

Miller, Gary	Roby	Smith (WA)
Moore	Roe (TN)	Southerland
Moran	Rogers (AL)	Stark
Mulvaney	Rogers (KY)	Stearns
Murphy (CT)	Rogers (MI)	Stivers
Murphy (PA)	Rohrabacher	Stutzman
Neal	Rokita	Sullivan
Neugebauer	Ros-Lehtinen	Sutton
Noem	Roskam	Thompson (CA)
Nugent	Ross (AR)	Thompson (MS)
Nunes	Rothman (NJ)	Thompson (PA)
Nunnelee	Roybal-Allard	Thornberry
Olson	Royce	Tipton
Olver	Runyan	Tonko
Owens	Ryan (OH)	Tsongas
Palazzo	Sánchez, Linda	Turner (NY)
Pallone	T.	Turner (OH)
Pascrell	Sanchez, Loretta	Upton
Paulsen	Sarbanes	Van Hollen
Pearce	Scalise	Velázquez
Pelosi	Schakowsky	Visclosky
Pence	Schiff	Walsh (IL)
Perlmutter	Schilling	Walz (MN)
Peters	Schmidt	Wasserman
Peterson	Schrader	Schultz
Petri	Schwartz	Waters
Pingree (ME)	Schweikert	Watt
Pitts	Scott (SC)	Waxman
Platts	Scott (VA)	Webster
Poe (TX)	Scott, Austin	Welch
Polis	Scott, David	West
Pompeo	Sensenbrenner	Westmoreland
Posey	Serrano	Whitfield
Price (GA)	Sessions	Wilson (SC)
Price (NC)	Sewell	Wittman
Quigley	Sherman	Wolf
Rahall	Shimkus	Womack
Reed	Shuster	Woodall
Rehberg	Simpson	Woolsey
Reichert	Sires	Yarmuth
Renacci	Slaughter	Yoder
Reyes	Smith (NE)	Young (AK)
Richardson	Smith (NJ)	Young (FL)
Rigell	Smith (TX)	Young (IN)

NAYS—11

Adams	Miller (MI)	Ross (FL)
Amash	Quayle	Tiberi
Benishek	Ribble	Walberg
Gohmert	Rooney	

NOT VOTING—54

Ackerman	Gibbs	Nadler
Alexander	Gutierrez	Napolitano
Andrews	Harper	Pastor (AZ)
Bachmann	Heinrich	Paul
Baldwin	Herger	Rangel
Bass (CA)	Hirono	Richmond
Berman	Holden	Rivera
Broun (GA)	Jackson (IL)	Ruppersberger
Burton (IN)	Johnson (IL)	Rush
Canseco	King (NY)	Ryan (WI)
Cicilline	Kinzingler (IL)	Schock
Cleaver	Lee (CA)	Shuler
Coble	Lewis (CA)	Speier
Donnelly (IN)	Lewis (GA)	Terry
Filner	Lowey	Tierney
Flake	Manzullo	Towns
Flores	Miller, George	Walden
Gallely	Myrick	Wilson (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1906

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 559, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

AMERICA NEEDS REAL SOLUTIONS FOR JOBS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the latest jobs report. For 43 months, our Nation's unemployment rate has remained above 8 percent. Last month, only 96,000 more people found jobs and, sadly, 368,000 people were discouraged and defeated and gave up searching for jobs. To make matters worse, for persons with jobs, the average hourly wages decreased and labor force participation is the lowest in 31 years.

The President's policies have failed to create jobs, failed to encourage economic growth, and failed to reassure hardworking Americans that we can restore hope for American families. The American people deserve better. They deserve leadership in Washington that will fight to create jobs. It is past time for the liberal-controlled Senate to act on the dozens of bipartisan bills the House has passed and approved promoting jobs for American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

MEXICO/CANADA/UNITED STATES ENERGY ALLIANCE

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Texans are growing more concerned about the rising cost of gasoline. One lady recently wrote me:

My husband drives a truck. As gas prices rise, so does the cost of diesel. This affects the cost of every single thing we buy. That includes food.

Gasoline prices are the one thing that people should not need to worry about. We have the resources, but Washington keeps them under lock and key. And we still import half our oil from unstable dictators like Chavez and the OPEC monopoly.

Americans can no longer afford to be beholden to the turmoil in the Middle East. So what about this idea?

United States, Mexico, and Canada are rich with God-given natural resources. So working together in a new strategic energy partnership, our three nations could become the world's new energy superpower alliance to compete with OPEC. Let's create an energy supply built to last with our North American allies and finally make OPEC and Middle Eastern dictators irrelevant.

And that's just the way it is.

DON'T CUT THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just recently it was announced that 50 million Americans experience food insecurity—and experi-

enced it in the last year. What that means is that families in the United States suffer without food. A predominant number of those are single parents and children.

What are we as a country if we allow children to go hungry in this particular great land?

I just came back from Africa, and saw children who are hungry. But yet we were there to encourage better technology to promote agricultural development. But today, this Congress, this House, Republican Congress, is cutting \$16 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Program. We can do better.

I want to work with this Congress to ensure that 50 million Americans are not hungry in this great land. Let us revisit the cutting of the Supplemental Nutrition Program because our children are begging, they're asking us: Do we care?

We do care. We cannot cut \$15 billion, \$16 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Program with 50 million Americans experiencing food insecurity—working Americans, Americans with children. The time to stop is now and support those families.

