

The statistics that we've heard, a lot of them tonight, some of the ones that I've heard is that on top of more seniors living longer, we're going to have, the number of disabled elderly persons is projected to rise by one-third by 2030. As of January 1, 2011, each day 10,000, baby boomers turn 65. The numbers just aren't going to fit.

We've talked about the Republican plan to reform Medicare, to not touch those benefits of our present seniors, but to reform it for future seniors, for the baby boomers to come that are going to be turning 65 and going to have to rely on and need to rely on Medicare.

□ 1920

I'd like to talk about something in a personal way. We have a personal story, a lot of us. I'm in the sandwich generation. My parents are both in their eighties, and they're really having a pretty rough spell of bad health. And what it's done for my brother and sister and me, is we've had to spend—and we lovingly do this—but spend many, many hours trying to figure out how to meet their health care needs, try to figure out how to pay for all of their obligations and the worry of talking with doctors, trying to make sure they're comfortable.

This is a real worry for all families across the Nation. In our country, 66 percent of these caregivers are women, and I think that's why we, as women of the House, particularly Republican women of the House, wanted to discuss seniors and care. So, with this sandwich generation, with the rising incidence of Alzheimer's, which touches every family—and my family is no exception—it brings a different type of need to this country on how we're going to address these very difficult medical issues.

But if we don't address them—and we've heard this tonight—if we don't address them, if we just let them lie, let them stay the way they are, the way they are right now today, they will not be there. They cannot exist.

One of the ways I think that we can really help our seniors is to have an economic program in place to grow our economy so that their 401(k)s that they look at monthly, that they rely on for income, are growing rather than just dissipating and shrinking, which is another huge problem for our seniors. Many of our seniors planned very, very well for their retirement. They've kind of thought of them as their golden years, the times when they're going to be able to travel or visit more with their grandchildren and have the ease of life of the day-to-day obligations being met. And with the downturn in the economy, with the lack of growth in our economy, our seniors aren't able to do that. They put their heads on the pillow at night, and they're concerned about whether they're not only going to meet their obligations for their health care, but the gas, the food, and the payment for all of their needs.

We need to realize that we have plans. We have plans for our seniors. We know how important Social Security and Medicare are to our seniors. Maintaining it and making sure it's there for future generations is absolutely critical. I want to thank my colleague for inviting me here this evening and getting a chance to talk about something that I care deeply about, and that is our Nation's Greatest Generation.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, SHELLEY.

Tonight you have heard from a lot of us, Republican women here in Congress. You've heard our stories and our love and our respect for senior citizens, and our heartfelt desire and commitment to serve and to represent them and to make sure that their rights are protected and that their voice is heard here. You've heard how we have had proactive plans put forth here in the House from our group to address Medicare and to preserve and protect it for the future. You've heard how we care about Social Security, and we're not going to take it away. We want to make sure it is there for future generations.

You've heard of our concerns for Alzheimer's and the other diseases that are ravaging our aging population, and our desire and our commitment to move forward and make sure that those are addressed and that we make sure and find a cure there.

You've heard of how we are listening to the financial challenges that we are hearing from the seniors in our districts and the plans that we put forth to eliminate the estate tax so one generation can pass on their farm or their small business to another generation without the Federal Government taking the property or taking the farm. You've heard our commitment to veterans and to those who have sacrificed so much so that we can stay free. We're going to honor those commitments and those sacrifices.

Lastly, you've heard about our respect for this generation, and we know of their desire to pass on an America to their grandchildren that is just as great and just as promising as the one they grew up in. We are committed to making sure that we rein in our runaway federal spending here, we keep our fiscal house in order as a country, and that that promise is alive and well for their grandchildren. We are committed to moving forward as a group.

We thank you for listening, and we thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this time.

THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT: WE'D BETTER PAY ATTENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BROOKS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. RUSH. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my outrage and my disappointment at

the Oakland, California, Police Department, which reacted with brutality to those peacefully protesting. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind our Nation's law enforcement authorities all across the land that civil disobedience is as American as American pie. It is the act through which our great Nation was conceived. It required great courage to do what they did at the Boston Tea Party. It required great courage for the great American, Henry David Thoreau, to refuse to go to war against Mexico in 1849, an act that gave birth to the anti-war movement that continues today.

