. Speaker, I think this was timely to come down to the floor and share this letter, and I thank you for the time.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 12 noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 58 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 12 noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

You have blessed us with all good gifts, and with thankful hearts we express our gratitude. You have created us with opportunities to serve other people in their need, to share together in respect and affection, and to be faithful in the responsibilities we have been given.

We wish to acknowledge before You, O God, the sacrifice of so many American men and women and many allies during many years of our commitments in Iraq. We thank them, and You, for their service and ask for Your continued blessing upon them as they now live into a future more secure because of their efforts.

In this moment of prayer, please grant to the Members of this people's House the gifts of wisdom and discernment, that in their words and actions they will do justice, love with mercy, and walk humbly with You.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GRAVES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2845. An act to amend title 49, United States Code, to provide for enhanced safety and environmental protection in pipeline transportation, to provide for enhanced reliability in the transportation of the Nation's energy products by pipeline, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2867. An act to reauthorize the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, and for other purposes.