

I'm proud, as a new Representative, to be part of this group of people supporting the cut, cap, and balance measure that would bring our spending under control. So we ought to be proud. That's an early victory. The markets, at least, believe we are serious about getting this spending under control. I hope we can play this out and prove that we are serious.

The other thing that my colleague from Arizona said that struck a chord with me was this notion that statesmen look not just to the next election, they look to the next generation.

There was a group of people back 150 years ago that entered politics. It was around the 1850s, and they entered politics certainly looking to the next generation. It was their belief that every man, woman, and child should be entitled to the fruits of their labor. They weren't partisans. In fact, they were Know-Nothings. They were independents, some Democrats. They came together with this notion, though, that everyone should be entitled to the fruits of their labor.

Well, when we continue to spend money we don't have, oftentimes on things we don't need, and kick the debt forward another year, another 5 years, another 10 years, another generation or two down the road, ladies and gentlemen, we are committing the fruits of the next generation's labor to pay off our current debt.

Madam Speaker, I think this is wrong. I think this cut, cap, and balance plan is a viable plan, a specific plan to stop this practice so that everyone, my four children, everyone else's grandchildren and great grandchildren, will not be paying off our future debts.

So again, I urge consideration and support of this cut, cap, and balance plan. And for those who are unable to support it, I would ask them to put forth a specific plan of their own, one that will get our spending under control and put this Nation back on the right fiscal course.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, let me just close with these thoughts. There are a lot of people that have sacrificed profoundly for this Nation. There are people lying out in Arlington National Cemetery tonight, and I wonder what their perspective would be if they could come back among us for just a few moments?

While none of us knows that, Madam Speaker, I would suggest to you that they didn't die so that we could spend our country into bankruptcy, so that we could weaken our Nation on all fronts simply because we weren't fiscally responsible. And they didn't die so that we could put ourselves so deeply in debt that we spent tens of thousands for each little child born today so that they would have to carry that the rest of their lives.

They wanted, as the Founding Fathers talked about, to see every person, not only in America but, ultimately, in the world, to be able to be born and to

lay hold on the miracle of life and to be free and to pursue their dreams. That's what they wanted. Sometimes I am so afraid that we have gotten away from that vision to the extent that we've grown sort of callous and cynical.

I hope that we can revisit those ideals tomorrow, and that we can force ourselves to remember that all of history and all of the future is watching us, and that what we do here tomorrow could mean the difference for America for decades and generations to come.

I believe if we do the right thing, that the loneliest moments in an old age home will be livable because we'll look back and say, you know, that's what we did. We did the right thing. And I hope we do that for the sake of my children, for the sake of America's children, and for the sake, somehow, of the children throughout the world that can be still touched by the message of this, the greatest Republic in the history of humanity.

Madam Speaker, if we will protect our constitutional foundations, if we will protect our economic base, if we will protect those things that make us who we are, then I believe that this government will have all of the revenue that it needs. I believe we will continue and go forward to be more productive than we have ever been, and I believe that America still has great things in the world to do. I hope we make sure that that occurs.

With that, with great respect, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2560, CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE ACT OF 2011

Mr. WOODALL (during the Special Order of Mr. FRANKS of Arizona) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-150) on the resolution (H. Res. 355) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2560) to cut, cap, and balance the Federal budget, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here this evening once again with my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues to talk about the need for jobs, jobs, and more jobs, and how we ought to be dealing with the debt limit and our debt crisis. Let me begin with jobs. That's not a new topic for the Congressional Black Caucus, because our communities unfortunately have a long-term and intractable history of unemployment.

Every year that I have been here, and I'm sure for the 40 years of our exist-

ence, job creation has been a priority, and that includes summer jobs for our young people, something we still have not been able to get the Congress to recognize and fund as critical to the well-being of our young people and our communities. In this Congress alone, CBC members have introduced more than 30 job-creating pieces of legislation, and we've cosponsored many, many more introduced by our Democratic colleague.

Need I remind you that the Republican leadership has still, today, done nothing to create one job. Meanwhile, unemployment remains a crisis in our country, and in the African American community it's a catastrophe.

And where is the patriotism of our corporations who are sitting on billions of dollars and still not hiring? I would say that if there is uncertainty in that sector, the corporate sector, welcome to the club.

As the gentleman from Arizona said, lack of confidence. But the cause of this lack of confidence in the corporate sector, in the banking sector and on Wall Street has got to do more with the gridlock, I think, that's caused by the Republican leadership who won't even consider the balanced approach that the President is asking us to take. And all this time the rest of the world is looking at us, watching this sorry mess that we're calling governing. I can't imagine that our allies in those countries around the world that look to us for leadership have much confidence in us either right now.

I am pleased to be joined this evening, Madam Speaker, by several of my colleagues, but I'd like to begin first to yield such time as he might consume to a reverend, to the former mayor of Kansas City, now our distinguished leader of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressman EMANUEL CLEAVER.

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Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, let me first of all express appreciation to Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN, Dr. DONNA CHRISTENSEN, for how she has put forth boundless energy making sure that we keep this issue of joblessness in front of us.

Let me first of all say that I did two interviews during the votes today, one with ABC News. And as I stood before the cameras they showed me two comments, one from a gentleman who said that he was so disgusted with Congress because nothing is being done and he believed that we needed to start trying to deal with the problems. He thought that we should not be raising the taxes on what he called "ordinary" people or low-income working people.

