

businesses of its community, and the Minnesota National Guard have helped ensure that our military members and their families have a strong support structure at home in their community.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is a unique program formed by the Minnesota National Guard to support the thousands of servicemembers who have served Minnesota since 9/11. It provides resources and training to servicemembers and their families before, during, and after their deployment, helping them find jobs and integrate back into their community.

As a Yellow Ribbon city, Maple Grove has gone above and beyond in supporting our troops and delivering a compassionate attitude to the many men and women who serve this great country, ensuring that our military members, when they come home, they come all the way home.

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RELEASE BAHRAINI PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the plight of Mahdi Abu Dheeb. Mahdi Abu Dheeb is the founder of the Bahrain Teachers Association and was arrested after taking part in pro-democracy protests in 2011. For this so-called crime, he was tortured and sentenced to 5 years in prison by a military court.

As a member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I call for the immediate release of Abu Dheeb and all of the prisoners of conscience. Mahdi Abu Dheeb is a nonviolent activist imprisoned for his beliefs. His release would send a message that the Bahraini government cares about freedom, prosperity, and justice for all of its citizens.

THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF GOVERNMENT TRACKS CITIZEN MOVEMENT THROUGH LICENSE PLATE SURVEILLANCE

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, government agencies have been keeping track of Americans' whereabouts by amassing databases of millions of our license plates by using license plate scanners. The information captures data on movements of innocent American citizens going about their daily lives.

Unbeknown to Americans, government technology records our movement from the time we get in our car in the morning to every place we stop during the day, to the time we drive home. Plus, this data can be stored indefinitely.

This reminds me of the days when I was in the Soviet Union and saw how government spied on its citizens constantly. Do we really want a government to have the authority to record us anywhere we go during the day or during the night?

When you go to work, to lunch, to the barber shop, to the airport, to the movies, to the post office, to the banker, to the shopping center, to the car repair shop, to business meetings, to vacations, the parks, to the pool, to grandma's house, to church, to the grocery, to a friend's house, to the hospital, et cetera?

We know by recent experience, abusive government cannot be trusted with dragnet information data files it collects on Americans.

To me, freedom includes government not keeping personal daily logs on individuals and their activities. None of these activities are the government's business.

The Right of Privacy and the Right to be Left Alone include the right to keep snooping government surveillance out of our lives.

And that's just the way it is.

TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

(Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, I am very concerned about the so-called "zero option" that was floated by the President.

Hundreds of thousands have fought for a victory for the Afghan people; and on the eve of victory for the Afghan people, the President is floating the option of no troops post-2014. I ask, Is the Taliban cheering that discussion, or are they scared of it? I would say that they are cheering the idea of no U.S. troops.

Sixty percent of the Afghan people are under the age of 20. It is a new society. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that we are on the verge of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. I would call on the President to announce a smaller post-2014 force and send a message to the Taliban that we will not back down and you will never rule Afghanistan again.

SOLUTIONS FOR OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to have the opportunity tonight to be here in this Chamber with so many of our colleagues, either to discuss solutions—solutions for our country, solutions for our economy—and I am just going to invite my colleagues to participation in the conversation as they see fit.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just point out to you that we have reached out to our constituents about this leadership hour tonight on Twitter using #4jobs; and, Mr. Speaker, we are hopeful that tonight during this hour, we will continue that conversation with our constituents at #4jobs.

I have a lot of comments from my constituents back home that I'm eager to share as we go through this hour. I want to point out what many of you may have already read, and that is that the President has stated that he plans to pivot, once again, back to jobs and the economy. I thought, well, that's great news. That's what we have been pushing here. Many of you have seen us carrying around our laminated cards that talk about all of the jobs bills that we've passed in this Congress and, last, trying to promote economic growth in this country, to help get hardworking, taxpaying Americans back to work.

But I lost my enthusiasm when buried in that article was the President's statement: White House officials said three speeches will not offer new proposals or approaches.

So we're going to pivot back to jobs and the economy, but we have no new approaches and we have no new ideas. That to me is a pivoting of message and not a pivoting of policy. We are watching, and all of us have stories of going back home to our constituents and meeting with American families that continue to struggle. The rhetoric that we all feel is not helping the reality of the situation of the people that we were sent here to represent.

We are not losing faith; the American people are not losing faith because the President's message isn't working. They are losing faith because his policies aren't working. I'm the first to say that we've got to quit doing a lot of this pointing fingers, so I'm hopeful that tonight we can have this conversation, and I have some solutions that I'd like to put out there. You can't criticize without coming behind it and offering a solution. We've continuously done that in this House and will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. I thank the gentlelady from Alabama for organizing this. It is great to be joined with you on this very important subject, the idea that over 7.5 percent of our fellow neighbors—and by the way, the President's own State of Illinois, it's higher than 7.5 percent. If you want to see what Big Government is going to eventually do, just look in my home State. You're going to see people that are desperately searching for work, that wake up every day just wondering if they are going to get a paycheck. If they have a job, they're wondering, Is this the last day? Am I going to go into work today and get that pink slip? Am I going to go into work today and have to tell my wife or husband or kids that we're going to have to tighten the belt because dad or mom just lost their job?