The equalities that we as Americans enjoy today are the result of those great, courageous Americans that fought for our liberties, Mr. Speaker. The women's suffrage movement went from 1848 to 1920. Generations of courageous women marched, they fasted, and they were arrested. Finally, in 1920, the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote. It took more than seven decades of civil disobedience to achieve the change that they sought.

Let's not forget, Mr. Speaker, that the abolition of slavery, the labor movement and the eradication of child labor, the civil rights movement, and the environmental movement all used civil disobedience as a powerful and peaceful weapon to change laws and to protect all of our liberties.

Members of the Occupy Movement now emerge as yet another generation of courageous Americans voicing a general frustration that many citizens feel: It was a money-driven elite that mismanaged the American economy. They are challenging us, this Congress, our government, to reform not only Wall Street but reform a culture of selfishness and greed that has distorted who we are and made the American Dream appear unattainable. We are losing ground as a result of these individuals, this grotesque, American, greedy and avaricious elite.

The Occupy Movement, Mr. Speaker, embodies a sense of growing disillusionment with the direction of our country. I, for one, understand that feeling. With deadlock a daily occurrence in this very House, it is hard for the American people not to feel a sense of utter frustration. They see their elected representatives unable to govern at this crucial time.

Mr. Speaker, a betrayal of American values occurred last night in Oakland, California, when police fired tear gas on those peaceful demonstrators. It occurred in New York City when police maced and beat protesters. Government violence against our own people? Is this not the very thing that we condemn in other places all around the world? How dare we denounce an action when committed abroad but yet remain silent when it happens in our own, very own—our own backyards.

□ 1930

I, for one, cannot remain silent. History teaches us that a violent response

to civil disobedience never, ever works. It makes people angrier and turns public opinion against law enforcement, against the police. It is counter-productive, and it never achieves the goals of those who are trying to impose order.

Getting arrested is a fundamental part of civil disobedience. The Occupy Movement demonstrators expected to be arrested. Civil disobedience participants all expect to be arrested, but they should also expect that the police will conduct themselves with professional understanding and a sensitivity of the power that they possess and of the government they represent. They carry weapons. They have the power to maim, to kill, to wound, and to arrest.

With that great power comes an even greater responsibility. That greater responsibility includes the freedoms that were promised to all American citizens in that great document, the preamble to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, which is the freedom from “unreasonable searches and seizures” as promised in the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution; the freedom from “cruel and unusual punishments” as promised in the Eighth Amendment; finally, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps most importantly, the freedom enshrined in the First Amendment, which guarantees “the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

It is the job of law enforcement to uphold these freedoms, to uphold our Constitution, to uphold justice even in the most difficult of situations. Beatings and mace and tear gas against our own people exercising their constitutional rights? That is unacceptable. More importantly, it is un-American.

I do sympathize with the tough job our Nation’s police officers face now and have faced, and I can understand why they may feel intimidated by the sheer numbers or may mistake the demonstrators’ passion for aggression. However, in a humble way, I ask the police officers who are monitoring these protests to act with a rational head, with soberness, with restraint. Violence only breeds violence. Such unwarranted crowd control methods will only serve to create mutual contempt between protesters and the police alike, dividing Americans against Americans and citizens against the police. We don’t want that. This is not a nation that supports and encourages that type of activity.

It was only last week, Mr. Speaker, that we—this Nation, the citizens of the greatest country in the history of the world—dedicated a memorial to a man who was the embodiment, the living proof, of the power of civil disobedience and nonviolence. It is those who marched peacefully in the face of fire hoses, in the face of dogs attacking them, of police batons striking them all over their bodies, including their heads, who changed America.