The other interview I did was on Fox and was an interview where I was interviewed about the joblessness among African Americans. I think both of those intersect. And the reason for this is, I said to people that as a Democrat I was embarrassed that during the last session of Congress we failed to listen to the American public. The public said they were interested in jobs.

I would go home to my district in Kansas City, Missouri, and people would simply talk about the need for jobs. I would come back to Washington, and the only thing we talked about was health care. And health care was important, I supported it—it was not the bill that I wanted, but I supported it anyway. And many of us supported it because of the way in which you, Dr. CHRISTENSEN, as a physician, presented us with how valuable it would be. But the point is we never, ever dealt with jobs. We are now into our 194th day into this Congress, and I am sorry and I am embarrassed that we have not created one single job.

African American unemployment is at 16.2. If you use what the Labor Department uses to factor real unemployment—it's called U-6—the U-6 unemployment for African Americans is at 30 percent. This is higher than the Depression. The 1929 fall of Wall Street created unemployment that devastated not only this country, but the entire world.

I am saying here on the floor—in this sacred well—that African American unemployment is at a crisis level. Why would that be important to somebody who's not African American or who lives in a community where there are no African Americans? Well, in the first place, we ought to be concerned about all Americans, period. And the day that I am not concerned with all Americans, I want that to be my last day in this body. I would say at this point that the congressional district from which I come is only 18 percent African American, but the people of good will in my district understand that all Americans should have equal access to jobs.

There are a plethora of reasons for the African American unemployment being so high—I won't get into all of them—but I want to tell you that if we had unemployment among any group in America, whether they were news anchors, whether they were comedians, no matter what the group, I think that this country would be in a crisis mode. We would have commissions; we would have the top economists and labor experts becoming involved, trying to figure out how can we erase or reduce the level of unemployment among this particular group. Now unemployment is at 9.2 percent with all Americans. That is unacceptable in the most powerful, industrialized, technologically advanced Nation on this planet; 9.2 is unacceptable, 16.2 is sinful, it is sinful in this country. I believe that we have got to figure out ways in which we can get something done.

One of the gentlemen said during the pre-interview with me that he believed, to quote him exactly, that "Congress is broke." It pains me, I've got to tell you, that I think he is right. I think it is a broken body, but the public has participated. The public is culpable as well, and that is this, we have people who run thermonuclear campaigns. And instead of public people saying

anybody who would run a nasty campaign is going to be nasty when they get in office, so I'm not going to vote for him or her, but that's not what the public says. They cheer, they rah-rah this negativity on.

And the people who run the nasty campaigns on both sides end up in this body, and they just simply escalate it with more publicity. And until the United States citizenry comes to the conclusion that they are sick and tired of what's going on and begin to punish people for being nasty, it's going to get worse and worse and worse.

I would love to be able to some day close my eyes, fall asleep among the elders, and believe before I go that the United States of America will present to my children—and their children and even their progeny—a state that has opened up opportunities to everyone and a state where the government works. We cannot get anything done because anybody who raises their head and presents something, if they belong to the wrong party, they're not going to get recognized and nothing is going to get done. Republicans do it; Democrats do it. It's wrong no matter who does it.

What we are facing right now is a situation that is grave, and I don't even think the Republican nor Democratic Parties in this body understand that we can't simply go as we are going. We're talking about the debt ceiling. It has to be raised. It is absolutely ridiculous to say that we shouldn't raise it. I sit in my apartment across the street from the Capitol at night looking at television and listening to people who know better say that it's all right, it's no problem, we can let the debt ceiling remain under the \$14.3 trillion and nothing cataclysmic will happen. And they know better. I would feel a lot better if people would say something and really meant it because they didn't know better. But they do know better, but many in the public don't, and so they think there's no big deal.

Look, if we don't raise the debt ceiling, we can pay 60 percent of our debts, but we've got to make some concrete choices on who gets that 60 percent. And no matter who gets it, it will create a cataclysm for the United States and perhaps the entire world. Italy, Spain, Greece and Ireland are already in trouble in Europe. And they don't have central banks like we have. We have the Federal Reserve, and so to some degree we can go out and have an auction of Treasury notes and bring in revenue; they don't. But if we end up having a very, very serious economic problem in this country, it's going to trigger a world-wide recession. Nobody wins. Nobody comes out on top if this happens. And the unemployment numbers, 9.2, they are going to rise.

I don't want people looking at this tonight or any of my colleagues believing that those are my numbers or that I am the only one who believes there is going to be trouble. Ben Bernanke, re-appointed by George Bush, says that if

we make deep cuts in the U.S. budget, it is going to create a problem because right now the only money that is going into the U.S. economy, into the GDP, into the economic activity is coming from the United States Federal Government.

And if you begin to cut back drastically, it cannot help but raise the unemployment numbers. And if we fool around and fail to raise the debt ceiling or just walk to the cliff, walk to the edge, walk to the precipice, the bond rating agencies, who have already warned us—and these are not Democratic bond rating agencies, these are not Congressional Black Caucus bond rating agencies, these are not Republican bond rating agencies, they are the bond rating agencies of the United States of America—and they tell us when we're in trouble and they tell us when we're in good stead. And they have said to us, if you walk to the precipice, we are going to end up getting in trouble because they're going to downgrade our bond rating. What does that mean?