Illinois has been hit very hard. The reason Illinois has been hit very hard is not because it is cold. It is cold in Illinois sometimes in the winter, and my friend from Colorado can talk about that, too. It's not because it's flat, although parts of Illinois are very flat. Illinois, in fact, used to be and still maintains some edge, but used to be the powerhouse for manufacturing in the country, but we've seen the disappearing of manufacturing. And in the bipartisan spirit of not trying to point too many fingers, I'll say that's happened under all administrations, where we've seen manufacturing leave. But the one difference between Illinois and what we've seen, and the States that surround us, is a big, stifling, bloated, bureaucratic government, a government that is so big it takes away the opportunity for the free market to breathe.

Mr. Speaker, I understand, and I'll be the first to admit that my party, the Republican Party, has not done a great job of messaging. I think that's the understatement of the century. Sometimes we get absorbed in the idea of numbers, and we talk about what it means to balance the budget, but we don't explain why we want to balance the budget. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about the middle class and those in lower incomes.

My father ran a homeless shelter, and he did this for a couple of decades. I was raised in an environment to understand conservatism and how that works with those who are homeless and down and out. My mom is a public schoolteacher. I understand the importance of public education in our society. And I understand that I became a Republican because I believe that a kid born in inner-city Chicago just 40 or 50 minutes from my house should have the same opportunity as a kid born in Channahon, Illinois, where I live, or Inverness, Illinois, a wealthy suburb. They should have every opportunity to find personal achievement to get an education and be successful.

I look forward to having this conversation and talking about the fact that there is a compassion for those who need help and the fact that too many people are out of work today.

I know my colleague from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) would like to say some things.

Mr. GARDNER. I thank my colleague from Illinois and the gentlelady from Alabama for her leadership and the things we truly need to get under control in order to build better lives for our families and families across this Nation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time tonight. I know the gentleman from Illinois said that his district is flat. I think I'll surprise a lot of people when I say that I represent the second largest geographic area in the State of Colorado in Congress and most of my district is flat as well, so I understand what the gentleman is talking about when he talks about vast areas of great flat land in the high plains of Colorado.

When we got elected in 2010, the three of us here tonight, who all got elected in 2010 because we wanted to find a way to make America work again, to empower people around this country, whether it was the inner cities of our biggest areas, to people in rural areas across Colorado and this Nation, empower them to build the life that they always wanted to, to pursue their dreams, to ensure that the American spirit is alive and well. I think most of us recognize that we do that when we give people the power to do that for themselves, to get government out of the way and let America work, to tear down regulations that prevent job creation, to help make sure that access to capital is easier, not more difficult, that energy is more affordable and not more costly. And over the past couple of years, we have pursued policies to do just that.

In fact, this upcoming week, we will be voting on legislation to ensure that energy policies don't drive up the cost that it takes to power our economy, but to ensure we have a safeguard over regulations that cost too much, to make sure that the Department of Energy is paying attention to what is happening at the EPA in terms of regulations.

We've passed legislation to make it easier for people in small dollar amounts to loan money to their neighbors, to their friends, to invest in businesses that they're excited about, to try to tear down hurdles to invest at the individual level. You don't need a stockbroker down on Wall Street to figure out how to get involved in the American economy. We've passed legislation that allows individuals to get involved at the very start-up level of companies, innovators and entrepreneurs around this country. We did it because we know there are people who have incredible ideas of how to create opportunity, incredible ideas of how to create new wealth where none existed before.

In my district, whether it's agriculture, whether it's energy, or whether it's high tech, entrepreneurs are leading this Nation. And I know the gentlelady from Alabama and the gentleman from Illinois have similar experiences. We talk tonight about what we can do for this country and legislation that we will be introducing. But we will also be talking about the impediments we have to a full, healthy, economic recovery, and that's the President's plan.

While the President talks a lot about the economy, and I hear that he's going to be talking once again about the economy, but, unfortunately, his actions haven't matched up and the people in this country are still suffering.

Mrs. ROBY. Like I mentioned at the beginning, buried in that article is when the President gives these speeches over the course of the next few days, there will be no new approaches or ideas. I also said that we can't stand

here and criticize without offering our own recommendations about how we can do this better and how we feel like we have done it better and offered real solutions for hardworking Americans.

I wanted to compare some of the things that we've done with what I am hearing directly from my constituents. Tonight, Mr. Speaker, specifically we wanted to communicate with our constituents using #4jobs. These are some of the comments that we've gotten.

Chris Ray from Prattville, Alabama says:

No business is going to risk hiring full-time employees like they did in the past because they will have to provide health care due to ObamaCare. Change that and address the widening skill gap, and I think businesses will begin to hire en masse. So it's a regulation problem and an education problem, in my opinion.

That's from Chris Ray from Prattville.

Well, let's look at our approach and how that matches up with the concerns of our constituents. Instead of pivoting back to no new ideas, because we remain focused on jobs and the economy, let's pivot away from ObamaCare to patient-centered health care that actually improves health care, brings down the cost, takes a market approach to help struggling families, and makes it harder for small businesses to hire; a health care system that ensures when you are sick, you and your doctor are in the driver's seat and making the decisions.

And then to address the concerns of Mr. Ray from Prattville, Alabama, about overburdensome regulations, we want to pivot again back to all these bills that we have offered that ease burdensome regulations so that businesses are free to expand and invest and hire so more people have good jobs.