Now a new generation follows boldly and audaciously with an American au-

dacity. They follow in the footsteps of those American patriots who dared to disobey the law of the land as a matter of conscience and priority, as a matter of conscience that created this great civil society called the United States of America. They made our Nation better back then, and I believe the Occupy Movement challenges us to make America better now.

Yes, it can be done. America can be better. America must address the issues that those who are now demonstrating peacefully across the land are raising. They are only trying to peacefully redress their grievances. It is their constitutional right. How dare dogs, how dare tear gas, how dare police attack them in the wee hours of the morning.

Mr. Speaker, the mayor of Oakland, California, Mayor Jean Quan, owes the Occupy Movement a sincere, heartfelt apology. Mayor Quan owes the American people a sincere, heartfelt apology. At 3 a.m. yesterday, the Oakland Police invaded the park where the protesters were assembled.

Forty-five years ago in the same city, 45 years ago this very week, an organization that I became a member of, the Black Panther Party, was founded in Oakland, California, as a result of the police brutality of the Oakland Police Department. Forty-five years later, I as a Member of this esteemed body, the House of Representatives, am ashamed to bear witness once again to the same Oakland Police Department violating and attacking and brutalizing innocent citizens who are protesting, bringing their deep-felt grievances to the forefront and engaging in acts of civil disobedience.

□ 1940

Police batons, tear gas, mace, no matter what the weapon is, no matter what the strategy is, they cannot kill this movement. They cannot stop this movement. This occupy movement is going to move forward. It’s going to move forward with an accelerated pace because of the actions of the police department in Oakland and in other cities across this Nation.

They have a right to protest. They have a right to make their voices heard. They have a right, as called for in the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Bible, to make their bodies a living sacrifice. These individuals, they are epitomizing the greatness in this hour. It’s a thing that we celebrate all across the land.

We celebrated it in Tunisia, we celebrated it in Egypt, we celebrated it in Libya, we celebrated it in Yemen, we celebrated it in China, we celebrated it in other places all across the world. How can we be so hypocritical? How can we be so insensitive? How can we be so arrogant to celebrate civil disobedience in other places across the world and attack the same, the very same actions and attitude here in our Nation when our citizens engage in civil disobedience?

Mr. Speaker, I say that those who are involved in the occupy movement, you are just lighting the first spark in a prairie fire of peaceful demonstrations across this land. Don’t give up, don’t give out, and please don’t give in.

Godspeed to you. We need you. You’re doing the right thing at the right time for the right reasons. Keep doing what you’re doing. Stand up for what you believe in. Stand up for what you believe in.

It’s high time now that the American people stand up for what they believe in and take to the streets to demonstrate to all that we’re sick and tired of being sick and tired. We’re sick and tired of home foreclosures. We’re sick and tired of unemployment. We’re sick and tired of being sick and tired, as Fannie Lou Hamer once said.

We’re just sick and tired. We’re sick, yes, of the rising cost of health care. We need to demonstrate and protest the rising cost of health care.

We’re sick and tired of the rising gap between those who are sitting high on the hog, the wealthy, the elite, and those who are at the bottom; the rising gap between those who are unemployed and underemployed, who are chronically unemployed and the 1 percent who are reaping all the wealth of this Nation and telling the rest of us that they have a right to the wealth of the Nation, but yet we as American citizens don’t have a right to a decent job. We as American citizens don’t have a right to decent housing, that we as American citizens don’t have a right to a decent education, that we as American citizens don’t have a right to decent health care.

How can they look down on us and tell us that we don’t have a right to the same opportunities and to the same life-style and to the same benefits? How can they tell the dwindling, disappearing American middle class that they don’t have a right to demonstrate?

These are our children, and they want a better future. These are our children, and they are willing to fight for a better future.

These are our children, and they have the courage to stand up against the government, to stand up against the elite, to stand for their rights. And I am proud that our children are standing up and standing for something to try to get some meaning into their lives and try to make this Nation a better Nation.

I’m proud of them and, again, I say to them, don’t give up, don’t give out, and please don’t give in. Godspeed to you.

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

AMERICA’S RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 30 minutes.