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Well, it means that the interest rates are going to rise. China is our number one creditor, external. Most people think that we owe more money to foreign governments than we owe anyplace else, which is not true. The majority of the debt is held by citizens of the United States. China is number one outside the country, and then Japan. Well, China has no other place to make investments, so that's to our advantage. Japan has nowhere else to make investments. That's to our advantage. But they are going to say to us, Look, you guys are not paying your bills, and if you're not going to pay your bills, it is a greater risk to us.

And what happens when there's a greater risk? We're going to raise your interest rates. So if the interest rates are raised on the United States, they're going to be raised in all of the banks and anyplace else where we seek credit. That is going to create a problem.

I don't understand how and why we have allowed all of this false information to go out about how this will not matter and nothing is going to happen. It has nothing to do with the facts. It has to do with the partisanship. It has to do with partisanship. And in this town, in this place, we allow ideology to trump everything. Everything falls second to ideology.

I don't understand how anybody could come to this place and say, I come here so that I won't have to compromise. You have to compromise. There's not a person in the world who has been married for any length of time who doesn't understand the word "compromise." If they don't understand word "compromise," then they understand the word "divorce."

And so what we've got to understand here is that we're going to divorce this Nation—one side red, one side blue, one side left, one side right—and we can't

get anything accomplished as a consolidated Nation.

Let me just say a couple of other things, and I'm through, Madam Speaker, and, that is, if I can go back to the jobs issue just for a moment. We know that only 18,000 jobs were created in the United States last month. We need probably 233,000 jobs each month to be created in the United States. Why? Because that's about the number of new employees or people seeking work who come into the work market, so we've got to constantly create jobs.

People who were laid off work 3 or 4 years and haven't found work, if the economy broke tomorrow and we were allowed to begin to see hiring in the major corporations, the 10 employees who were laid off 3 or 4 years ago would now be three or four employees called back to work. Why? Because technology is constantly growing and advancing, and where we needed 10 line workers 3 or 4 years ago, we only need two or three workers today, which means that we've got to educate the workforce.

What does that mean to the country? Well, if we don't educate the workforce in the United States, it means that the imbalance of trade with other countries is going to rise, because other nations are going to be able to provide what we can't provide and they're going to do it at a lower cost. We've got to have a workforce that can compete with China and India and Japan and Indonesia and Vietnam, because if we don't, American corporations are going to continue to try to do business abroad.

We cannot ignore the fact that a lot of those jobs, positions, were held by African Americans, and they need to be retrained. We need to retool the U.S. workforce. Let me tell you why we have some numbers that are disproportionate with African Americans, because I don't want people doing what has been done in this country for the last 400 years. Some people assume, well, you know, the African American numbers are high because African Americans don't want to work. We've heard all of that unfortunately over the years. The only reason we know what the numbers are is because those are the individuals who are out seeking work, who have gone to the unemployment agencies in their States, and that's how we know that the unemployment numbers are what they are.

But keep in mind, and nobody probably thinks about this. Every time you read about a State laying off workers, a municipality laying off firefighters or police officers, or if you find any government agency laying off, it means that the number of African Americans who are unemployed will rise, and the reason for that is that African Americans disproportionately seek work in the government. We've done it historically because it was always believed that if you could work for the government, the chances are less likely for you to be discriminated against, so we

have a large number of African Americans who work for the government.

You see all of these State layoffs all over the country, and I want people to realize when you see those numbers, please understand that a disproportionate number of them are African American.

Now, while we are here fiddling instead of trying to deal with some real problems in this country, there are people with real problems. People who don't have a job, they have a problem. I'm willing to compromise. I've talked about others who won't. I will. I'm willing to compromise. I've already compromised.

My father turned 89 years old last Friday. Thank God. Glory. Hallelujah. I'm happy. He's in great condition, probably better physical condition than me—doctor, I'm going to do better—and my uncle, who is 87. I'm thrilled and fortunate and blessed that they have this kind of longevity in the Cleaver line. But I'm not ever, ever going to compromise on one aspect, and that is Social Security.

My father has worked since he was a kid. His brother has worked since he was a kid. For me to ever support reducing the benefits for somebody who paid into Social Security—this is not some kind of giveaway program. Everybody in this country who paid the payroll tax paid into Social Security, and in their sunset years, they deserve the opportunity to live as decently and in as healthy an environment as possible. And so I'm not going to compromise on Social Security, at least on the benefits.

I will compromise if we raise the age at which people can qualify, 10 years down the road. I will compromise on lifting the cap on \$106,000. Right now if you earn above \$106,000, you will pay Social Security taxes only on the amount under \$106,000. So you can make 6 gazillion dollars and never pay Social Security taxes on but about \$105,000, which I think is actually silly.

Those of us who have been blessed to earn more than \$106,000 should understand how fortunate we are, and so we should pay above the cap. It's wrong. It's not right for people who earn a meager salary to have to struggle when there are people making \$106,000 and not even paying Social Security tax.

I am representing Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, and I want to focus some attention before I close, Madam Speaker, on a tragedy occurring in Missouri and the entire Midwest region, for that matter. Currently, farmland and homes are underwater along the Missouri River, from Montana to my home State of Missouri. Record snowmelt runoff this spring along with unexpected record rainfall in the upper river basin filled up the reservoirs in eastern Montana and the Dakotas and word is the Army Corps of Engineers plans to release large amounts of water from the reservoirs to keep them from overflowing. That excess water has flowed down-

stream, creating a path of destruction in its wake.

