

Congress must act responsibly for the fact that we expect Puerto Rico to pay its obligation, but we force her to play by a particular set of rules. Puerto Rico cannot declare bankruptcy because Congress passed a law saying that she could not. Puerto Rico is under the choke hold of the Jones Act, a law passed right here in this room, without any consultation with the Puerto Rican people, that says, by law, Puerto Rico cannot shop around for the best deal on shipping. No. They must buy the most expensive, which means double the import costs and an estimated \$500 million extra on Puerto Rico's food bill alone.

When it comes to producing for themselves, a large chunk of the best agricultural land—the land that sustains and feeds a nation—is taken away from them for U.S. military bases. Thirteen percent of the land is gone.

Puerto Rico is a tropical island, but a lot of its fruit and vegetables and almost all of its food is imported. We must allow Puerto Rico to create an agricultural economy, allowing Puerto Ricans to feed themselves. The economy produces goods the people do not consume, and the people consume goods that they do not produce.

Even when the U.S. is caught re-handed stealing water from Puerto Rico's freshwater supply—not paying a dime for it—what happens? The U.S. Government is not held responsible or made to pay. When the military bombs and pollutes Vieques and Culebra, does the U.S. Government feel any obligation to restore it? Not really.

So, Mr. Speaker, when Congress talks about Puerto Rico's debt, I say we look at the totality of the debt—the part owed to Puerto Rico, not just the part Puerto Rico owes to Wall Street. Every soldier she has sent to war, every time the U.S. has stepped in to override her courts and her government, these debts add up but are not accounted for.

Now, what is the solution that everyone in Washington is lining up behind? A Federal control board. Imagine that. An island that cannot determine its own destiny. It has to play an economic game with a stacked deck and all the rules rigged against her. What is the solution in Washington? Take away what little autonomy they have left.

If Congress were smart, we would find a way to get out of the way. Free Puerto Rico's people to unleash their inherent, hardworking character, spirit, and dedication. Free Puerto Ricans to work and toil and build and create. Free Puerto Rico so that she can build a sustainable economy that keeps her people at home in the land of their birth and their heritage.

We cannot get sidetracked by seeing Puerto Rico's economic health exclusively through the lens of food stamps, Medicaid, government programs, and further dependency on Washington. We must make the conversation about jobs for Puerto Ricans, jobs that build the economy, the tax base, and the self-sufficiency of the island.

Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico's problems were a long time in the making, but I have utter confidence in Puerto Ricans' ability to solve them if we in the Congress begin to listen to them, work with them, and recognize them as equal partners.

We must free Puerto Rico so that the Puerto Rican people can free themselves.

KURDISH PESHMERGA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important efforts made by the Kurds and the Peshmerga in the fight against ISIS.

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said last December: “The Kurdish Peshmerga have been exactly what we have been looking for in this whole fight in Iraq and Syria, namely a capable and motivated force that we can enable.”

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we need to do more to combat ISIS on the ground and also to help our allies who are willing to join us in this effort. ISIS is a brutal evil, and it is one of the greatest threats to both our national security and to the security of our allies in the region.

We continue to read reports of ISIS raping women, beheading captives, and brutally torturing their prisoners; and ISIS' alleged use of chemical weapons against the Kurds in Iraq and Syria reaffirms the danger posed by this terrorist group. During the conflict against ISIS, the Kurds tell me that at least 1,600 Peshmerga forces have died and thousands more have been wounded, and we see some of these pictures here on this graphic.

We are thankful to all of the members of the Peshmerga who are fighting to eradicate the evil of ISIS, including several all-women units who are proud to fight for their people's freedom. These are the hardships that they all endure.

Unfortunately, the Peshmerga still don't have the proper weapons, the proper equipment—most of which is over 30 years old—and they are still running low on ammunition. In fact, the Peshmerga are using captured ISIS tanks to roll through minefields, while ISIS is using American equipment that they have picked up after overturning Mosul.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the legislation introduced by the chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, which would authorize the direct provision of weapons to the Peshmerga, a bill which our committee passed unanimously in December.

