AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESSES NEED THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

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

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, today I have a simple ask: let the Export-Import Bank answer the call. 2,655—2,655—that is how many small businesses called the Export-Import Bank last year and asked for their assistance in selling American-made goods and services around the globe. That is how many businesses the Export-Import Bank said yes to, without any impact on taxpayers—no cost to taxpayers whatsoever—in order to help those 2,655 businesses be competitive in a global market.

The truth is, in each district—Democratic districts, Republican districts, urban, rural, coastal, interior—each district is rich with businesses large and small. Every Member has small businesses that are the result of hard work, families pulling together to build something of value and worth that can be assisted by the Export-Import Bank—brand-new business as well, not just those that are intergenerational. These are the businesses that create jobs and employ millions of our loved ones and our neighbors and our family. When they want to export their goods and services, who do they call? They call the Export-Import Bank.

Alliance Rubber Company is just one of the 2,655 small businesses that made that call. Alliance is the largest manufacturer of rubberbands in America. It is a women-owned small business located in Hot Springs, Arkansas. They employ a whole 156 employees. Alliance plans to add 15 employees within the next year, but without exports, they will be cutting 10 jobs—our family members, our neighbors. Add 15 or cut 10? It seems like the choice is obvious to me.

Here is what another company said: ''Thanks to credit insurance available through the Ex-Im, we have hired a salesman dedicated to growing international sales. Growing our traffic and safety business internationally will mean more jobs in our Fife facility and more business for our local vendors.''

That is in my district, Fife, Washington. The company is Pexco, another one of the 2,655 businesses. There are Pexcos in Republican districts and in Democratic districts all over this country. There are Alliance Rubber companies in Republican Districts and Democratic districts. And if you listen to these business leaders, it makes sense to help them do what they are doing.

Who will answer the call after June 30? Well, unfortunately, not local banks or even the big banks. If you don't believe me, ask them. They are the ones that usually refer the businesses to the Export-Import Bank.

We have 10 days left, 10 legislative days to act before the help on the other end of the line is gone. Companies have 15 business days to make the call and see how they can sell their goods and expand their exports to foreign customers. If you are a small business looking to export, call 1–800–565–EXIM, 1–800–565–3949. That is why the Bank is there. That is why it should remain.

As a matter of fact, Chairman HENSARLING's own witness—I couldn't make this stuff up—who testified against the Bank as a small-business owner last week told her hometown newspaper this later: ''The fact is that there are a lot of small businesses and large businesses that need the Bank right now, and to pull that rug out from under them would be devastating.'' I couldn't make this up.

Hold a vote, Mr. Speaker. Hold a vote. Give your colleagues the opportunity to vote for our small businesses and the jobs they provide. They are the backbone of this community and this economy and this Nation; 2,655 of them and counting. Let the Export-Import Bank answer the call.

AMERICANS DESERVE TO KNOW WHO RAISED THEIR FOOD

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

Mr. MASSIE. Mr. Speaker, Americans want to know: Where does their food come from? Parents want to know before they give it to their children: How was this food raised? Where did it come from? Moms want to know, dads want to know, and today they can; but if proposed legislation passes this body this week, we won't have that information necessary to make those decisions for our family and our family's health.

What legislation am I talking about? I am talking about the country of origin labeling. In other words, right now, if you buy food and it comes from a foreign country, it must be labeled. If you buy pork, you buy beef, you buy chicken, wouldn't you want to know where that food came from?

Why would you want to know? Well, different countries have different rules and different cultures. If you remember back in 2007, we had some pet food that came from a foreign country that killed a lot of pets. It was enhanced with melamine to up the protein readings in it, and it was unsafe for pets. A lot of pets died as a result. Well, it came from a different country that has different ethics. I think Americans deserve to know who raised their food, which country did it come from. But the legislation that is in front of us this week will repeal that requirement to label beef, poultry, and pork.

Now, why are we doing this? Why are we in such a rush? Because we have been told that the World Trade Organization requires it.

What is the World Trade Organization, and who are they to tell Congress what laws we have to pass? These judges weren't appointed by the President. They weren't confirmed by the Senate. These are not judges from our Constitution. These are extra-constitutional judges, yet they are telling us here in Congress you have got to do this or there will be repercussions.