Levees have been breached in Iowa, Nebraska and in my home State in northwest Missouri, causing flooding of farmland, road closures including Interstate 29, and evacuations. More than 500,000 acres of land have been flooded in the seven States along the river. The high waters have moved eastward and further downstream in Missouri, causing high water and flooding in Ray, Saline and Carroll Counties.

□ 2040

I have gone to those areas. I have seen the flooding. I have looked at the fields that farmers would normally have corn growing in underwater. If we are here in Washington twiddling our thumbs, and the farmers in Missouri and other States, for that matter, are struggling just to make it—and with rivers still running above flood stage and soil saturated, forecasters have predicted this summer flooding season could rival the worst in U.S. history. That means what was called the "Great Flood of 1993" during my term as mayor, cost about \$25 billion in damage—this would exceed \$25 billion.

The excessive high temperatures sweeping across the Nation this week cannot erase concerns about river flooding. These high river levels are not going away any time soon, and neither is the risk of flooding. There will be sustained high water along the Missouri River through August as the reservoirs continue releasing high volumes of water. Due to this high water and saturated soil, just a small amount of rain could trigger more flooding in areas that have already seen record flooding in 2011.

Obviously, we cannot plan for every natural disaster. However, we have the responsibility to take preventive measures whenever possible. The original purpose of these upper Missouri basin dams was flood protection. Over the years other priorities may have slipped in. However, I believe now is the time to reevaluate the Corps of Engineers management plans and once again place the safety and livelihood of people who live and work along the river first.

Reservoir levels need to be lowered between October and April so fewer releases are needed during the spring rain season. A goal of targeted releases should be that they not exceed any given flood stage downstream. And, if releases above flood stage levels are required, then a maximum flow of no more than 5 feet over given flood stages for no longer than 15 consecutive days could be set, followed by 5 consecutive days below given flood states. This cycle could be repeated as necessary and would reduce downstream damages. This or other contingency planning is needed to prevent flooding events such as this year's from happening again.

Madam Speaker, we are here dealing with political—I think "shenanigans"

is a word that would fit. People out in the country, the real people, are struggling. Whether it is from flooding or unemployment, they are struggling, and the Congress of the United States needs to act.

You know, one of the reasons we can't get anything done with jobs, as I mentioned earlier, or the flooding problem, is this bickering based on political affiliation. Here is one thing I learned. I am always watching Animal Channel and the Discovery Channel. My family always makes fun of me. But I learned something a few years ago watching the Discovery Channel. Bees cannot sting and make honey at the same time. They either have to become stingers or honey makers. What has happened here is we have become stingers, and, therefore, we are not making any honey or laws to help the American public.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Chairman CLEAVER, and thank you for making it so very clear to those listening this evening what the real situation is in this country and how important it is for us to act to help the American people.

You have heard Reverend and Chairman CLEAVER talk about the job situation and the floods and other challenges the American people are facing. And now to add insult to injury, instead of passing a clean increase to the debt ceiling, as we have done in the past, our country and our good credit is being held hostage by Republicans, pushed by their tea party members, who demand drastic and deep spending cuts, cuts beginning in the last quarter of this calendar year, against the advice of some of our most expert economists in this country.

The cuts in this new Cut, Cap, and Balance Act that we heard the talking points on this weekend and tonight, as our Budget ranking member VAN HOLLEN has said, put more Americans out of work while this country is still recovering from the worst recession since the Great Depression.

In the earlier hour, we heard a lot about Republican leadership, but I think they are leading us down the wrong path, the wrong path for this country and for most Americans. That bill, which will be on the floor tomorrow, would cap spending at the levels in the Republican budget that are below 2008 spending levels. It would make it near impossible, if not impossible, to make the investments that we need in education and health care, in research and infrastructure to secure our future. And it would still, with all of that, extend even more tax cuts to special interests. All it would do is hamstring our Nation's growth at a time when we are falling behind. It is not going to help to restore confidence, as the gentleman from Arizona said. Only lifting the debt ceiling will do that.

I have heard my colleagues say that the bill on the floor tomorrow will protect Social Security, Medicare, and

veterans payments, but I am not too sure about that because the cuts and the caps that they will impose are likely to lead us down a primrose path, with no way to fund those programs later on, causing us to have to renege on our promises to our seniors, our veterans, who have protected us, have been willing to make the sacrifices to protect the freedoms we enjoy.

Also targeted in that bill tomorrow, or subject to the caps, are SNAP, or food stamps, at a time when their policies are leaving more of America's families and especially their children hungry. It would include cuts to unemployment when we should really be adding 14 more weeks of unemployment, as the bill that BARBARA LEE has, as H.R. 589 would do. It would be cutting school lunches when sometimes that is the only meal that some children have that is really balanced.

It would cut college loans and Pell Grants, as though we are trying to go back to a time we don't want to go back to when only the wealthy could afford a college education. We cannot move our country forward by denying education to so many of our people. And all of this without letting those tax cuts expire and continuing to let some of the wealthiest in our country go without paying their fair share of taxes. The Cut, Cap, and Balance Act is not the way to go. Lifting the debt ceiling, doing it without having it being held hostage to cuts and bills like this balanced budget amendment, is what we should be doing.

