

make contact with outside parties when they initiate it, when they are reaching out for more information on a candidate to make a decision. So they are not making a decision.

Basically, they said, don't call us, we will call you. But no one I know—no one—has received any kind of contact from the DOJ, which makes it pretty clear to me that they are not seriously reviewing the case.

To recap, the President said: It is not on my desk. The Chief of Staff said: I don't know anything about the case, talk to this person at DOJ; and that person, more than 2 months later, told someone to tell me that we will call you if we are seriously reviewing the case. And there has been nothing from the Obama administration.

That is why I continue to call on Puerto Ricans and people of good conscience to come on October 9 to Washington, D.C., as we join together to show our unity and resolve that Oscar Lopez Rivera should be set free to return to Puerto Rico.

Mr. Speaker, I don't mean to be rude, but my message to Puerto Ricans about Oscar Lopez Rivera is so important, I will deliver the rest in Spanish with a translation provided to the House.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

I am sad to say that our optimism and confidence that President Obama would finally set Oscar Lopez Rivera free is in jeopardy.

Every indication I am getting from the President and his staff is that the review of Oscar's case is not progressing, so we need to make our voices perfectly clear and work together to send the strongest possible message to the President.

If you need to walk, take a bus, crawl, or swim to get to Washington on October 9, you should do so.

We will be gathering on Sunday, October 9, across the street from the White House in Lafayette Park with celebrities, leaders and Puerto Ricans of all kinds.

We cannot let our brother die in jail.

We cannot let our nation be ignored.

We must stand together as Puerto Ricans—no matter who we are, no matter where we were born, no matter where we live now—and tell the President of the United States and the government here in Washington that 35 years is enough. Enough.

We want our brother, Oscar Lopez Rivera, to walk amongst us and to touch his feet on the warm land of Puerto Rico again.

Show that you care and that you will not be silent. Join us on October 9.

Me da tristeza decir que el optimismo y la confianza que el Presidente Obama liberará a Oscar López Rivera está en grave peligro.

Cada vez que me he comunicado con el personal del Presidente me han indicado que la evaluación del caso de Oscar no está progresando; por eso tenemos que hacer nuestras voces

perfectamente claras y trabajar juntos para mandarle el mensaje más fuerte posible al Presidente.

Si tienen que caminar, tomar un autobús, gatear o nadar para llegar a Washington el 9 de octubre, háganlo.

Estaremos reunidos con celebridades, líderes, y Puertorriqueños de todo tipo el domingo, 9 de octubre al cruzar la calle de la Casa Blanca, en Lafayette Park.

No podemos dejar que nuestro hermano muera encarcelado.

No podemos dejar que nuestra patria sea ignorada.

Debemos seguir unidos como Puertorriqueños—sin importar quienes somos, donde nacimos y donde vivimos ahora—y decirle al Presidente de los Estados Unidos y al gobierno aquí en Washington que 35 años es suficiente. Ya basta.

Queremos que nuestro hermano, Oscar López Rivera, camine entre nosotros y que sus pies toquen la tierra cálida de Puerto Rico una vez más.

Demuestren que esto les importa, y que no se quedarán callados. Únete a nosotros el 9 de octubre.

FISCAL CLIFF IS LOOMING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I heard Congressman Mo Brooks from Alabama give a very disturbing speech, but a speech that everyone should hear, and that is: America is headed toward Greece. Financially we are in a bad situation. We are \$19.4 trillion in debt.

In 2000 I was here when President Clinton was leaving office. We had a Republican House, a Republican Senate, and we were headed for a surplus. In fact, the debt in 2000 was \$5.6 trillion. Today that debt is \$19.4 trillion.

The poster I have with me, Mr. Speaker, I used all during August. It is a great political cartoon. It is kind of sad in a way, I guess. The cartoon is this: It has got Uncle Sam in a wheelchair, and Uncle Sam is saying, "I can see Greece from here," and the cliff has got written the words "fiscal cliff." And then who is pushing Uncle Sam but Mr. Obama, and he is saying, "Forward." And who is pushing Mr. Obama? The donkey, representing the Democrats? Who is pushing the donkey? The Republicans, the elephant. What it is saying is both parties are guilty of this debt that is going to strangle this country before very long.

