

in the backdrop of a horrific tragedy that we are all reminded of in the loss of Americans in what continues to be an attack on our values. That's why it's important for us to shed all that partisanship leads to and the lack of bringing forth bills that would help all of America.

So I am here this morning to remind us of work yet undone, that we just had 61 bills that have been signed into law this year, the fewest in more than 60 years. In all of 2011, only 90 bills were signed into law. And so we know in the last session, the 111th Congress, 258 bills were signed into law. We have got to do better. And the most difficult thing that I rise and speak about is the lack of presenting on the floor of the House the President's jobs bill, the American Jobs Act, that would invest in small business, that would create an opportunity for those who have lost their unemployment to be extended, to create summer jobs and part-time jobs, to be able to ensure that there is job training, and to make sure that we say to America: we are your partner in job creation. Why haven't we been able to overcome those who would stand in the way on the other side of the aisle for putting forth the American Jobs Act? It is to help the American people.

We have not been able to tackle, if you will, postal reform. Those are jobs. Those are people who work to make America's commerce travel from place to place. I have spoken to small businesses, and they say the U.S. Postal Service is their lifeline for their small business. They can actually make a profit by using the U.S. Postal Service. Senior citizens who receive their Social Security checks, sometimes in the mail, many times we know online, but are connected to the post office. They're connected to the letter carriers. They're connected to the local post office in their neighborhood. How do I know? Because of the outpouring of concern for the closing of a post office on Mesa Road in the 18th Congressional District, my congressional district.

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So I am interested in this Congress not being known by the do-nothing Congress, do-nothing Republican Congress. I want us to work together and be able to say that these items need to be put forward for the American people. What do we have to say, now looking toward sequestration? We realize that you cannot cut discretionary funding. We realize that 50 million Americans are suffering from food insecurity, and we have a \$13 to \$16 billion cut in the supplemental nutritional program. That simply cannot be. That cannot be the record of this Congress. No jobs, no postal reform, cutting food that people need, and, of course, starving down at our men and women in the United States military where resources that they need may be cut.

So I am asking that we may be reminded that there are those who have

written, Norm Ornstein and Thomas Mann, that in studying Washington politics in Congress for more than 4 years, this is their quote, they have never seen such a dysfunctional place. We can do better. We must do better.

Democrats are ready to work to pass the American jobs bill, to pass postal reform, to pass bills dealing with helping to improve the lives of Americans, to ensuring that no American goes to bed hungry, and that we welcome our troops home and provide for their families. That's the Congress that we should be known for. That's what America is all about.

I ask that God blesses this Nation, but this Congress recognize that we have to be busy until He comes. Let's get busy for the American people. Democrats are busy and want to work to succeed to do what is right for America.

VOICE OF TEXAS, JEFFREY FROM LEAGUE CITY, TEXAS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Texans have been sharing with me their stories and lives about their businesses that they have built without the help of an out-of-control government. The responses were a testament to the tenacity of the American people.

Jeffrey, from League City, Texas, wrote me this:

I am the son of a single mother. I grew up watching my mom work two and sometimes three jobs to support us. She never took one penny of government assistance.

When I was 8 years old, I lied about my age and took three paper routes that had morning/evening and Sunday delivery.

At the age of 11, I took a job as a short-order cook at a 24-hour diner working from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., went to school, played sports, went home, grabbed a quick dinner, slept for a few hours, and went back to work.

I did my homework while standing over a grill in the kitchen.

In the summer months, I would squeeze in a second job working in a service station.

I went into the Marine Corps upon high school graduation at the age of 17. I spent 6½ years in the military.

Upon being honorably discharged, I entered the Houston Police Academy. I have been an officer in Houston, Texas, for the past 27½ years. I worked 17 years undercover in the narcotics division, the rest has been in patrol.

My wife is an educator. We have two sons, a 19-year-old Lance Corporal in the Marine Corps on his way to Afghanistan and a 7-year-old. We live day to day, paycheck to paycheck, and are on the verge of losing everything if our taxes go up along with the cost of living.

Meanwhile, I see folks on government (giveaway programs) with Smart phones, flat screen TVs and newer cars than I can afford, cable TV, and Internet, and living in nicer apartments than I could afford while I was trying to save 17 years for my first house.

Sir, my family and I have built this life. Don't tell me that government built this life for me. That is a lie.

Mr. Speaker, Jeffrey is not alone. Contrary to the misinformed views of

some, the American people are the backbone of this Nation, not government. Government is not the solution. It's the problem. Government encourages some Americans to live off the hard work of others. Government promotes a social philosophy that it will give away more free stuff to some while it takes and punishes people who work.

People, not government, take business risks. People work and make sacrifices in an effort to pursue the American Dream, and people, not government, suffer the loss if the business is not a success. But Big Government wants to take credit for what American workers have done.

Government doesn't make America, Mr. Speaker. People make America.

And that's just the way it is.

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the Speaker.

About 27 miles away from here, secret negotiations are ongoing. A number of us have asked to be allowed to observe the negotiations because it will have a dramatic impact on the future of the United States of America and our economy, but no Member of Congress has been allowed into these negotiations. This is over something called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It's essentially NAFTA for the whole Pacific Rim.

Now, imagine how well that's going to work. NAFTA, of course, has cost the U.S. hundreds of thousands of jobs in many industries.

Now, this is a new agreement, a new forum, the President has put his stamp on it, it is called a living agreement, meaning it's being negotiated among a small number of relatively small countries, but the U.S. is running the show. But later on, other countries, like Japan and China, can plug in.

We know very little about what's being negotiated because, again, the documents are all kept secret from Members of Congress. They have been shared, however, with 600 corporations who, at the click of a mouse, can access them through a secure site online. But yet no Member of Congress is allowed to see these documents, no one representing the American people.

Now, the problem is that we have had some leaks, and the analysis is if Japan is allowed to join, and the U.S. is trying to get Japan to join, we'll lose 90,000 automotive jobs immediately. This is yet another example of failed trade policy of the United States of America.

It is also rumored—again remember, no elected representative of the American people is allowed to view these documents which 600 U.S. corporations are allowed to review and annotate and make suggestions on—that it would have intellectual property restrictions that would far exceed those that were