The Peshmerga have already proven to be one of the most capable forces on the battlefield, and making sure that they are strong, making sure that they are well-equipped is crucial to defeat-

ing the ISIS threat that confronts us all. The Peshmerga are continuing to fight despite not being paid for months, with uncertain logistical backup, and with inadequate weapons and equipment—three strikes against them.

The Peshmerga need our help, and we must get them what they need in order to have them continue to be successful. The Peshmerga provides safe havens for Muslims, Christians, Yazidis, and people of any religious minority who have been oppressed. According to the Kurds, about 300,000 Syrian refugees and 1.5 million internally displaced persons are in the Kurdistan region, where there is a growing humanitarian crisis.

I will turn to the other poster that I have, Mr. Speaker, their fighting forces.

The burden of war and the responsibility of caring for 1.8 million additional people have pushed the Kurdistan region's economy to the brink of collapse. My friend, Igor Pasternak, recently briefed me on his visit to the Black Tiger Peshmerga base south of Mosul on the ISIS front line, and he introduced me to the Kurdistan Regional Government's representative to the U.S., Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman.

Ms. Rahman's parents were sentenced to death by Saddam Hussein because they refused to bow down to his tyranny, and instead they fought for Kurdish liberation and for human rights. Her parents lived to see Saddam's downfall, and her father continued his leadership role in the Kurdish region's struggle before being tragically assassinated by Islamic extremists in 2004.

In the Iraq city of Erbil, Sami Abdul Rahman Park honors Ms. Rahman's father and, more importantly, recognizes the immense oppression suffered by the Kurdish people.

I am pleased that KRG Representative Rahman is in the gallery today.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to announce that I will soon be introducing a resolution to honor the brave men and women of the Peshmerga and their families who are fighting bravely against the brutal evil of ISIS and to stand with the Kurdish people as they continue to endure great hardships during this war.

God bless each and every one of them.

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VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, since 1970, more Americans have been killed from domestic gun violence than all the Americans killed in every war going back to the American Revolution.

If all the victims of gun violence since 1970 were put on a wall like the Vietnam Memorial, it would contain

1.5 million names and stretch 2½ miles, 25 times the length of the Vietnam Memorial.

I have had enough of Congress' failure to lead. So each month that we are in session, I am going to speak the name of every person killed in a mass shooting in this country. I will also create my own memorial wall in the hallway outside my office.

Here are the stories of some of the victims of the 18 mass shootings in January of this year. There have been so many people last month affected by mass shootings that I don't have the time to list those who were injured, just those who were murdered.

David Washington, age 24, Eneida Branch, age 31, and Angelica Guadalupe Castro, age 23, who were shot and killed in a house on January 6 in Lakeland, Florida.

Antoine Bell, age 17, was shot and killed while helping a woman with car trouble on January 7 in Memphis, Tennessee.

Raymon Blount, age 29, was shot and killed while standing on the street on January 8 in Chicago, Illinois.

Ira Brown, age 20, was shot and killed on January 11 during a home robbery in Wilmington, Delaware.

Joshua Steven Morrison, age 18, was killed near a house party January 17 in Gloucester County, Virginia.

Randy Peterson, age 64, was a bank president shot and killed during a robbery on January 21 in Eufaula, Oklahoma.

Kevin McGrath, Sr., age 47, and Shanna McGrath, age 42, were killed at their family home on January 23 in Crestview, Florida. Elbert L. Merrick, age 22, was killed outside the home on the road.

Jason and Jacob McLemore, a father and son, age 44 and 17, were killed at the gun store they owned in a dispute over a \$25 service fee. This was on January 23 in Pearl River County, Mississippi.

Cyjia Nicole Bell, age 16, Shujaa Jasiri Silver, age 19, were killed outside a liquor store on January 23 in Los Angeles, California.

An unidentified man was killed at a Mexican restaurant on January 25 in Perris, California.

James Quoc Tran, age 33, and Jeanine L. Zapata, age 45, were killed at a homeless encampment on January 26 in Seattle, Washington.

