

taxes at all, for large corporations who pay no taxes at all, for special subsidies to businesses that move their jobs overseas, to special subsidies for companies like Big Oil that don't need the subsidies.

We also need to make sure that those who can afford to pay a little bit more pay a little bit more, because that's how we get our budget back in balance. But if my Republican friends only say, you know, all we're going to do is cut, and we're not going to meet the Democrats halfway, then I'm afraid we're moving to fall off a cliff.

President Obama was absolutely right yesterday when he said that one side seems to be saying, my way or the highway; tax cuts forever, even if our budget is not balanced.

We, as Democrats, are saying let's do it a compromise way. Let us cut spending, let us close tax loopholes, and let those who can afford to pay a little more, millionaires and billionaires, pay a little more.

We are here because the American people sent us here. I know my constituents are concerned about Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, and the New York Graduate Medical Education. I didn't come here to devastate those programs, and I want my constituents to know that I'm going to fight like crazy to preserve Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and GME. We cannot balance our budget on the backs of senior citizens.

I want to remind my colleagues that when President Clinton, the last Democratic president before President Obama left office, we had record surpluses. President Bush came in and we have red ink deficits as far as the eye can see.

And I want to remind my Republican colleagues that 6 of the 8 Bush years Republicans controlled both the House and the Senate, and had the presidency for 6 years. If they wanted a balanced budget amendment they could have had it. If they wanted to try to balance the budget they could have done it.

So I don't think lectures are important now. I think there's plenty of blame to go around on all sides. We had the Bush tax cuts, we had wars, and we had reckless spending. And it was done under President Bush with Republican majorities in the House. So we need to put our heads together and move to the sensible center in terms of what the American people want, to get us off this precipice that we're about to fall into.

I think there's one other thing the President should do. If he sees, in a few days, that there's no progress being made, and we are about to approach August 2 and we're about to have this train wreck, the President should invoke the 14th amendment. The 14th amendment says the public debt shall not be questioned and, in my estimation, gives the President the authority to raise the debt ceiling by himself. I think the President should do that if we cannot come to a compromise.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 7 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Miroslaus Stelmaszczyk, Holy Family Church, Creighton, Pennsylvania, offered the following prayer:

Almighty Father, we gather here this morning to ask for Your wisdom, charity, and humility. We continue the task of operating this great Nation with honesty and integrity. Grant us the wisdom to act for the greater good of all citizens. Keep us humble that we not forget who we are and why we are here.

We remember the Founding Fathers, who risked their reputations, their fortunes and their very lives to form a Nation that ensures the freedoms and opportunities that we enjoy today. We also remember those brave individuals who paid the ultimate price to protect and defend those freedoms and opportunities.

Father, keep us dedicated to the people we represent. Let us not allow partisanship to cause discord among our number and prevent us from completing our agenda. We depend upon Your grace and mercy to allow us to continue to serve this Nation with honor and integrity.

We ask this in Your name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) come

forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PITTS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND MIROSLAUS STELMASZCZYK

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, in the midst of one of the most contentious congressional debates in recent times, I knew just who to bring to Washington to help bring people together. It is my great honor to welcome Reverend Miroslaus Stelmaszczyk, who today serves as our guest chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Known simply as "Father Miro," he has led the Holy Family Parish in Creighton, Pennsylvania, for 12 of his 36 years in the priesthood. He has received numerous awards in recognition of his public service since he first came to the United States from Poland in 1986.

As testament to his popularity among his congregation, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome the three dozen Holy Family parishioners who made the trip to Washington, along with Father Miro, and are now seated in the gallery to witness his opening prayer today.

Welcome to you all.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House, welcome, Father Miro, and congratulations on being chosen as today's guest chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

LET'S LEARN A LESSON FROM THE "GERMAN MIRACLE"

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Dr. Milton Wolf in *The Washington Times* reported, in the last 2 years, over 2 million private sector jobs have been lost, that unemployment has increased by 1.5 percentage points, that the U.S. dollar is 12 percent weaker, and that the long-term unemployment is the worst ever on record—and sadly, the national debt has exploded by 40 percent.

At the same time the administration pushed the failed stimulus spending here, the President urged German Chancellor Angela Merkel to do the

same in her country. The Chancellor refused. Now, as a result of her good judgment, Germany's economy has recovered. German unemployment levels are reduced while over 14 million Americans do not have jobs.

The President should learn a lesson from the "German miracle." The solution is not for big government to keep borrowing and spending. Tax increases destroy jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism. Our sympathy to the people of Norway in the religious extremist mass murderers.

A COMPREHENSIVE, BALANCED SOLUTION TO SAVE THE ECONOMY

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Last night, Speaker BOEHNER addressed the American people and said that if the President would just simply sign his debt ceiling bill, the crisis, in his words, would disappear.