Last week there was an article in Reuters News. The headline was: "U.S. Army Fudged Its Accounts by Trillions of Dollars, Auditor Finds." The auditor said that, in the year 2015, he found that the Army had misappropriated over \$6 trillion. I don't know where the outrage is anymore. I have no idea where it is. Six trillion dollars they cannot account for. And yet I hear very little about it from the Department of

the Army and very little from leadership in the House of Representatives.

In addition to that, I, for months, and maybe even years now, have been talking about the absolute waste, fraud, and abuse in Afghanistan. It is one of the worst failed policies America has ever had. We are not changing anything.

You go back to Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great went to Afghanistan, or what was known as Afghanistan then. He was going to make it a different part of the world. It failed.

Then you had the British. Winston Churchill was a young reporter and was in Afghanistan in 1920. He wrote and said: What is this country? What is this land? It is impossible.

And then you had the Russians. The Russians went there, and they failed and they left. Now America is spending billions and billions of dollars, and it is failing.

There was an article about 3 months ago, and the title of the article was: "12 Ways Your Tax Dollars Were Squandered in Afghanistan." John Sopko is the inspector general for Afghan Reconstruction. What he said was:

Billions have been squandered on projects that were either useless or substandard, or lost to waste, corruption, and systemic abuse, according to SIGAR's reports.

That is John Sopko's group. They are known as SIGAR. Anyone can look it up on the Internet. They will just verify everything I am saying of just how much waste, fraud, and abuse, and how it is worse today than it was 15 years ago.

I do not understand how we in Congress can be complicit.

Well, what do you mean complicit?

Well, when we pass the bill to fund the Department of Defense, if we know a percentage of that money, billions of dollars, is going to Afghanistan waste, fraud, and abuse, aren't we being complicit? I think so. I started voting against the bills because I don't want to be part of that, quite frankly.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank Congressman Brooks for coming on this floor yesterday, as I have done many times, to warn not only Congress but the American people that we are going to have a collapse sooner rather than later if we don't change the way that we are spending money here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our men and women in uniform, thank the families of our men and women in uniform, and thank the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

PEOPLE ARE JUSTIFIABLY CONCERNED ABOUT ZIKA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, after one of the longest congressional breaks

in history, House Republicans are trying to wrap things up and leave town, leaving critical work unfinished. Meanwhile, millions of Americans in New York, Florida, and throughout the United States are justifiably concerned about the dangers of the Zika virus.

Nowhere has this disease hit harder than in Puerto Rico, where Zika has become an epidemic. As of last week, more than 1,380 pregnant women in Puerto Rico have been diagnosed with Zika; and overall, there have been 16,000 laboratory cases of the virus found on the island.

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It would be a tragic and heart-breaking mistake for this Congress to ignore the severity of this threat. Let us be clear: this is the first time we have identified a “mosquito-borne” form of birth defect. It is also the first new, major infectious cause of birth defects in five decades.

There are some things we do not know about the Zika virus. It is not clear what proportion of infants affected by the virus will suffer birth defects, but what we have seen so far is saddening, troubling, and horrifying. To look upon their helpless faces and do nothing is unconscionable. Yet, despite what we do not know, one thing is tragically clear: this House has failed to provide adequate resources to address this danger.

It has now been 7 months since President Obama’s administration requested adequate resources to help stem the threat of Zika, but House Republicans have taken zero—I repeat, zero—votes on adequate funding that will help tackle this problem.

Now, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is telling us they are running out of money to deal with this potential catastrophe. There are critical public health steps we need to take but cannot because the CDC is essentially out of money. Already, NIH is drawing resources from other priorities, like HIV and AIDS and cancer research, because this body has failed to act.

Sometimes my colleagues on the other side like to talk about how we must “protect the unborn.” Well, let me ask you this: When we fail to tackle a disease that causes unborn babies to develop birth defects that will haunt them the rest of their lives, how are we protecting the unborn?