Okay, so what regulations? I can look at any one of you and you could say, Keystone pipeline, the hindrance of allowing that to move forward; replacement to the health care law. I had a bill, the Working Families Flexibility Act, that amended part of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a 70-year-old restriction that doesn't allow compensatory time in lieu of cash payments for overtime in the private sector which would help these very Americans that we're talking about, about providing flexibility in the workforce and all of the uncertainty that we see. We have stood on this floor many times talking about testimonials that we have heard directly from business owners.

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And it just never ceases to amaze me that we're having these discussions here. But we're all about to go home in August, and I would love to hear from even our colleagues on the other side of the aisle about what they're hearing from their businesses. Do they feel certainty? Do they feel like they can ramp things up and hire more people in this uncertain environment with all of this overburdensome regulation that we're

trying so hard to ease so more Americans can have jobs?

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. I just would like to add to that.

So, you know, we talked about regulations, and I know, look, the vast majority of Americans, myself included, are not small business owners. And so the vast majority of Americans can listen to this and say, I understand in theory what's being said, but it's not something I necessarily feel.

So let's try to put this in a way that I think a lot of people can relate to. If you're looking at buying a house, now, you have a big decision to make. You're ready to buy a new house. You've got a family you're providing for. You know what your budget is, what you can afford on a mortgage. You know what you can afford for your property taxes.

But let's say there's a lot of government uncertainty out there. Let's say, first off, you may not have a job in 6 months because of this economy. You may be saying, Boy, I just don't know what my cash flow is going to be like, and I don't know if it's going to be there.

Well, let's relate that to the bigger economy. These companies don't necessarily know what's going to be brought and put before them by Washington, D.C., what it's going to cost them.

Let's say your local government was threatening to raise property taxes in a major way. Well, now that comes into play.

Let's say there was a threat of losing your home mortgage interest deduction, and so, as you put that into play and you're trying to decide "Do I buy this house?" now that's a threat.

And you watch the television, and all over the television the idea is homes are collapsing in value. We remember that from a few years ago. That's uncertainty. That's the kind of uncertainty that every day Americans feel, the kind of uncertainty that you wake up sometimes in a cold sweat because you don't necessarily know what the next month is going to look like.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's our point is take that uncertainty that an individual feels, but now put that on a bigger level of a business owner, a business owner who sometimes is the last person to get paid because they sign everybody else's paycheck first.

And sometimes these small business owners are literally in tears at night. They're in bed; they don't know whether they can make payroll. They know they have 5 or 10 people that are relying on them to provide that paycheck because they have families, too. That's a lot of pressure.

So we're not talking about making businesses not pay taxes. We're not talking about getting rid of all regulations and letting this be the Wild West of business, but we're talking about creating a level of certainty that these businesses can plan, and they can begin to know what they can do and take a deep breath and create jobs.

Mrs. ROBY. I want to share something that I posted on Facebook last week, and it was an article. Many of you may have seen it, but it was in *The Washington Post* last Wednesday, and this is what I wrote:

If you've ever wondered just how ridiculous Federal regulations can be, just ask Marty the Magician. This front-page *Washington Post* article tells the story about how USDA regulators required a children's magician to license his trick rabbit and even compile an animal disaster plan to comply with the Federal mandates. It's a light-hearted tale, but the rabbit trail of regulations Marty was forced to navigate illustrates a lesson in one of Washington's bad old habits: the tendency to pile new rules on top of old ones, with officials using good intentions and vague laws to expand the outrage of the total bureaucracy.

If you haven't seen that, I strongly encourage you to get online and find a copy of it. It is a funny story, but it's really sad at the same time because it shows and highlights exactly what you're talking about for a guy that just wants to pull a rabbit out of a hat for some kids at a birthday party.

Mr. GARDNER. I've talked to countless individuals, business owners, people who wanted to start a business, that talked about what it took for them to get started. Some of them maxed out every credit card that they had. They applied for more credit cards just so they could max out to try to get the business off the ground.

Others are looking at it, saying, you know, I've got some great ideas where we could grow, we could expand, or I could even start my own business, but I can't do that because we don't have the ability or the means to do that.

But to your point about the USDA requiring a license of somebody's rabbit, *The Wall Street Journal* recently talked about a Competitive Enterprise Institute study estimating that Federal regulations cost over \$1.8 trillion. Now, that's nearly \$15,000 for every American household, \$15,000 that, before you can start your business, before you do anything else, is already built into the cost of doing business. That's already part of the factor you have to overcome the regulations. \$1.8 trillion, that's about the same size as Canada's GDP, the gross domestic product of Canada.

We are regulating this country to the size of Canada's gross domestic product; and yet we're hoping to solve our unemployment problem by getting people to put it all on the line and risk their houses, their lives to go out and start something, to go out and take a risk, and yet we have regulations, \$15,000 every household.

How can we expect this economy to recover when we have the uncertainty, whether it's the President's health care bill, whether it's uncertainty over energy regulations, coal ash bills that we'll be dealing with this week, or, indeed, licensing a rabbit at USDA?

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. I understand that. And look, as we go forward, you hear the rhetoric a lot; right? I mean, the House of Representatives is filled with rhetoric; right? It's probably been like that since the day it was built and the day it was created.