Actually, the opposite is true. An hour or two before his speech, the Standard & Poor's rating agency issued a report, saying that, if the Boehner plan passed, the American bonds would be downgraded from its AAA status. A downgrade is as bad as a default in terms of driving up lending costs and damaging a fragile economy that today needs all of us to work together to strengthen job creation to solve our problems. The Boehner plan calls for three separate votes over the next 15 months for a debt ceiling increase, exactly the kind of political instability that rating agencies are not looking for.

It is time for a comprehensive, balanced solution, which the President has said he will work with the Congress to pass in order to get this economy moving again and to create jobs.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SACRIFICE OF BORDER PATROL AGENT MICHAEL GALLAGHER

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, tonight, Representative GABRIELLE GIFFORDS' office is organizing a Special Order to recognize Border Patrol agents who were killed in the line of duty last year.

I want to thank her and her staff for working to acknowledge these dedicated servants who died serving our Nation. While I won't be able to speak tonight, I wanted to take a moment to honor Agent Michael Gallagher, who grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

On September 2 of last year, Agent Gallagher was on patrol near Casa Grande, Arizona. A drunk driver ran a stop sign, colliding into the patrol car

and ejecting Michael from the vehicle. He served in the Border Patrol for 2 years, and also served our Nation in Iraq, risking his life to protect our freedom.

He is dearly missed by his wife and his two sons.

Even though he moved away, I understand that he remained a dedicated Pennsylvania sports fan. We cannot thank him and his family enough for his service. We can only honor him for dedicating his life to keeping Americans safe here at home and abroad.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING ON AMERICA'S DEBT LIMIT

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking, and we must act now on increasing our debt limit. The American people must understand that increasing the debt limit will enable us to meet obligations that have been incurred by Democratic and Republican Congresses in years past. Defaulting on these obligations will not only wreak havoc on the American people; it will weaken our overall economy.

The Republicans have been given opportunity after opportunity to help craft an acceptable, long-term debt reduction plan that would include a debt limit increase, but Republicans have slow-walked us to the brink of collapse.

The Republican plan is to imperil Medicare and Medicaid. Republicans want to balance the budget by forcing the government away from government-sponsored Medicare and provide vouchers so seniors can purchase coverage from private insurance companies. Republicans want to shift the Medicaid responsibility to States that are already struggling to balance their budgets. Republican budget cuts will force doctors, hospitals and other health care providers to leave the Medicaid program entirely.

The Republican strategy has been evolving for a long time, and now it is revealed. Shame on you. Shame on the Republican majority.

□ 1210

RAISING THE DEBT LIMIT: THE HYPOCRISY COULD NOT BE MORE CLEAR

(Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask the American people to listen closely to these words:

"The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. It is a sign that the U.S. Government cannot pay its own bills. It is a sign that we now depend on ongoing financial assistance from foreign countries to finance our government's reckless fiscal policies.

"Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that 'the buck stops here.' Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and our grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better."

These were remarks by Senator Barack Obama, March 2006. Mr. Speaker, the President's hypocrisy could not be more clear.

God bless America.

WE NEED TO COMPROMISE

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, the Republicans in Congress campaigned on, Where are the jobs? Not spending cuts or living within our means, but where are the jobs. The Blue Dogs were the ones calling for responsible fiscal responsibility.

Then at the end of Congress last year, President Obama compromised with the Republicans, extended the Bush tax cuts in order to try to create jobs. This gamble did not create jobs. All it's done is extended the tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires.

We cannot play chicken and cause our Nation to default. We must lower the deficit with cuts to wasteful spending. But we can't balance the budget on the backs of seniors, the poor, by cutting Social Security and Medicare while continuing to give tax breaks to the ultra-rich and oil companies and those who make over \$250,000 a year.

No taxes, no jobs. We must compromise. It can't be "my way or the highway."

THE SMALL ARMS TREATY

(Mr. POMPEO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, over the past 1½ years, we've seen this President take away a lot of our freedoms with big spending and a big health care plan. I want to talk about another risk to American freedom today, and that is the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty, also known as the Small Arms Treaty.

I'm profoundly disappointed, but, frankly, not surprised, that this administration is joining the United Nations in crafting this dangerous treaty designed to curtail our Second Amendment rights.

Parties in the negotiations about the treaty are talking about banning civilian possession of firearms, decreasing the ability for trade in firearms, and heavily restricting the rights of Americans to carry their firearms. Each one of these directives, if implemented, would clearly violate individual rights as enshrined in our Constitution.

The Senate should not ratify this treaty. We must never turn our national sovereignty over to anyone, most especially the United Nations.