These are innocent children—American children in Puerto Rico and on the mainland—who are suffering enormously because this Congress has not done its job. We are learning that this disease is sexually transmitted, making contraception a key part of any solution. But Republicans are raising objections to adequate funding for contraception.

Mr. Speaker, protecting the safety and health of the American people is a solemn obligation for every Member of Congress. It is a responsibility that we are currently not living up to.

I call on my colleagues to do the right thing. Do your job. Pass a supplemental funding bill so the CDC can get to work and help stop this terrible virus from spreading.

DOL OVERTIME RULE

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to represent the concerns of Kentucky’s Sixth Congressional District’s business, education, and nonprofit leaders who will be negatively impacted by the Department of Labor’s final rule on overtime pay. These new regulations will have a crippling effect on businesses’ ability to create jobs and even continue operations in our already tough economic climate.

Today I want to share some stories from my constituents, who are among the millions of Americans whose businesses and educational institutions and nonprofits will be significantly harmed by the Department of Labor’s final rule.

Darshana Patel, a first-generation American who emigrated to Kentucky from India, sat in my office with tears in her eyes, voicing concerns to me about the impact of the overtime rule on the three hotels that she worked hard to build and own.

As a result of the high cost of the rule, Mrs. Patel’s small business will be forced to demote a manager who has worked with her for 14 years to an hourly position on December 1. She also worries that she will have to let go some of her employees. She says she will be forced to take these drastic actions because, with this rule, she will have to come up with about \$25,000 per property—money that she did not budget for.

This hardworking, first-generation American entrepreneur was crying because she said she came to this country to achieve the American Dream, and the government of the United States is tearing that dream apart with over-regulation.

According to the Asian American Hotel Owners Association, more than half of hotel managers in the United States start in entry level positions. The Department of Labor rule will reduce employment opportunities for these workers just starting off and significantly limit upward mobility.

The Department of Labor’s overtime rule will also negatively impact educational employment opportunities at our colleges and universities. The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, which includes the University of Kentucky, in my district, has stated that the overtime rule will likely place upward pressure on tuition and adversely impact outreach missions of universities. Because of the rule, students who are already facing significant barriers to accessing higher education will be further burdened by increased tuition.

Caroline Ruschell, the executive director of the Kentucky Association of Children’s Advocacy Centers, also reached out to me about the negative impact of the overtime rule on her organization’s critical work with child victims of sexual abuse.

To avoid penalties under the overtime rule, many clinics that provide vital exams and treatment to sexually abused children will be forced to reduce the hours of salaried workers, while supplementing those lost hours by overworking other employees. This will result in lower quality care and longer wait times for children to receive the critical treatment they need after facing such horrific trauma.

While the Department of Labor bureaucrats claim that the overtime rule will improve economic conditions for middle-class employees, this onerous regulation on businesses, educational institutions, and nonprofits will have the exact opposite effect by reducing job opportunities and limiting hours for many workers. Nonprofit and universities doing critical work in our communities will be forced to reduce the reach of their efforts by these burdensome regulations.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015, regulations cost us \$1.89 trillion in lost productivity and growth. At a time when job creation and small business growth are critical to our recovering economy, the Department of Labor’s final regulation will be detrimental for millions of hard-working Americans.

This regulation, like so many other regulations in the avalanche of red tape coming out of the Obama administration, hurts the very people that they claim that they are trying to protect and that they are trying to help.

Nearly 8 years after the Great Recession, Americans are stuck in the slowest and weakest economic recovery of their lifetimes, and the reason is simple: this administration is burying the American economy in red tape.

Enough is enough. Leave the American people alone and let them do their work.

VOTE ON GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, on July 14, Republican leaders recessed the House for 7 weeks without taking a single vote on legislation to help keep Americans safe from gun violence.

Ignoring an issue that you don’t want to deal with doesn’t make it go away. House Republicans desperately need to learn that lesson. When Republican leaders in the House refuse to deal with gun violence, the American people pay the price.

During the 7 weeks that the House was in recess, 2,015 people were killed by someone using a gun. Thousands of families across our country have spent the last 7 weeks grieving.