At this time I would yield to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas, who always comes with a lot of information and words of wisdom and inspiration.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I would like to thank the manager and chairwoman of this particular hour, sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus, and for those of us who care, along with many of our members in the Congressional Black Caucus and in this Congress, I think it is important to note for our colleagues that there are many Members who truly believe in their heart that we can find a common path, a bipartisan path, and are in angst, if you will, because they want to represent their constituents in the best way possible in what seems to be the tyranny, in some instances, of the majority.

□ 2050

Frankly, I do believe in the democratic process. I believe that if you are a victor in elections, you have the right to define your agenda and to present it to the American people. But there's some instances where the American people call upon us to have those agendas set aside so that we can work for America.

So I want to thank the gentle lady for her great work on the Affordable Care Act. We are beginning to see many who never had access to health care begin to be, if you will, the beneficiaries of

preventative care, the parity with mental health issues, more health professionals that we work so hard on in the Congressional Black Caucus, and of course, access to health care for those with preexisting disease.

But I want to talk tonight to reiterate some points that were made about the double-digit unemployment among African Americans and the 36 percent unemployment among youth and just make the point to the American people, to my colleagues, that no jobs bill has been put forward by our Republican friends, absolutely no job bill. This is now July 18. A supermajority is on the other side. They could do so much alone, without any votes from Democrats. Democrats have been pushing for a jobs bill.

The Congressional Black Caucus will be leaving out in a couple of weeks to visit cities all over America to not only say we care but to talk about jobs. This summer we were going to close city pools and community centers in Houston, with temperatures of 100, 105 degrees. I felt if we couldn't find public moneys, let's work to find private moneys. We were able to open over 10 to 15 community centers and pools in my congressional district.

For me it was being able to find resources, meaning that some came forward to give the resources, but, more importantly, it created jobs for youth who could be, if you will, lifeguards. As I visited these pools and talked to young people who would not have had a job, obviously a small measure, but to at least acknowledge the desperation that we have for jobs. As we go out as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, we'll be embracing corporate leadership and others to have job fairs so that individuals can have it. Just a summer or two ago, I had a job fair in the teeming heat and thousands showed up, so much so that people were lined around the block.

Americans want to work. And in a bipartisan partnership, wouldn't it have been just great for Republican colleagues, no matter whether they're a tea party or no party, to come together and say the first act that we will engage in will be creating jobs. And out of that job creation comes growth. We've done a great job under President Obama, and we in the Democratic Party have done a great job. We've actually been creating private sector jobs every single month, and as well we did create 3 million jobs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment. That should be very clear.

And the loss of numbers or the bump in unemployment is, as our colleague indicated, for all of America, was because public sector jobs were being willy-nilly dispensed with—front liners, first responders, sanitation workers, teachers, firefighters, ambulance drivers—all over America by Republican Governors. They laid the people off en masse. In many instances, they didn't need to. There could have been ways to work it out. But they laid

them off en masse, and that gave the bump to the unemployment.

But where does that lead us today? And what I want to focus on is the fact that I want to make it very clear that members of the Congressional Black Caucus have supported many bipartisan efforts to turn our economy right side up. We have worked on infrastructure issues. We have supported transportation legislation to fix America's bridges, highways, dams, because we know how important it is. We have helped resolve our budgetary issues, our revenue issues. We have voted in unison in a bipartisan way for some legislation that may not have been in total agreement with many of our views but we did it for America. We voted for a balanced budget amendment that generated the Children's Health Insurance Program. And we need to continue to discuss this, where we are today, because we need to help the American people. And I've heard the concerns of my constituents.

Today, I was at an announcement of the use of neighborhood stabilization funds, where we work with Habitat for Humanity and open the door of houses for those who weren't ever able to have a house. Oh, you should have seen the excitement of those families. But the seniors there were asking me: Are we going to get our Social Security check?

You can't go anywhere in your district where people are not up in fury. They want to know how we can get this done.

I think it's important to note a little bit of history. Prior to the existence of the debt ceiling, Congress had to approve borrowing each time the Federal Government wished to borrow money in order to carry out its functions. With the onset of World War I and the growth of this Nation, more flexibility was needed to expand the government's capability to borrow money expeditiously in order to meet the rapidly changing requirements. That's where this came from. This is not a Democratic idea. This is not the idea of President Barack Obama.

To address this need, the debt ceiling was established in 1917, allowing the Federal Government to be the umbrella on a rainy day, to come to the aid of Americans during emergencies, to be able to address the question of war and peace. This wasn't something we developed just to agitate Members who believe they are the fiscal hawks of all time, even more so than President Reagan, who understood that the government had certain roles.

Since the debt limit was first put in place, Congress increased it over a hundred times. In fact, it was raised 10 times in the past decade, which includes the era of President George Bush and the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress last came together and raised the debt ceiling in February of 2010, and it did so with the idea that we were working together.

We understand that we are at \$14-plus trillion. There's no one who is happy

with a growing debt. But many economists will tell you that a deficit is sometimes important to take care of a country's people. Who knows what is going on in Japan right now because they need to take care of their people. They need to ensure that those who are impacted by the tsunami and the earthquake and the nuclear implosion can be taken care of—the sick people, the displaced people. And when I say not knowing what's going on, we know that they are growing a deficit.