Some of the rhetoric I've heard is that our party only cares about big business, that we only care about the 1 percent. Recently, we talked about taking food from the mouths of children; right? We heard about that.

Any sane, reasonable person knows that's not the case. Any sane, reasonable person knows, look, both sides of the aisle are very passionate about the future of the country; they want success. I think it's okay to have a conversation about how we get there.

I believe that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want their country to be successful. I think if we can hear that they also agree that we want our country to be successful and we can have this conversation, this is so helpful.

Now, let me ask, in that vein, in having a fair and honest debate about this, let's see what the President's plans are. I mean, we hear constantly more and more stimulus spending.

Do you realize that the last stimulus bill that was really passed at midnight, basically, with a lot of Christmas tree ornaments for everybody to get "yes" votes, and only about 6 percent of that actually went to infrastructure, which is the job of the Federal Government in the first place; it's denoted in the Constitution. But, you know, interestingly to me, we spent, in one night, almost as much money, maybe even more money, but almost as much money as we had spent in Iraq to that point.

And what did we get for it? What did we get for it? We had a promise of unemployment staying low. It didn't.

Look, I get it. I believe that the President, I believe my colleagues on the other side of the aisle really thought this was going to be the thing that worked. I really believe they believed that. But it didn't. History shows it didn't. History shows this didn't work.

So are we going to really, honestly, revisit the idea of more and more stimulus spending again?

Mr. GARDNER. The gentleman brings up a good point. Just one instance of stimulus spending in my district where it actually threatens jobs, and that was a program that came out of the BTOP grant program to try to provide broadband to unserved and underserved areas across this country, a noble purpose, to try to make sure that we're connected to Internet technologies that we need with high speed, to make sure we're able to educate children and a competitive workforce.

But, unfortunately, the money that came out of the stimulus actually was used to duplicate services by the private sector. In some areas, they actually overbuilt, 100 percent with government money, services, a fiber-optic

cable that was already in place by the private sector.

Many of these companies are very small, small co-ops, telecoms that can't afford to have somebody come in and undermine them with the free government money, trying to offer under-cost services, and yet that's exactly what happened in the stimulus bill. They were already providing the service, and yet the government came in and laid a line right next to the line that already existed in there. So that's what happened in the stimulus bill. Instead of creating jobs, it actually undermined our ability to build the private sector up.

And I know the gentlelady from Alabama has been an incredible leader on this.

Mrs. ROBY. Well, I just was thinking, while we were talking about this, part of the President's criticism in this article that came out is about Republicans' approach to just slashing spending.

If any of us cannot recognize that we are spending well beyond our means—we have \$17 trillion in debt and our 4th year with over \$1 trillion deficit. My kids, Margaret and George, are the reason that I'm here. Why I'm fighting is for that generation that's going to carry this burden after we're all gone.

And for us to not first admit that we have a problem as we move toward finding solutions and admitting that we are spending well beyond our means, that we do have to rein in spending, that we have to change the approach, that's when we see our economy improve. That's when we see hard-working American taxpaying families begin to be able to pick up and make that investment that you mentioned into the business so that they can be the job creators.

So this is great if the President wants to talk about this again because I see, for my kids' future, that this is how we're going to get this country back on track.

Mr. ROTHFUS. It's a pleasure to join this conversation. I thank the gentlelady from Alabama for starting it.

And we've heard this phrase for years now, "pivot to jobs." And, frankly, I'm new here. I've been here a little over 6 months, maybe 7 months, and I've been looking at it from the outside, and I haven't seen that pivot to jobs.

And sometimes folks hear that phrase in Washington, D.C., and they think "pivot to jobs." Well, what they really mean is pivot to government, and that's certainly what we've seen. Every time they think they're going to do something to help the job market, they pivot to more and more government.

Remember when they passed the health care bill, it was suggested that this is going to be a job creator. Well, it really hasn't been, and we're talking to businesses time and again who are not hiring people.

I had a great conversation with somebody in my district, a very tough

conversation, and she was upset because her hours are being cut back because of the health care bill. And of course we see this across the country, not just in my district.

And then we see more government as a proposal for more jobs, but we see the regulations coming out of this town that are hurting the jobs in my district.

Just last week, we learned that some power plants are going to be closing in western Pennsylvania. These power plants are not in my district, but you know what? There are people who support those power plants by providing things to those power plants. You have jobs of truckers, of shippers, miners.

More regulations coming out of this town by these Federal elites doesn't help jobs. I'm glad that we're going to pivot to jobs.

I've talked about how you get jobs going in this country for quite a long time now, and I've stumbled on to three Rs. You remember the three Rs from going to school.

Well, the three Rs, I think the number one R, or the first R is "repeal." Repeal ObamaCare.

The administration acknowledged, I think, the problems with this bill by coming out with a unilateral action just a couple of weeks ago, saying, Don't worry, big business; you don't have to comply for another year with the mandates here; but the everyday folks, you still have to comply.

So this House, last week, took an action to provide some relief there. We'll give the President the authority that he assumed unilaterally, but it needs to come from this House, and it's called the rule of law, that the President—it's our authority to give that waiver.

