

eventually in the basement of the Hotel Albert in Selma, Alabama. One hundred forty-five years ago, on August 31, 1867, an African Methodist Episcopal missionary, Brother John Turner, addressed the group assembled in the basement of the Hotel Albert and extended them an invitation to unite with the African Methodist Episcopal connection.

Two years later, in 1869, these visionary church members bought a plot of land on Sylvan Street, now known as Martin Luther King Street. This beautiful edifice of Brown Chapel that stands today, with its imposing twin towers and Romanesque revival styling, was built in 1908 by a black builder, Mr. A.J. Farley. Today, we celebrate 145 years of Brown Chapel—a history of faith, courage, and leadership.

It took great courage in the early 1960s to defy an injunction that forbade all churches in Selma, Alabama, from holding mass meetings. Most churches in Selma refused to disobey the court order, but Brown Chapel opened its doors to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and became that wonderful church of courage that played such an integral role in the civil rights movement. Brown Chapel became an icon of the movement.

It was from Brown Chapel that they marched on Bloody Sunday, 2 days later on Turnaround Tuesday, and on March 21, 1965, the day when the Selma to Montgomery march was finally completed. Leading the infamous Bloody Sunday was Hosea Williams, as well as our esteemed colleague in this Chamber, Congressman JOHN LEWIS of Georgia.

The story of Bloody Sunday will go down in the annals of history as a pivotal event in the civil rights movement. On March 7, 1965, at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, six blocks from Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, mounted troops confronted the marchers on that bridge. Sheriff Jim Clark and his posse charged the marchers with tear gas and with billy clubs. That night, ABC News interrupted regularly scheduled programs to air footage of Bloody Sunday. By morning, news of the event had spread to nearly every American household, and thousands of supporters began to walk to Selma. The Selma to Montgomery march and the subsequent outrage led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

For 145 years, Brown Chapel has been a powerful agent of change. It has been a place where socioeconomic and racial barriers have been challenged, a place where barriers that divide our Nation have been broken down.

Brown Chapel continues to make history. On March 4, 2007, then-Senator Barack Obama, a Presidential candidate, gave the address for the annual Bridge Crossing Commemoration. It was during this address in 2007 that Barack Obama thanked the “Moses Generation” and challenged the “Joshua Generation.” In his famous “Joshua Generation” speech, Obama asked what

the present generation would do to fulfill the legacy, the obligations, and the debts that we owe to the people before them.

As a proud member of Brown Chapel Church, I had the privilege of being there that day. And for me, his words were a call to action. It was because people prayed in Brown Chapel and people marched on the Edmund Pettus Bridge that a little black girl from Selma, Alabama, could dream and could one day stand here in this wonderful Chamber as the first black Congresswoman from the State of Alabama.

Brown Chapel has been a pillar in my hometown of Selma, Alabama; and it still remains so today. I am a proud member of this church and have been for the last 30 years of my life. I was raised in this beautiful historic church, and I know its significance. I am now proud to represent the Seventh Congressional District of Alabama and proud of the many giants on whose shoulders I stand.

In honor of the 145th anniversary of the historic Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, I, TERRI A. SEWELL, Representative to the United States Congress from the Seventh District of Alabama, do hereby recognize Brown Chapel for its numerous contributions to the city of Selma, the State of Alabama, and this Nation. I ask those present today to join me in celebrating 145 years of historic Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church.

□ 1130

CREDIT DEFAULT

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority has once again proven its complete irresponsibility by putting our economy at risk in handling our Nation's finances. A little over a decade ago, there were projected surpluses as far as the eye could see. The Nation had achieved a firm financial footing. That was before the George Bush administration and the Republicans took us on a spending spree, paying out trillions in huge tax cuts, skewed to—guess who?—the top 2 percent, the wealthy, whose investment decision then killed jobs in our country. The last month that George Bush was in office, we lost over 700,000 jobs just in that month. The Bush Administration plunged the Nation during that decade into two wars they refused to pay for.

History tells the story.

Then came the big economic collapse of 2008 during the Bush Administration that included a loss in Federal revenues, which followed the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression, due to George Bush's capitulation to Wall Street abuse. Now, Republicans claim to care about the Federal deficit?