But our country is not like Portugal and Greece, and economists that we listened to 2 weeks ago said on the record that this Nation is not broke. Let me say it again, Americans. Don't be intimidated and frightened to believe that America is broke. We can solve this problem. The way in which we are able to address it, the assets that we have, will allow us to extend the cuts over a 12-year period. Every reasoned economist in America says you cannot cut our spending overnight; you cannot cut it. So Congress is entirely within its right to be thoughtful on this issue of the debt.

And it is also important to note that what makes us so strong is we have something called United States Treasury bonds, which have traditionally been one of the safest investments another country or an investor can make. And other countries, including Americans, buy Treasury bonds. Our children are given Treasury bonds. For foreign nations and investors purchasing a U.S. Treasury bond meant that they held something virtually as safe as cash, backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. This is constitutionally worded.

And so my friends who are drawn to the tea party are suggesting that we go straight to the brink. But when you go to the brink, as my colleague has said, you begin to shake the markets. They begin to shudder. And the impact comes to the hardworking American who has been so fiscally responsible that they have put away savings for their children's college, savings for themselves if they retire. They have been dutiful. They have been respectful. But what we will do is force this market to get so shaky that those savings may be jeopardized.

□ 2100

How can we do this—the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Tea Party? If it's a registered party or a group of people, if there are members who have come here wearing the banner, they can do nothing more than adhere to that.

So we are here on the floor tonight to look for compromise and reason and to say, in turn, with the proceeds from the bonds that the Federal Government of the world's largest economy is able to finance its operations. That's us, the United States.

Let me remind everyone we have the largest economy in the world. America is not broke. We have to do better. We

have to extend our cuts. We have to balance over a period of time, almost like a household, where they begin to try to analyze what they'll be able to pay and what they'll have to cut out. You've heard families say, We've stopped going out as much as we've gone out. There are unemployed persons who have to make more devastating cuts and go into their savings. That's why I say: Where is the jobs bill that the Republicans are supposed to put on the floor of the House? Where are the jobs? Somebody used to say in an advertisement: "Where's the beef?"

So this week, my friends, we're going to be spending a whole week addressing the question of a bill called Cut, Cap, and Balance. Before I just address to you who will be hurt on Cut, Cap, and Balance—it's a balanced budget amendment that came out of the Judiciary Committee of which I'm a member—I just want you to know that every State can stand up here and say that, but I want to put it on the record that it has come to my attention that:

Social Security beneficiaries in Texas, 3,440,442, likely will be impacted. The total number of Social Security beneficiaries in Harris County—that's where Houston, Texas is, which is the fourth largest city in the Nation and is a very diverse city—is 429,760, which might include SSI, which is for those who are in need of moneys because of their children or they're disabled. There are 780,000 seniors and individuals with disabilities in the metro area who are currently enrolled in Medicare—the lifeline of our seniors—and there are currently 145,000 individuals in the district, the 18th Congressional District, who are on Medicaid. It's interesting to note that the Medicaid issue has not even been discussed.

So here we have a week of Cut, Cap, and Balance. Frankly, the Treasury bond is in jeopardy. The marketplace of innocent, hardworking Americans who have saved and invested in those bonds, who owe nations around the world, who bought what they thought was a rock-solid investment are now teetering because we're willing to take this week to discuss a bill called Cut, Cap, and Balance, which the President of the United States has already indicated that he intends to veto, and there's a question of whether or not the Senate will even address this bill. So we will spend our time wasting and debating so that someone can get a political mark.

Let me express my understanding of Members who need a political mark: I voted for a bill that will never pass and could never be a useful tool in the United States. You can go home, as you bang your chest, and suggest, I showed them. I told them what it was. I voted for the Cut, Cap, and Balance.

By the way, there is no doubt that this will possibly pass, because Republicans have a supermajority, but do you know what this is? This is playing political chicken. Who will blink? We have never played political chicken

with the raising of the debt ceiling. We have never put the American people in this jeopardy. We didn't do it to Ronald Reagan. We didn't do it to Jimmy Carter. We didn't do it to the first George Bush, a distinguished Texan. We didn't do it to President, as I said, Carter. We didn't do it to President Clinton. We didn't do it to President Bush, who was just in office, but here we are with President Barack Obama now at a time that we think we have to do this. This is based upon an ideological view that does not look to the American people.

So let me tell you who is hurt in all of this so that we can understand real people are involved. I'll just call this "working Americans" and this little one who will represent millions of children across America. This is who this will impact.

In the State of Texas, our Governor has already cut \$4 billion from education. He actually took the stimulus money that was supposed to be for education. Governor Rick Perry decided to just snatch the moneys away and put it in a rainy day fund. It looks good when you're going to run for higher office to show off that you saved money. You haven't saved any money. You took the money out of the children's mouths. You're closing schools. You're closing school districts. You're taking away teachers. You're building up the class sizes. You're making our country second and third class in education while other countries are moving forward. So that's who we'll hurt.

Just take this little one who is not yet in school. This is a hardworking nurse, who represents working Americans. This is who will be hurt because, on the Cut, Cap, and Balance bill, though they say they are protecting Medicaid, Medicare and others, you're going to find out that we literally are not going to be able to run this country. My colleague came from Missouri. Everybody saw the tragedy of Joplin, Missouri. So the Cut, Cap, and Balance is going to hurt them. I'm going to call this the "Tap Dance bill" because they're going to be tap dancing around all the people who are going to be hurt.