The Dooley family, including mother Lori, father Todd, son Landon, daughter Brooke, and grandmother Doris, were killed at their family home on January 27 in Chesapeake, Virginia. The shooter, their son, Cameron Dooley, committed suicide after murdering the family.

Andre Gray, age 42, and Tina Gray, age 42, were killed at their family home on January 29 in Caroline County, Virginia.

Sean Marquez, age 19, Jose Aguirre-Martinez, age 19, and Yovani Flores, age 16, were killed at a house party on January 30 in Glendale, Arizona. Sean Marquez died in his sister's arms.

Victor Mendoza, age 46, was shot and killed at a motorcycle show in Denver, Colorado, on January 30.

May the dead rest in peace and the wounded recover completely. It is time. It is time for Congress to end this bloodshed.

APRIL BROOKS' STORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, the war on coal touches nearly every family in southern West Virginia. President Obama and his EPA regulations don't just close mines. They put families out of work.

Coal miners call it job scare. Every time miners go underground, they don't know, when they come up, if they will receive a WARN notice telling them that they are going to be laid off. Families worry about making ends meet or moving to find work someplace else.

Businesses that depend on coal are suffering, too. CSX recently announced it is closing its Huntington division and moving its jobs to another State, in part because of the decline in coal shipments. Norfolk Southern in Bluefield is also moving jobs out of Bluefield, West Virginia.

Shops and restaurants are closing their doors, as families leave town and have less disposable income. Walmart in McDowell County has recently shut its doors, and the residents in the area have to drive to another State just to get groceries. The uncertainty can be paralyzing.

This is reality for so many of my constituents like April Brooks of Princeton in Mercer County. April writes me:

"My husband has worked in the mining industry for the last eleven years, and my dad was a coal miner for over thirty years.

"Like every family that depends on coal for a living, we live day to day worrying about what will happen tomorrow. You can't plan for the future because of the uncertainty.

"I went back to work several years ago so that we would have supplemental income in case of layoffs. We love our State, but how does one stay here and survive if the jobs aren't there?"

Mr. Speaker, President Obama's job-killing overregulations are having real consequences for real West Virginians. We need to pass policies that create jobs and ensure a future for all West Virginians, all West Virginia families, so they can stay and work and live in our great State.

CLEAN POWER PLAN

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of EPA's Clean Power Plan.

I am concerned that the Supreme Court ruling on the Clean Power Plan will significantly and unnecessarily delay the full implementation of this important action.

The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and the less chance that we have to keep this world's warming below a safe threshold.

This week's Supreme Court decision only highlights Congress' inaction on the issue of climate change as well as the immediate and pressing need for action.

A damaged climate has a negative impact upon our Nation and on my southern California community. Changing weather patterns, more frequent droughts, worsening air quality, and sea level rise all cost us money and threaten the well-being of our families and our neighbors.

We all want the world to be safe, to be a healthy place to raise our families and to grow our economy. Now America has the opportunity to lead the world in making our environment safe and healthy, both now and into the future.

We can do this by increasing our use of local, renewable energy sources, investing in research and development to bring about the next generation of clean and efficient energy systems, and assisting communities both here and abroad in adapting to the inevitable changes that have already been done to the climate.

Reducing emissions from our power sector is a foundational action in this endeavor. This is an achievable endeavor.

America's innovation has given us spaceflight, the Internet, cures to disease once thought to be incurable. Our innovation and our leadership is paving the way for a cleaner, safer world, and many States have already determined how they can meet their goals and reduce carbon pollution.

Cities and electric utilities in my district have taken the extraordinary steps in increasing efficiency and sustainable practices to reduce their carbon footprint.

My State of California is on track to exceed its carbon pollution reduction goals under the Clean Power Plan. California implemented the first statewide carbon trading system and has set ambitious targets for increasing renewable energy, increased efficiency, and decreased petroleum usage.

America's leadership like this will save us money and create jobs, but if we delay, the costs will be higher to us and especially to our children and grandchildren.

We are not doing this alone. Because greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide spread around the world, no country is immune to the damaged climate. No country can fix this problem alone.