

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, work on the Nation's bridges, highways, and transit has all but stopped because of 34 patch extensions that keep everything—except patchwork—on hold.

Today, the House is rushing out of town early, leaving a new 3-month patch. This time, though, the Republican House is scrambling out of the Capitol, literally, to get away from the Republican Senate, which had been trying for a 6-year bill. The Republican House's "my way or the highway" was addressed to the Republican Senate, and the public be damned—and it worked. The Republican Senate has given up on the Nation's infrastructure, too. The Republican Senate announced this morning that it will accept the House's 3-month patch. Six months of control of the House and Senate by the Republicans has made Congress even more dysfunctional.

The new House 3-month patch has nothing to do with roads and bridges. Who knows what will get done this time? House Republicans see political goals at the end of their 3-month road, when the must-pass highway bill could serve their purposes, such as the usual, if dangerous, dispute over an extension of the debt ceiling.

Yet, Republican and Democratic States alike keep meeting their obligations under the State-Federal partnership. Eighteen States and the District of Columbia have raised their gas user fees, going as high as 10-cent increases in Iowa and in Wyoming; but the roads, bridges, and transit remain stalled because the Federal partner keeps dropping out. More than half of the funds for a nationwide system that connects our States with one another comes from the Federal trust fund.

During the 34 patch delays, not a lick of work on a final bill has been done except the Senate's current try at a 6-year bill. There have been no serious talks here on alternatives to the gas user fee, although it long ago was swallowed by today's hard-won fuel efficiency that leaves the transit trust fund thirsty for a refill after a year and a half or so.

Democrats, however, have offered four alternatives to the current user fee, which is the legacy of the Eisenhower years. House Republicans have offered none. Congress has refused to raise the Federal user fee since 1992, adding to the woes of the 1950's method we use to pay for our roads.

The Republican House runs out of town today to hide from the Republican Senate. As they run home, I can only hope they run into the arms of their own angry constituents on their own rickety roads. House Republicans can run, but they can't hide from the broken down bridges, roads, and transit they will use back home.

DEMAND FOR TRANSPARENCY IN THE REGULATORY AND RULE-MAKING PROCESS

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

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to address a concern that anyone who has ever owned or has run a business truly understands—the negative effects of unchecked government regulations on our American economy.

No matter how large or small, Federal regulations are being added each day into law by the hundreds—and even sometimes by the thousands—most of which are not directly approved by Congress.

By allowing Washington bureaucrats to continue to stuff the overwhelming number of regulations into congressionally passed legislation, we are essentially handing over authority to the Federal agencies for them to legislate as they please. It is our job in Congress to oversee these regulations as they are being generated in order to provide that our constituents are not left behind.

During this Congress, we have made great strides in reforming the regulations process in order to help the economy grow. A great example of that occurred yesterday with the passage of the REINS Act. There should be no question that any regulation that makes an annual impact of \$100 million on the economy should require congressional approval before it can become law.

As my colleagues are aware, a copy of the day's Federal Register is delivered to each of our offices daily. This book provides a hard copy of every new regulation that ranges from environmental protection to labor standards, to health guidelines, to restrictions on financial institutions.

Last year, the Federal Register contained over 77,000 pages, with 3,554 new regulations. Even though this large number of pages is absurd, it was only the sixth highest page count in the Federal Register's history. As of this morning, the 2015 Federal Register sits at over 45,000 pages.

It is unthinkable to me that the most important document—the Constitution—can fit on 39 pages, in this little book. In comparison, this is the July 13 edition of the Federal Register. It is 627 pages, and it is only one of three editions from that day alone.

Mr. Speaker, when is enough enough, and when does it become too much?

The continual expansion of our government through a vast number of regulations causes our economy to become as shaky and unstable as the Federal Registers that are stacked up in my office from this year, which is unacceptable and very concerning.

An even larger issue comes from how the general public is made aware of these proposed rules and the opportunity to voice one's concerns on the rules. While we are provided with a

daily index of rules and new regulations through the Federal Register, the American taxpayers, for whom we work, are left in the dark.

Since these regulations do not take into account the economic impact that is placed on American businesses and families, each new regulation can lead to lower wages, job losses, and higher prices for goods. In 2014, Federal regulations cost American families an estimated \$1.88 trillion in financial burden, representing, roughly, \$15,000 per household. This cost is also larger than Canada's economy, is larger than Mexico's economy, and is larger than the economies of Australia, Russia, Spain, and South Korea, just to name a few. In fact, the economies of only nine nations in the world are larger than the cost of our regulations.

Although all sized businesses and industries feel the effects of government regulations, it is the small businesses that face greater adversity from regulations due to costs attributed to comply. In addition to compliance costs, limited comment periods, and a lack of information pertaining to how they make their opinions heard, business owners are usually those who end up being left out in the cold.

I ask my colleagues to join me in demanding more transparency in the regulatory and rulemaking process because it is our duty to our constituents.

GIVING SENIORS A MEDICARE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

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

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago this week, President Lyndon Johnson signed the law that created Medicare and Medicaid—the most important healthcare programs in our country's history prior to the Affordable Care Act. With one stroke of his pen, President Johnson guaranteed both poor Americans and older Americans the right to high-quality, affordable medical treatment.

Thanks to Medicare, for 50 years now, our seniors have received the health care they have needed to stay healthy and to live full lives; but despite the success, there are gaps in Medicare coverage that need to be closed. The most glaring gap is the fact that Medicare does not provide basic medical coverage for seniors' eyes, ears, and teeth. It is as though Medicare assumes that seniors don't need to see or to hear or to chew.

We are not talking about exotic, high-tech treatments. We are talking about no Medicare coverage for eyeglasses, eye exams, hearing aids, cavity fillings, and dentures. We are talking about no treatment for medical conditions that lead to blindness, deafness, lost teeth, and serious gum disease, which has been strongly linked to heart disease. It is unthinkable that we deny our seniors this elementary level of care.