And so we passed a bill last week to say, You know what? Take another year. And to the individuals who are going to be struggling, give them the same break, too.

Mr. GARDNER. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, I think you make some great points, and I just am reminded of the businesses that I've talked to in my district, from employers who are concerned they may have to reduce hours of their workforce, or employees who've already had their hours reduced.

And I don't want to interrupt your comments, but I think you are pointing out how this is actually hurting the economy. So, as the President pivots to jobs, perhaps he should pivot away from the bad policies that are driving this economy downward.

Mr. ROTHFUS. When you look at the regulatory framework that we have, this House is soon to consider a bill known as the REINS Act. It's a very simple bill. It basically says to the agencies that are staffed by bureaucrats, not by individuals who are elected, who are accountable—the people in this House are accountable. We stand for election every 2 years. We get a performance review every 2 years. I tell

the people in my district I'm their employee. I'm the employee of about 705,000 people, and I get a performance review every couple of years.

Well, you know, the regulators, we need a check and a balance on them.

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So there's a thing called the REINS Act, a very simple bill that talks about if an agency puts out a regulation that's going to have an impact on this economy of \$100 million or more. And as the gentleman from Colorado said earlier, the SBA, the Small Business Administration, has said that the cost of complying with all the regulations in our Federal Register is \$1.8 trillion across the economy. The REINS Act says if you have \$100 million or more in a regulation that's going to go on the economy, it comes back to the Congress for a vote. We get to take accountability there.

And so we get to assess whether the cost benefit is going to be good for this economy and good for the American people. Otherwise, the out-of-control government is going to continue to choke our communities and our businesses. And what happens? Middle class jobs are lost. Power plant workers. You can't replace jobs like that.

Mr. GARDNER. To the gentleman from Pennsylvania, I would just point out that this is not a radical Republican idea. The idea behind the REINS Act is actually something that's embraced across many States in the country right now. In Colorado, we have what's called the rule review bill. When an agency, whether it's the Department of Health, whether it's the Department of Agriculture, issues a new regulation, it actually comes to the State legislature for a vote by the State legislature. The State senate and the State house get to vote up on or down on whether or not that regulation is in the best interest of the people of Colorado, if it complies with the will of the legislature and the executive branch is carrying it out in the right way.

So the REINS Act that you point out is not some crazy idea. It's actually something that's in use right now to protect our economy from overreach.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Let me add to that. I want to briefly remind people about the State of Illinois. I'm so proud of the people of the State of Illinois. I love my State. I've lived there most of my life, except my time in the military. But let's look at that approach.

That approach has been a regulatory approach. That's been a big government approach. In fact, you look at, again, the south part of Chicago, and you see I think it was like nine people killed just in this last weekend. It's unreal. That's more than you will find killed in a day in Afghanistan. And this is an American city.

How is the best way to fix that? It's to pull people out of poverty. Illinois has a big government. Illinois has very

generous stuff they give. But Illinois is not good lately at generating jobs. So does big government help those people in a tough situation in south Chicago? You know what would help the people in south Chicago is an opportunity to go out, work hard, earn a living, and an opportunity to get ahead. That's what this is about.

This is about how do we give everybody the opportunity that all of us speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives have, who have all the different backgrounds that we've got, whether it was from our parents or our education or from whatever it was. How do we ensure that we replicate that?

Mr. ROTHFUS. The good news is that we can do that. If we empower our communities, empower individuals, and empower families, we can do that. The solutions are not inside this Beltway. They're out there. And Washington needs to get out of the way so that people can take their own initiative and build those real economies out there.

The third R I talked about—we've got repeal ObamaCare and replace it with commonsense, patient-centered reform that gets care to people. The second R is the REINS Act. Stop the overregulating. And thirdly, reform. Reform our Tax Code. We have the highest corporate tax rate in the world, the highest business taxes in the world. This is a world economy. Ninety-five percent of the consumers in the world are outside our borders. We need to be competing for the world's capital to come here to invest in our communities.

I was talking with a business in my district that is a subsidiary. They have a foreign owner. But they were trying to convince the foreign owner to invest in our country, which would be a good thing because that's going to mean more jobs. The parent company said, You're just not competitive right now. And that's a lost opportunity.

Our corporate tax rate is 35 percent. And do the corporations really pay that? Our Tax Code is so riddled with loopholes and picking the winners and the losers, rather than having a competitive, fair playing field. We have to move to have the most competitive tax system in the world.

Mr. GARDNER. I was speaking to a business in my district several months ago, and they had a conversation with somebody who isn't interested in reducing the burden on American families by making common sense out of our Tax Code, creating a flatter, fairer tax system. This is a manufacturing business in Colorado. They were talking about what their tax rate is and that they have looked at every way, every provision, every code possible to try to figure out how to lower that rate, and they can't go any further. They're still in the lower thirties.

The response they got from a legislator was, Well, you just need to hire a new accountant. Instead of actually

trying to get to real reform of our Tax Code to lower the rate, flatten the code, they actually were told to just get a new accountant because they're not doing the right jobs. That's not how we're going to create jobs in this country.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. I think the great point on that is why do we want to lower the tax rate, right? Is it because we want to protect the 1 percent? I've heard that a thousand times. And I'll be honest, I probably haven't been the best at coming back at that and explaining why we want to lower the Tax Code and why we want a fair Tax Code for everybody—a tax that people pay what they need to pay to the government, they aren't overcharged, but then people aren't also allowed to get away with being undercharged.