Well, yes, revenues have shrunk by about \$400 billion a year because of the

financial crisis they created we're trying to dig ourselves out of. Spread out over 10 years, that covers the, roughly, \$4 trillion we're trying to eke out of this sick economy to pay down our debt. But it's a very delicate balance we're attempting because there are 14 million Americans out of work and up to 24 million who are working part time, who want to work full time, or others who have completely given up and dropped out. We can't hurt them more.

Fewer jobs mean lower revenues at all levels. It means lower profits to many companies, and it certainly means lower revenues into the Federal Treasury because there are more people who are on unemployment; more people who rely on government assistance, more people who rely on public health because their private insurance has dried up. How many people now can't afford to pay their COBRA? Millions who are not earning paychecks are not able to pay their contributions to Social Security and Medicare. So it's a vicious cycle.

In any time of economic downturn, national economic policy must act like a fulcrum on a teeter-totter. It has to level impacts on people so they can reposition. The government has to at the Federal level help prop up the American people until they can find their footing again. It doesn't take a mental giant to figure that out. Unemployment is the major cause of the deficit that we are bearing now; yet we hear almost no discussion about jobs and how to create jobs, to get rid of unemployment, as the reemployed and lift the economy—healing the Republic. Rather than talking about how to create jobs and how unemployment causes lost revenues and kills more jobs, all we're hearing is take more flesh off the bones of families and communities. House Republicans have placed the entire economy at risk now to satisfy the ideological wishes of a few.

The American public sees what's happening. Importantly, they're feeling directly what is not happening. Nobody is being fooled. I've heard from thousands of people back home in northern Ohio who are concerned that the Republican leadership is playing politics—playing with fire—during a time when our economic recovery is very, very fragile. Putting our Nation's credit rating at risk is totally irresponsible and will cause more economic harm. I had somebody tell me yesterday he's trying to renegotiate his home loan, and the mortgage company wanted to raise the interest rate a quarter percent because of the market uncertainty all of this is causing.

Since World War I, our country has always received a AAA status from credit rating agencies because, until now, we have always put the Nation first—not any political party first, but the Nation first. To force America to default for the first time in history would hurt our Republic and every working family, and it would hurt

those who are out of work even more. It would mean higher interest rates on cars, on home loans, on credit cards, on student loans. It would mean fewer jobs and less growth.

Instability, uncertainty, creates a downdraft on the recovery. Congress should be focusing on economic recovery and creating jobs if we want to close that deficit gap. You balance budgets by full employment economies. We surpassed the debt limit over 2 months ago, and come August 2, the Treasury will simply not be able to pay all the bills that are currently due.

Yes, it's long overdue to reach a compromise. Instead, Speaker BOEHNER has walked away from the negotiating table and has chosen to roll out a hasty bill that hasn't gone through the normal committee process. Apparently, many in his own party reject it. This isn't leadership for America at a time when she needs it. It may be capitulation to Grover Norquist and his lobby, but our responsibility is far greater.

Mr. Speaker, the way that you balance budgets is to put people to work and grow the economy. I support a balanced, bipartisan solution to reduce our deficit, create jobs and grow our economy, to expand our middle class and protect Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid beneficiaries. The solution to deficits is robust job growth and full economic recovery. Let's spend two months putting that initiative forward!

THE AMERICAN DEBT LIMIT HELD HOSTAGE—AN UNNECESSARY CRISIS

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, today we face an unnecessary crisis. The debt limit has never before been held hostage by any political party, because it is in every American's best interest to protect the credit of the United States; but now ideologues in Congress have hijacked this issue, and have pushed our Nation to the brink of default in rejecting all offers of compromise.

Calls for massive spending cuts, and spending cuts alone, without raising any revenues whatsoever are irresponsible at least and deliberately destructive at worst. They would default on our debt, causing a global financial crisis, rather than see hedge fund managers, corporate jet owners or phenomenally profitable oil companies pay higher taxes. Their call for fiscal responsibility rings hollow, and the fiscal history of the last three decades shows that.

This chart shows the growth of America's national debt since 1980.