I think our Founding Fathers would be appalled at this notion, that we have given up our sovereignty. I don't accept the premise that we have to make laws here based on what some world court agrees to, but I suppose somebody made a trade agreement in some Congress previous that bound us to decisions of this court.

Now, even if you accept the premise that we have to abide by the World Trade Organization, and because they have ruled that we can no longer label pork and beef as from foreign countries to inform our consumers, then you have got to ask the question: Why did we add chicken to this bill? The World Trade Organization is silent on the subject of chicken, yet it is in the bill.

We are going to remove the labeling requirements for chicken. I think it is a bad idea. I think it is probably motivated by some large meat packing companies; but they are represented here in Congress, and the American consumer and small livestock farmers are not.

□ 1100

I proposed voluntary country of origin labeling last night in the Rules Committee. I had an amendment. It said: Okay. Maybe we shouldn't mandate. Maybe we shouldn't force the foreigners to label their meat when it comes into the country; but how about voluntarily letting American producers put that proud stamp and know that it is the seal of approval that most consumers want so they know that beef, that pork, was raised in this country?

I was shot down in the Rules Committee. It was just a voluntary program. In fact, it was proposed 10 years ago by this Speaker of the House, by the former chair of the Ag Committee, by the current chair of the Ag Committee, and by the current chair of the Rules Committee; yet they wouldn't allow my amendment for a vote in the Rules Committee. All I sought to do was let American farmers proclaim that their beef is raised in the United States.

Today, Mr. Speaker, that is why I am here. I am here today to say that we need to assert our sovereignty, the sovereignty of this body. We all took an oath to the Constitution. We didn't take an oath to the World Trade Organization. We need to assert our sovereignty, and we need to uphold our commitment to the Americans who sent us here.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the repeal of the country of origin labeling bill later today.

ISRAEL

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, our Commander in Chief admitted that, in the fight against the Islamic State, the U.S. does not have ''a complete strategy.''

It is hard to believe that it has been 1 year since the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria—ISIS, ISIL, or whatever you want to call them—began making headlines in American newspapers. It is hard to believe that it has been nearly 1½ years since the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency told members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that it was ''likely ISIL will attempt to take territory in Iraq and Syria.''

But it goes back even farther. In January 2014, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq said the Islamic State is ''capable of taking and holding ground and causing a lot of trouble.'' In November 2013, a State Department official testified before a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee and specifically cited the ineffectiveness of Iraq's military.

Then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Iraq and Iran said: ''ISIL has benefited from a permissive operating environment due to inherent weaknesses of Iraqi security forces.''

Mr. Speaker, all of these warnings occurred after Iraq's Prime Minister made an appeal to President Obama to help defeat the growing threat to his country. That was 2 years ago; so here we are.

In June 2015, the leader of the free world tells an international conference in Austria that the United States does not have a complete strategy to defeat an enemy he once called a JV squad. Well, that JV squad is responsible for the horrific murders of American citizens.

That JV squad has overtaken territory fought so hard for by American troops, territory that nearly 4,500 American servicemen and -women died to protect in the most violent battles witnessed by U.S. troops since the Vietnam war. That JV squad waves black flags while driving stolen military equipment through streets where Americans made the ultimate sacrifice.

From overlooked redlines to bypassed deadlines, the Obama administration will serve as a case study in how not to conduct foreign policy for future world leaders.

Today, the President wants us to believe that his administration's negotiations with Iran are in Israel's best interests. Ironically, Israel's Prime Minister made a direct appeal to the American people expressing the contrary.

This past March, Prime Minister Netanyahu petitioned Congress from the podium right behind me because he, like so many, has lost faith in the abilities of our Commander in Chief.

He is right; he is right to be skeptical about the State Department's ''trust above all else'' policy with Iran, whose leaders have publicly proclaimed their desire for Israel to be wiped off the map. Mr. Netanyahu has rightly questioned America's once unwavering commitment to his homeland, Israel—our partner, our ally, but, most importantly, our friend.

