

a better proposal. The Republican bill has a cap in terms of how high these rates can go over time. The President's does not.

We need, obviously, to get both sides to come together and come up with a real compromise which comes up with an affordable, sustainable way for the Stafford student loan program to work. With only 5 days to go, I would argue that the better course now is just protect the lower rate, give us some time to come up with, again, overlapping good ideas from both sides of the aisle to fix this problem.

Let's not let the rates double. Let's pass H.R. 1595. Let's help 7.5 million college students pursue their goals and dreams and help the U.S. economy.

SYRIA—ANOTHER GUNRUNNING OPERATION BY UNCLE SAM

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there is a civil war raging in Syria. No question about it, President Assad is a bad guy. He hates Israel and he hates his own people. The humanitarian situation in Syria is dire. I have been to Syrian refugee camps in Turkey and seen firsthand the devastation of this war. In one camp I went to, there were 150,000 Syrians in Turkey fleeing from the devastation of war.

However, there are numerous rebel groups trying to remove Assad from power. Who exactly are these rebels? We really don't know. But we do know the most powerful among them is al Nusra, an affiliate of al Qaeda. These extremists on both sides are killing each other in the name of religion, and the people of Syria are caught in the middle.

Lining up on President Assad's side are the nations of Russia and Iran; also, the terrorist group Hezbollah, of course, sponsored by Iran. Lining up on the so-called rebels' side are Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and numerous rebel groups from patriots to criminals to al Qaeda and outside mercenaries.

For 2 years, the United States has just ignored the situation; but now, suddenly, the administration has decided it's time to get involved. The administration's answer: send the rebels American guns. Send the rebels American guns? Blindly traffic American guns into Syria and, I guess, hope for the best.

Does this sound familiar, Mr. Speaker? We've tried this before. We've seen this song and dance in Libya and even in Mexico, our neighbor. This administration is gun-happy to give guns away. In Libya, the administration armed the rebel group to oust Muammar Qadhafi, another bad guy. Well, where are those guns now? Were they used in Benghazi? Who knows. The administration is still silent on Benghazi. Those guns are scattered all over the Middle East and in north Africa.

Were they used in Algeria? Remember, Mr. Speaker, in Algeria there were

Americans working at an energy plant there, along with other citizens from other countries. Two Americans were killed in that attack. Were they also used in Mali? Who knows. Only time will tell. And who has died because these weapons end up in the wrong hands every time we give American guns away to rebel groups?

By providing weapons to radical sectors fighting against Assad, we're really taking sides in somebody else's war. We're also arming some radicals who seek to destroy us, like al Qaeda, who is fighting on the side of rebels. More weapons will only escalate this conflict. More people are going to die because the United States picks sides.

But Syria and Libya are not the first time this administration blindly trafficked weapons to terrorists. Let's go back to our own hemisphere. Let's talk about our neighbor, Mexico. Do you remember Operation Fast and Furious? We still haven't gotten answers on that scandal.

In an effort to help fight the drug cartels, the administration sent thousands of weapons to Mexico without even telling the Mexican Government. And who got those weapons? The drug cartels.

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Of course these guns ended up in the hands of the terrorists—the narco-terrorists—and resulted in the death of at least two or three Americans and hundreds of Mexican nationals. Another botched gunrunning operation sponsored by the U.S. Government.

Too bad we don't learn from history and stop this nonsense of furnishing guns to groups in somebody else's country. Did we implement universal background checks on the violent criminals we armed in Syria, Libya and Mexico? Yeah, right. Is this the new foreign policy of the United States—international weapons trafficking?

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, this administration is on a tireless crusade to ban guns in the United States. Mr. Speaker, why is the White House so determined on disarming Americans while arming known potential terrorists, bandits, drug lords and mercenaries? Irony, don't you think? But that's a different issue for a different day.

And I ask this question: What is the national security interest of the United States to be involved in Syria, in somebody else's civil war? There is none. This is not our war.

Mr. Speaker, this is a regional religious war that we should not be involved in. It's a war between the Sunnis and the Shias. These two religious groups have been fighting each other since the year 630, and now we're involved in this regional, religious war. What's next? Is the administration going to propose and implement a no-fly zone? Well, if this occurs, I believe the President must ask for congressional approval under the War Powers Act.

Almost 100,000 Syrians are dead.

No question, the U.S. should help with humanitarian aid.

The U.S. should work for a political solution, not a military solution.

But the Administration's policy seems to be traffic guns to third world countries and subversives and hope for the best.

However, recent history has shown this is a bad idea.

This is a dangerous foreign policy.

What area of the world is next for our gun running government?

Wait and see.

And that's just the way it is.

WAR POWERS ACT

(IN PART)

50 USC §1541—Purpose and policy

(a) Congressional declaration

It is the purpose of this chapter to fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States and insure that the collective judgment of both the Congress and the President will apply to the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, and to the continued use of such forces in hostilities or in such situations.

(b) Congressional legislative power under necessary and proper clause

Under article I, section 8, of the Constitution, it is specifically provided that the Congress shall have the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution, not only its own powers but also all other powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any department or officer hereof.

(c) Presidential executive power as Commander-in-Chief; limitation

The constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief to introduce United States Armed Forces into hostilities, or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, are exercised only pursuant to

(1) a declaration of war,

(2) specific statutory authorization, or

(3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its armed forces

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, having traveled home this weekend and listened to so many back in my district concerned about the lack of solutions and the lack of effort on behalf of the United States Congress to get things done, I told them to take heart, that sometimes these things are difficult. And I added:

What if I tell you that we could deal with the rising cost of health care, we could bring down the national debt, and do it all by providing better quality, coordinated, and patient-centered care? That would be a good goal, they surmised.

And what if I told you we could do this without raising taxes or cutting Medicare benefits? And what if I told you that all of this notion began from the seeds of an idea that was an outgrowth from the Heritage Foundation,