At the end of the Carter administration, the national debt was less than \$1 trillion. Twelve years later, with President Reagan's 8 years and the first President Bush's 4 years, the national debt had grown by more than 300 per-

cent—it had quadrupled—and we were mired in debt. The Reagan-Bush economic policies greatly increased the debt and led to soaring deficits and rising interest rates. It ended in a recession.

In 1993, President Clinton was under severe pressure from the very Republicans who had meekly followed the two Republican Presidents as they raised the national debt by over 300 percent. President Clinton championed a balanced austerity program with, roughly, equal spending cuts and revenue increases—the Clinton years. Republicans in both the House and Senate voted unanimously against that program, arguing it would cost jobs and cause a recession, but the exact opposite occurred. More than 20 million jobs were created under the Clinton administration, and each of the last three budgets of the Clinton Presidency produced a surplus. Those three budgets were the only budgets and surplus in the last 40 years, and Clinton's balanced program is considered highly successful by economists. President Clinton raised taxes on those who could afford it and reduced spending to shrink our deficit, and the economy grew by leaps and bounds.

The fiscal record of the second President Bush is a record of utter irresponsibility. It began with massive tax cuts, skewed sharply toward the wealthy, and with trillions of dollars spent on two long, unpopular wars—all of that paid for by borrowing. It ended in the Great Recession, caused by the collapse of an unregulated housing market which was fueled by Wall Street greed. President Bush turned President Clinton's surplus into more than 5 trillion additional dollars added to our national debt—all the way up to here—almost doubling the debt again.

President Obama was inaugurated during the worst month of job losses in the Great Recession and cannot be blamed for what happened before, but the recovery has stalled, and we're short 12 million jobs.

History has shown us what works and what doesn't. The Reagan-Bush economics led to hugely increased debt. The Clinton economics eliminated the deficit and accelerated economic growth, but it required some sacrifice by all Americans to fix the national problem.

Now Republicans want to slash social programs, gut Medicare and Social Security benefits, and further reduce taxes for the wealthiest few. The Republicans threaten default on our debt. The only plan they offer would add hundreds of thousands of people to the unemployment lines by eliminating jobs in the public sector. They would protect the wealthiest few at the expense of the entire country. They offer no plan to create jobs and no long-term solution. Yet America needs a long-term solution, and that must include spending reduction and revenue increase in balanced proportion.

□ 1140

DEBT CEILING HOSTAGE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the elaborate Kabuki dance continues here on Capitol Hill surrounding the angst about increasing the debt ceiling. I think what we are seeing can be summarized in three words: "recklessness," "abuse," and "hypocrisy."

First of all, it is reckless for my Republican friends to hold the debt ceiling discussions hostage in an attempt to achieve other political goals. There have already been significant costs. American currency has weakened. We've watched a slide of the stock market since last Friday when the agreement blew up as Speaker BOEHNER walked away from his work with President Obama. We've watched premiums being paid now to ensure United States debt. People are making adjustments that are having consequences right now and eroding the confidence that we have had globally in the strength of American commitments to pay its debt—a confidence that has resulted in record low-interest rates that have benefited everybody in the United States, and that is at risk.

The irony is that there is no reason for this to occur. We have increased the debt ceiling 102 times since this unusual little law was enacted in 1917. The United States, you recall, is one of only two countries in the entire world that goes through this charade of having to vote to finance spending that we've already done.

It has always been routine. We did this routinely for President Bush. The irony is now when we are facing another adjustment in the debt ceiling, ironically most of the debt, \$9.5 billion, was incurred as a direct result of the policies of the two Presidents Bush and Ronald Reagan. There is a great little chart on page A-14 in today's New York Times that outlines this.

Instead of making it routine and making whatever pontification people will do on the floor of the House, which they have done since 1917, now all of a sudden we have thrown a monkey wrench into the process. We've raised the specter of default. We're having people speculate whether there's enough money to go to August 2 or August 5. We're speculating about what debts, what bills the President will pay.

The irony is that this Republican recklessness is actually empowering the President of the United States to make decisions about whether to pay Chinese creditors or honor our obligations to senior citizens or people who do business with the United States.

Absolutely outrageous.

Wouldn't you think Congress would like to make these decisions rather than punting to the President? Well, no. In fact, the Republicans are more