As I have said before, for those who do not believe in the United States' moral obligation to protect Israel, I remind them about the United States' strategic obligation. Israel benefits from a secure America, just as America benefits in having a secure, stable, and trustworthy ally in a very volatile and dangerous region of the world.

The Obama administration's inability to realize this twofold bond between the United States and Israel illustrates their lack of understanding. I suggest to the President and his advisers that, if they really want to salvage any remaining trace of foreign policy competence for their history books, they walk away from this deal.

I urge our President to pause and reflect on America's role in the world. Mr. Speaker, I urge him to reassess our courses of action abroad. The President must start by determining what is important for America. Only then will he be capable of developing a strategy, let alone the right one.

In God we trust.

REAUTHORIZE THE ESEA

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, across my congressional district, elementary and secondary school students are packing up their lockers, taking final exams, and saying goodbye to their classmates and homeroom desks for the summer.

While our students head into a well-deserved summer recess, our teachers have already started thinking ahead to the next academic year, setting up lesson plans and figuring out what their course curriculums will be.

Unfortunately, many of our teachers will be faced with yet another year of stifling one-size-fits-all testing requirements and deadlines. Instead of enabling our teachers to do what they love and inspiring our children to learn and succeed, they are forced to waste classroom time by preparing and administering redundant and often low-quality tests.

Mr. Speaker, it has been nearly 15 weeks since I last spoke on the House floor about the need to provide relief from burdensome testing requirements for our teachers, students, and parents.

At the time, the House was actively considering H.R. 5, legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as an amendment I was pleased to offer with my Democratic colleague, SUZANNE BONAMICI of Oregon. Our bipartisan amendment, which was adopted and included as part of H.R. 5, offers a solution to the overtesting problem that is taxing our schools and teachers.

Our amendment empowers teachers and parents by giving existing Federal funding to State and local education agencies to develop curriculum plans to make better use of tests for the students, with the ability to reduce testing.

It would also allow for quicker delivery of assessment data to educators and parents and a more qualitative analysis of how to shape curriculum for that student from the local school district and parent, not the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, we need to continue our work on this bill and reauthorize the ESEA. We owe it to our colleagues who have worked for months on this bill and underlying policy. We owe it to our teachers who have dedicated their livelihood and careers to the betterment of our children.

Most of all, we owe it to our children, who deserve the best possible education that we can provide, an education that encourages them to think, learn, and succeed and not that simply tells them how to fill in the blanks on a generic test.

For those of my colleagues who may be undecided on advancing this bill and reauthorizing the ESEA, I ask you to consider: Are you happy with the status quo? Are you content to sit on the sidelines while Common Core standards and a myriad of tests are imposed on our students?

I would like to read into the RECORD a letter I received from the superintendent of my home school district. Let me preface this by saying it was not written to me as a Member of Congress, but rather as a taxpayer in the West Chester Area School District.

I read this because there is no better example of a need and an opportunity for us to help our families back home do our job and govern here in Congress. It reads:

> Dear Parents, many of us are quick to fault the U.S. public education system, comparing it to other smaller European countries and finding deficits and gaps. The system and the way it is funded are far from perfect. However, we manage to educate generations of children who go on to do incredible things.
>
> Now, we are asking our students to do something that is entirely unfair: to spend weeks and weeks filling in bubbles, taking standardized tests, and having their entire educational ambition directed toward passing them. This is not what public education was intended to do, nor should do.
>
> As the superintendent of the West Chester Area School District, I believe in very high standards for our students. I believe in accountability. I do believe that tests can be a good thing, but not the way we are being forced by the government to give them.
>
> We officially began the PSSA testing window on April 13, and we will continue to test through May 27, when we finish with the high school Keystone Exams, a new graduation requirement. Beginning with the class of 2017, even a straight-A student who doesn't do well on these tests won't receive a diploma under State law.
>
> State and federally mandated testing has been around for a long time, and is certainly here to stay, but it has become a massive burden that is stifling creativity and love of teaching and learning.
>
> While our district has embraced high standards and accountability, we now spend the first 7 months of the school year preparing to take three standardized tests; then we spend approximately 6 weeks giving tests to students. Unlike private and parochial