It's because on an individual level you literally have mothers filling their vans up with gasoline, buying groceries, and not able to afford to feed their children because the government, in some cases, takes a third of what these single mothers make. They just take it. And then we see people that can get away with all the loopholes in the system. They hire enough accountants and they don't pay that percent.

So let's make it fair for everybody.

Mrs. ROBY. But we got ourselves in that trouble, as far as the government goes. We can't point fingers at somebody that is smart and figures out how to do it. What we do is fix the problem, which is the underlying code, by making it fairer and flatter.

I'll just say, we were saying earlier, Mr. Speaker, that we've been communicating tonight with our constituents at #4Jobs. Just some of the things that I'm hearing go directly to this point.

Josh from Troy says:

Throw out the Tax Code.

I just want to highlight that the people that we're hearing from, Mr. Speaker, are saying exactly what our frustrations are on this floor, as the President tells us to pivot back to jobs and the economy.

James from Dothan, Alabama, says:

Taking out ObamaCare will help free employers to hire full-time employees, which our economy really needs.

Sara from Dothan:

Health care is the biggest problem. Employers are afraid to hire until they know the whole deal.

We've talked about that in your three R's, the repeal and the replace being the first, about this uncertainty not just in the regulatory environment that businesses have to deal with, or, with the Tax Code, which is the point you were all just making, but also in how these laws are going to be implemented. We've passed these gargantuan bills. We don't know what's in them. And they get passed. And now the uncertainty associated with it.

How many people have you talked to have had to hire a new person just to come into compliance with what they

think the health care law might be, instead of hiring another individual that can then produce what that company produces to provide a product for this country? Instead, they're having to compete with all of the Federal employees that are put in place to implement these laws. Employers are going to go out to hire somebody just to come into compliance with the laws.

Now I hear from our bankers back in our State—and you've probably heard this one—that not only is the regulator showing up, but the regulator is now showing up with a lawyer as well. So the bank has to go get their lawyer there because they're not going to find themselves in a position to not be duly represented at a time when there's a Federal regulator in their office. This is just costing businesses more and more dollars.

Mr. ROTHFUS. It's not just costing businesses. Again, for the mom who's sitting at that kitchen table.

Mrs. ROBY. It's passed off to me, the consumer.

Mr. ROTHFUS. You think of the mom who no longer has the free checking. They're paying the monthly bills. They're looking at that utility bill. The electric bill is coming in. And remember when the President in 2008 said that electricity rates are necessarily going to skyrocket with his plan? Well, there's the mom who's going through the monthly bills, wondering how she's going to make ends meet. And all of a sudden there's another \$5 or \$10 or whatever the charge is going to be for losing the free checking. That's real money. And then she goes to the gas tank and all of a sudden prices are going up at the gas tank again. Another \$10 there, \$10 for the checking. That's \$20 right there. And it grows and it grows and it grows.

Mrs. ROBY. Then she goes to the grocery store and she sees that the cost of milk is higher because the cost of gasoline is higher. I'm that mom that puts gas in her car and goes to the grocery store. And you can see the net effect that this has on the individual. So you're absolutely right. It's not just the businesses. The businesses then have to turn around and pass that cost on to the consumer.

We have solutions for these problems—real commonsensical solutions that we have put forth and put forth and put forth, reducing the regulatory environment, a health care solution that works, that allows for individuals to make those decisions between themselves and their doctor, an all-of-the-above energy plan that is actually put into practice here in the House of Representatives instead of being that campaign rhetoric. We really have demonstrated our belief in our approach to an all-of-the-above energy plan.

Speaking of energy, thanks for joining us.

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Glad to be with you this evening.

I thought it was interesting. You just raised the issue where the President

said that costs would necessarily skyrocket. I actually carry that quote around in my back pocket. So I pulled it out, my little folded-up version that I have, and what he said was:

When I was asked earlier about the issue of coal, you know, under my plan of cap-and-trade system, electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket. Even regardless of what I say about whether coal is good or bad because I'm capping greenhouse gases, coal power plants, you know, natural gas, you name it, whatever the plants were, whatever the industry was, they would have to retrofit their operations. That will cost money.

And you know what he said next? Exactly what you've been talking about. That they, talking about those plants that would have to retrofit, will pass that money on to consumers.

But it's not just the higher cost to the consumers, the moms and dads that are going out there shopping, trying to make ends meet, trying to look at their grocery bill getting bigger, their gas bill getting bigger, et cetera, et cetera, but it's also the impact on the families. Because no matter what they say about we can do this with jobs and we can create jobs, that's not been the case, particularly in my district, which is a natural gas and coal-producing district.

I was at a Remote Area Medical program this weekend in my district. Senator KAINE was there. I was doing intake and helping folks get those documents filled out. One of the people that came through was there because she needed some help, her husband needed some help, and her daughter needed some help. Her husband lost his job in the mine. This is happening all across my district, all through central Appalachia. They're laying off people. Every month, we're losing more and more jobs. A lot of folks don't know that those jobs are bringing in money to the community and that these are big-paying jobs. The estimate is somewhere between \$75,000 and \$95,000 dollars a year. That's what these jobs bring into the community.