Next who is going to be hurt are our military families. Now, they say that they're taking care of veterans' benefits, but this is active duty military. They need to be paid. They say they have classified or taken out the security. Well, have they taken out the grandmamas of these soldiers and their wives? Have they taken out the parents of these soldiers and their wives who need Medicare and Social Security? Have they taken out the sisters and brothers who need student loans? No.

So they're tap dancing around the fact that they say they're not hurting these people. It's not the Cap bill. It's the "Tap Dance bill." That's what it's going to be. Then, rather than the Cut and Cap bill, they're going to organize the "Losers' Club of America." We're going to open up a losers' club with what is going to go on on the floor to-

morrow. The "Losers' Club" will be the American people—children, seniors, college students, the jobs that we want to make through the infrastructure. How many people have driven on freeways and bridges and hit potholes? It's because America's infrastructure needs to be rebuilt.

So very quickly let me just say that, as these poster boards take their own life, the "Losers' Club" tomorrow is going to pronounce that we will be giving gifts to millionaires. They'll get \$200,000 because the bill tomorrow is worse than the Republican budget. So the millionaires will get \$200,000. Remember what I said. They call it the Cut, Cap, and Balance. I'm calling it the "Tap Dance, Losers' Club and Bust bill." So we're going to give millionaires \$200,000 a year while seniors will be paying an extra \$6,000 a year for their Medicare because it will bust Medicare as we know it.

Now, how did we get to where we are today? Why are we in this false status where people are saying, "Don't raise the debt limit"?

We brought it on ourselves. The Republicans were in charge when the Bush tax cuts came in, and they never wanted to have it expire. That was a big fight when we came in and when the President came in. That was a big fight. Out of compromise, he said, Let's be fair. So you can see the Bush tax cuts are 37 percent of our debt—37 percent. So, to talk about why we're here, look at what the Republicans have done. Then you have the Iraq war—11 percent. So it's interesting that now they're going to be fiscally responsible, yet they're the cause of the debt.

Let me finish by just saying that I am glad to be here with the Congressional Black Caucus. I want to rename the bill as the "Tap Dance, Losers' Club and Bust the American People bill"—bust the safety net for America. I want to thank the gentlelady by simply saying that I love this country, and I believe we can come together.

I have great respect for my colleagues who have a different view, but what I beg of them to do is to take the Constitution and cherish it like we all do. As to that opening part that says, "we the people," we are now calling on Republicans and Democrats and members of the Tea Party who are in this Congress to be part of the "we the people." Let us not in a frivolous manner take up the floor time that it is going to take to work on a bill that will never be signed and take it away from the resolution of the debt ceiling, which then causes the markets to go in a tailspin. I want to save the American people, and I, frankly, believe that we have the right to do so.

I will simply close by saying to you: Martin King, whose monument will open in just a few weeks, gave us a wonderful challenge—the time that he asked this Nation to believe in his dream.

□ 2110

And he gave us the further challenge of the night before his death. He indicated that he had been to the mountaintop, and he looked out and saw the Promised Land, an opportunity for all of us, no matter who we were, to have an equal opportunity in this country and to respect views but always look for the greater good.

But he said that he as a person, he didn't think that he would get to the Promised Land, but he knew that we as a people, we as Americans, would get to the Promised Land some day. I still believe in that dream and in that charge. And I am asking for my colleagues to work with us to be able to do that—this time on behalf of the American people.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank you so much for your charts. You're really pointing out who would be hurt by the Cut, Cap, and Balance, or as you call it, the tap dancing bill. Sometimes you have to call it what it is. So thank you, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, for joining us this evening.

I listened to New York Times columnist Tom Friedman yesterday, and I think we ought to put his talk on with the one that he had with our Nation's governors on DVD and make it required listening for some of our stonewalling colleagues. He put an adjective on the debate or so-called negotiations that have been staged these last few weeks. He called the debate "idiotic." Now, some may agree, some may disagree with that.

But he further said, and this I do agree with, that it is not worthy of our country and a disservice to our children.

So just like the other 74 times since 1962, 74 times that a clean, non-controversial lift of our debt ceiling has been done, we should have done it a long time ago, and that's what we ought to do now. And then after that, whether we use Bowles-Simpson or Rivlin-Domenici or what's left of the Gang of Six—I guess it is now just Democrats—their plan is a starting point; we need to begin coming up with a solid deficit reduction plan that isn't done on the backs of our poor, our middle class, our children, our seniors, and our people with disabilities. And one that is as the President has called for, one of shared sacrifices. It's the only fair way. It's the only American way.

And while important to securing the future, deficit reduction by itself is not enough. We are still in a recession, a recovery, but it's very slow, and it's uneven. What we need now are jobs, jobs, and more jobs. We need to continue the work of the Recovery Act and add to the 3 million jobs that we either saved or created with that bill and that act. We need to rebuild our manufacturing base as the Make It in America Democratic agenda would do. And we have to revive the housing market to help families stay in their homes and restore the opportunity for every American and those who came to live

in this country to achieve what we call the American dream.

We need to do what we have always done best—to create. We need to regain our place as the innovation capital of the world. And to do that and to secure a sustainable future for our children, we have to invest in the work of bringing our country back from 25th in science, 17th in math, 14th in reading, and 12th in college graduates.