So here's a lady that needs help because they've lost their job because of the policies of the administration that have killed those jobs. But as the gentleman previously stated, it's not just the jobs in the coal mines, it's not just the coal operators. It's the people that sell the cars to the people who used to work in the mine. It's the people who sell the mine safety equipment to the people who run the mines and work in the mines. It's the people who haul the coal. It's the people who work for the train companies that haul the coal. And it's the cost of making goods in the United States of America, where those costs are going up and up and up compared to other parts of the world.

In fact, there's an article just recently that says that Southeast Asia, even though natural gas is available to that Asian market, is choosing coal over and over again because per Btu, it's better for them to use coal. And a lot of times people talk about the low cost of natural gas in this country. I

have to tell you, it's a great boon to us in many, many fields and lots of areas. But you have to remember, at \$4 per million Btus created, coal and natural gas are equal. Anything above \$4, coal is more efficient. It's cheaper to use. But guess what? This year we've been over \$4. Right now, today, it's at \$3.83. This year we've been over \$4.

□ 2000

So what we're doing is we're passing these costs on. We're taking our jobs and we're shipping them overseas. And I know you all have heard this before, but Mr. Speaker, I want everybody in the country to know that we send these jobs overseas. They're making the goods that we used to make in this country; they're getting the money that we used to have in this country for our jobs, our employees. And according to a NASA study, it takes 10 days for the air from the middle of the Gobi Desert—that's in central China—to get to the Eastern Shore of my beloved Virginia. The air is coming back over here.

So what we need to be doing is we need to be looking for things that resolve this issue of the pollutions and so forth on a global basis, and we don't need to be killing jobs in the United States of America while we look for those solutions. We need to make sure we're encouraging those jobs in the United States of America.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. That was very well said. Wouldn't it be nice if we could just all have conversations like that all the time? I mean, look, there are people that really believe that coal is bad. I disagree, I disagree vehemently. They believe it. And I'm sure my friend from Virginia would love to debate them, and debate them respectfully. I remember hearing rhetoric about our party supporting black lungs and that rhetoric that's meant to fuel instability and anger and division. That's what's disappointing to me.

Mr. Speaker, as I look to the President to lead this country, I want to look at a man who—of his past and who he is is a very dynamic person. He came from some very tough circumstances to become President of the United States. I wish he would say that, you know what, my job is to lead this conversation about jobs and the economy. My job is to lead this conversation. Look, we tried stimulus spending. I really thought it would work, but it didn't. Some Republicans, why don't you come to the White House. Why don't you have a conversation with me. I haven't been invited to the White House in years. Why don't you come to the White House, and let's have a conversation. Maybe we're not going to find any agreement, but at least we can respect each other's opinions and say what do we need to do to get this economy back on track. Why is it that over 7 percent of our neighbors don't have jobs? Many more than that are underemployed in jobs they don't want. Why is that? What can we do to come together?

Mr. GARDNER. One of the things that I think the gentleman brings up in tonight's conversation is he continues to talk about opportunity and what we stand for and what we've been able to do for jobs. I know that the gentlelady from Alabama is leading, if you're interested in engaging in this conversation around the country, wherever you are over the next days, weeks, months, as we talk about the economy, and beyond then, sending a tweet with the #4jobs in terms of engaging in this conversation. But you talked about what we can do. What we can do right now—and the gentleman from Virginia knows very well—it is energy.

We've talked to people about a manufacturing renaissance in this country. There are articles in the paper about businesses that were located in Germany that are looking to relocate into the United States. A company we talked to said the cost of energy in India is four times what they were paying here.

Traveling to my district, the Niobrara Formation, Eastern Plains, Western Slope, the energy that we can create there that's allowing this to happen. Whether it's coal, whether it's natural gas, whether it's renewable energy in my district, we have incredible opportunities to create these kinds of jobs that we know will put food on people's plates around the table, that will actually allow people to go on vacation, to afford to put gas in the car, to find a better way for their families.

So these are the kinds of jobs with this revolution that we can continue to foster, but we have to have a President that doesn't just pivot to jobs once in a while, but is committed to a long-term, healthy economy that gets the regulatory mess out of the way, that provides certainty.

I talked to a restaurant owner in my district. He owns three different bagel shops. He's actually going to have to sell one of them. He's worried because he doesn't know how he's going to be able to comply with the new health care plan. That's not the kind of certainty that we're looking for.

So don't stop what's going good in this country—the manufacturing renaissance, energy development, opportunity—and let's fix what's not going great; let's fix what's going wrong in this country.

Mrs. ROBY. I wanted to share a few numbers with you.

Since the President took office in January 2009, the U-6 unemployment rate has remained stuck at 14 percent. That's workers that are stuck in part-time jobs, or they just have dropped out of the workforce altogether. During that same time we've watched, as I mentioned earlier, the national debt go from \$9.8 trillion to \$16.9 trillion; and according to Gallup, 17.3 percent of Americans consider themselves underemployed, which goes to your point.

The President also promised 1 million new manufacturing jobs by the end of 2016, but factory employment has

continued to fall in 2013, where 4.3 million Americans have been out of work for 6 weeks or more. The point is that we started this hour talking about The Washington Post article where the President came out and said that he is going to pivot back to jobs and the economy; and to the gentleman from Colorado's point, he should have never left the issue of jobs and the economy.

Here in the House, our majority has been working tirelessly, as the gentleman from Illinois said, to bring the other side and say look, we have these commonsense solutions. This is about my kids and yours. This is about the future of this country. And we have an opportunity as leaders here in Washington representing all of the people that we do back home—and a responsibility at that—to do all that we can to get the Federal Government out of the way so that people like your constituent back home in Colorado with the bagel stores can open another bagel store instead of having to worry about closing.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Let me just add really briefly to that.

You talk about our ideas and the fact that, you know, look, the President can—the REINS Act, for instance, that makes sense, some of those things.

I make a promise here today: if the President comes to the Republicans and says, give me some ideas, and we give him ideas and he takes them, I will not go out and say that is a victory for Republicans.

So let's get the partisanship out of this and say it's time to not be Republicans or Democrats about this; it's time to be Americans. Look, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the President has made, in his mind, a valiant attempt to save the economy. Unfortunately, I hate to say it, it hasn't worked. So come to us. Let us give you some ideas. And if you adopt our ideas, I—I personally—promise that I will not go out and say that the Republican Party just rolled the President, or we just rolled the Democrats, or anything like that. I will say America just won because we've worked together to get some big things done.

Mr. GARDNER. That's exactly, at this time, what this country needs. I'm working, in a bipartisan fashion, with a Democrat from Vermont, PETER WELCH, on an energy-efficiency measure. The President has also talked about this kind of approach, using performance contracts to create jobs, lower the amount of energy consumed by the United States Government—the largest economy consumer in the country. But we do it without government mandates; we do it without government subsidies. But we're doing something that's going to create private sector jobs, save the taxpayer dollars, and use less energy at the Federal level. The President's doing this. We're doing this here.

These are the kinds of opportunities we have to work together that are creating jobs. And they're not to bow

down or to kowtow to a certain element of an agenda. It's actually to move the country forward by doing the right thing.

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. I believe if we use our energy sources—which I believe can be a bipartisan issue and it is in my part of the world in central Appalachia—but if we use our energy resources, I am convinced that the United States of America can remain the number one economic Nation in the world well into the next century—recognizing we've just started this one—well into the next century. But we have to make sure that Washington doesn't get in the way and completely stop that economic engine.

Mrs. ROBY. Well, I just want to thank all of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, for joining us to talk about these important issues.

As we will hear from the President in his next three speeches about pivoting back to jobs and the economy, we here in the House remain focused on jobs and the economy for all Americans families. But we are also remaining focused on an all-of-the-above energy approach; repealing ObamaCare so that I can make those decisions with my doctor about what's best for me; a fairer, simpler Tax Code that we know will help all Americans. We've got to ease burdens and regulations so that businesses can create more jobs instead of having to worry about the ones that they're going to lose.

This is about making life work for Americans. This is about easing the pain that so many Americans are feeling because of this bloated government that refuses to, first and foremost, admit that we have a spending problem.

This is about refocusing our efforts here in the House and making sure that we are remembering the people that sent us here, the families that we've talked about tonight that we want to ensure that government is not hurting, but government is getting out of the way so that they can thrive in these United States of America.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials into the RECORD on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and my privilege once again to

anchor this CBC Special Order where, for the next 60 minutes, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus will have an opportunity to speak directly to the American people on the important issue of race in America. Where do we go from here?

The events of the last several weeks have startled many throughout this country; most recently, the verdict down in Florida where Mr. Zimmerman was acquitted and the result that shocked many all across this country, a verdict that was viewed by many as unjust.

A few weeks prior to that, the Supreme Court struck down an important provision of the Voting Rights Act, an act that had been the most effective piece of civil rights legislation in this country which has helped to bring our democracy to life and is designed to make sure that all Americans, regardless of race, have an opportunity to participate in our democracy in a meaningful way.

The debate over the farm bill that has left many people troubled by the fact that the SNAP program, in an unprecedented fashion, was left out; and if we don't come to an agreement here, our failure to step up and help those who are hungry will disproportionately have an effect on many in the African American community.

These are just some of the recent events that have come together to put us in a position where, as the President has recently indicated, it's time for us to have a meaningful conversation on race—a direct conversation, a forthright conversation, an honest conversation. That's why the members of the Congressional Black Caucus are here today.

We have made tremendous progress in America. We've come a long way in this great country, but we certainly still have a ways to go. The road to equality is still under construction, and we're here today to try and lay out a roadmap for how we can get closer to a more perfect union here in America.

I'm pleased today that we've been joined by the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, the distinguished gentlelady from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), who has been such a tremendous, eloquent, forceful leader in her position as chair of the CBC.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio.

Ms. FUDGE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to thank you, Congressman JEFFRIES, for leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour on this very important topic tonight, a topic that has once again captured national attention and sparked a dialogue in communities across this Nation.

On Friday, President Obama helped provide context to the emotion Americans—and particularly African American men—have had around the tragedy of Trayvon Martin. Over the weekend, people of all ages and races gathered at Federal Government buildings in their