The issue should not be cut, cut, cut. I agree with Tom Friedman on that as well. But it should be how do we do what is necessary to bring our beloved Nation back to the first-place standing which is where it always must be and what our families and our children deserve.

As the African proverb said—this is really what's happening now—the elephants are fighting and the grass is getting crushed.

This should not be a fight over political ideology. Democratic leaders have shown their willingness to compromise on many of the programs we hold sacred. What those compromises are and how large they are I think will determine where the CBC stands when the time comes to vote.

But there can be no compromise, as you've heard from my colleagues tonight, on Social Security, which has nothing to do with the deficit whatsoever, or on Medicare, which we have done so much to strengthen and lengthen in the Affordable Care Act, or on Medicaid, which would not only cause undue but grave harm to the poor and all of the States and territories that we represent.

So I say to my fellow Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, on both sides of the Capitol, let's raise this debt ceiling. Let's forget this crazy debate about cutting programs that hurt our fellow Americans and do it in a clean vote so that we can get back to the important critical business of creating jobs, of rebuilding our country, of putting in place a strong foundation for our future, of restoring our image in the world and holding on to our position of leadership.

I yield the balance of my time to Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank the gentlelady.

I want to thank her so very much for her leadership but I wanted to—when I said the bust, I want to equate it to the balanced budget amendment. That is what this Cap, Cut, and Balance is; it is a balanced budget amendment.

But let me be very clear, because you said something very important. The balanced budget amendment, if it was passed, would virtually guarantee that future budgets would cut and end Medicare as well as drastically cut Medicaid, just like the Republican budget. The balanced budget amendment takes two-thirds of the House and the Senate to pass. It is almost impossible for it to pass.

And we are not like States where States do balance but they only have to take care of their State.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. What you are saying, though, is we would never be able to raise any revenue because it takes two-thirds of both bodies to be able to do anything to increase revenue.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. So in Joplin, Missouri, the floods, the tornadoes—and let me finish on this.

We served on Homeland Security. We have seen the death of Mr. Karzai's brother, his very close aide. We have seen Pakistani police officers shot down in a massacre by the Taliban. This is a very serious climate of terrorism in this world.

And the tragedy, the backdrop of 9/11 where we had to bail out the airlines, where we had to rebuild New York and other places, that is a responsibility of America. That's why there is a Federal Government. And if we are to play with this through the Cap, Cut, and Balance, the balanced budget amendment, we will be the tap dance, we will be the losers club, and we will bust the rights of Americans to call upon their Federal Government when they are in need.

This is not a time to play with the lives of Americans. I believe that we are ready to compromise but not to engage in frivolity when it is serious and when we have to do what the American people need us to do.

I am very glad to be with the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands tonight, but I couldn't leave the podium without emphasizing that homeland security cannot be undermined and diminished. It is extremely important and does well to serve and secure the American people. Let's do right by the American people.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank the gentlelady from Texas.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION FOR A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) is recognized for half the remaining time until 10 p.m., 22 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

America is the greatest Nation in the history of the world. We enjoy a standard of living that is envied by most. We have a national defense unmatched in history. We are a beacon of freedom for all.

Have you ever thought about why America is the world's leader? Are we just lucky. No. I would submit to you that there are substantive reasons for our greatness.

We are blessed today because of the sacrifices of others before us, others who gave of themselves to ensure a better future for their children and succeeding generations. History shows us that great nations rise and great nations fall, but they rarely fall from

without without first suffering weakness from within.

Today, the greatest threat to America is not a foreign power. No. America's greatest threat is Washington's irresponsible, dangerous, and insatiable spending habits. Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified recently before the House Armed Services Committee that America's greatest national security threat is our own unsustainable and growing debt burden. It wasn't al Qaeda. It wasn't North Korea. It wasn't the Taliban. It wasn't any other foe across the globe. It was our unsustainable national debt. And he is right.

□ 2120

For years, Washington has been on a spending binge of epic proportions. Why do Washington's politicians risk America's future? Because they have put their own self-interests above America's interests. They spend money we don't have to get votes for the next election. They don't care about who must pay the bill. They don't care about America's future generations. They don't care whether their spending binges risk America's future.

Some say we don't need a balanced budget constitutional amendment to force Washington to spend within our means. They are 100 percent dead wrong. Most recently, the President stated: We don't need a constitutional amendment to do our jobs. The Constitution already tells us to do our jobs—and to make sure that the government is living within its means and making responsible choices.

And he went on: We don't need more studies. We don't need a balanced budget amendment. We simply need to make these tough choices and be willing to take on our bases.

But history has established that we need, in the United States Congress, a balanced budget constitutional amendment because it will provide the backbone that Congress has lacked for so long. History proves those naysayers are wrong. Three years of trillion-dollar-plus deficits proved them wrong. Projected trillion-dollar deficits into the future proved them wrong.

America must rise up and force Washington to live within our means before it is too late. America must give Washington the backbone it lacks. That backbone is a balanced budget constitutional amendment forcing Washington to do the right thing.

If this Congress will not pass an effective balanced budget constitutional amendment, then the States must do it for us. The Lone Star State of Texas recently passed a resolution calling for a constitutional convention for a balanced budget constitutional amendment if Congress fails to act. The great State of Alabama has joined Texas.

I will next read into the RECORD of the United States House of Representatives Alabama's Senate Joint Resolution 100 from Alabama's 2011 regular session just passed by the Alabama