REMEMBERING THE 9/11 ATTACKS

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow our Nation will mark the 11th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. At community gatherings across the country, neighbors will come together to honor the memory of those lost in New York, Pennsylvania, and our Nation's capital, including a ceremony in Bucks County at the 9/11 Garden of Reflection, the official Pennsylvania memorial to the victims of the September 11 attacks.

As I stand before you this evening, I'm reminded of the President's address to the Nation the evening of the attacks. In his remarks to the Nation, the President said that:

Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.

Eleven years later, our resolve has never been stronger, and we continue to honor the memory of those tragically lost that day.

□ 1920

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Here we are today on September 10, 5 weeks since Speaker BOEHNER pushed

through a motion to recess for 5 weeks at a time when our Nation faces so many challenges, so many ticking clocks in terms of must-do items, some of which have already cleared the U.S. Senate, like the farm bill. And yet despite that need out there from the country, looking for some action and certainty out of this Chamber, the majority again said, Nope. We're going home for 5 weeks. And we're going to leave dairy farmers whose price supports expired on August 31 left hanging in the breeze—despite the fact that the U.S. Senate has passed a farm bill with Dairy Security Act provisions that reforms the price structure, saves the taxpayer money, and provides some horizon so that the folks who are getting up every morning and milking cows could have some certainty in terms of whether or not their business, their operations, have any sense of future.

They are losing money every day in New England. The feed costs, the high energy costs. And the Dairy Security Act, which was part of the Senate farm bill, and by the way was also incorporated in the House Agriculture Committee in its committee bill, will, in fact, provide that sense of security and future for dairy farmers. Yet the Speaker put through a motion to recess for 5 weeks.

August 31 has come and gone, and these guys and women are out there and they are faced with total fear, and those are the faces that I saw when I was home in August about the fact that this Congress, particularly the House of Representatives controlled by the Republicans, refused to take up a farm bill despite the fact that we had weeks of time to do it before the expiration of the price supports for dairy farmers.

Obviously, American agriculture is far broader than just the dairy industry. It also includes commodity crops in the great Midwest, which are facing a historic drought right now where the security of crop insurance is so important.

Joining me here this evening to report in from the Midwest is a great Congressman from eastern Iowa, my colleague and friend, Congressman BRUCE BRALEY, and I would like to yield to him to talk about what the lack of a farm bill means in your great State.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I thank my friend for yielding.

The thing that I think we need to focus on at the beginning is 62 days. It's been 62 days since the House Agriculture Committee reported a strong, bipartisan farm bill that passed out of committee after extensive debate and numerous amendments, and that's on the heel of the Senate Ag Committee passing a farm bill with strong bipartisan support, that passed the entire Senate where it's incredibly difficult to pass anything these days with a strong bipartisan vote.

So I think the question on the minds of many of my constituents in Iowa's

First District is when is the House going to vote on a farm bill, which in the past has always been a bipartisan priority of the House and the Senate.

Now, my district in Iowa has been burning up all summer. Almost every part of the First District of Iowa has been classified as extreme drought conditions. Now, what does that mean? Well, I will tell you what it means to the eye when you go out and visit the farms that I visited back in the First District in July and August.

Corn that normally fills up an entire ear, and the ear is typically about this long, now is coming out on ears that are this long that if you're lucky has a fraction of the kernels per ear that you would normally see in a typical Iowa cornfield. Stalks of corn were burning up in July and had to be chopped because they have no value other than the insurance policy that was in place on those crops because commodity insurance has been available to those farmers.

Soybeans were more fortunate because they weren't burning up and got late rain that allowed them to mature, and we're hopeful that the bean crop will not be as devastated to the extent that the corn is.

This is profound, it's real, it's going to have dramatic implications for the cost of food in this country, for the cost of fuel in this country. And while we sit here and do nothing in the House to get a farm bill reported out into conference committee, farmers back in my district are looking at what's going to happen this fall when they face dramatically reduced yields. Then we roll into the period of time this winter when they're buying crop inputs for next spring. All of these things have enormous ripple effects on our domestic economy.

Then you look at what's happening with our nutrition programs, which will also be expiring on September 30. And we know how many people depend on those nutrition programs. Who are they? Most of them are seniors, the elderly, who depend on those food stamp programs. It's people who are disabled and on fixed incomes and working and are underemployed right now.

So this failure to act is having profound consequences for the people I represent in Iowa. I have done 14 listening posts on the farm, food, and jobs bill in Iowa this summer, and we get people from across the spectrum who will be dramatically impacted if Congress fails to act.

You look at the rural economic development title of the farm bill. It has profound implications throughout this country, and it's not based on whether a district is blue or red or purple. Every single district in this country is impacted by our failure to act.

That's why I'm glad to be here tonight talking about these implications, and I hope to be bringing to the floor soon a discharge petition that has been delayed because of the inaction on this bill but that will give every Member of

the House of Representatives the opportunity to go down and record on a piece of paper whether they want to see a farm bill brought to the floor for a vote, an up-or-down vote, and I encourage all of my colleagues to take a serious look at joining me in signing that discharge petition so we finally get action on the long overdue piece of legislation.

Mr. COURTNEY. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I'll be happy to yield back to my colleague.

Mr. COURTNEY. I think your last point about the fact that we are now at a place where the Democratic minority is finding itself in a position where they really have almost no choice but to seek a discharge petition.

The fact is that this week the majority, Speaker BOEHNER's office and the House Majority Leader, Congressman CANTOR, issued their agenda for the week which lists the bills that they are proposing to take up for votes. And for those listening around the country, I think it's important to remember that the Republican majority controls that agenda. I mean, that is something that we have no control in our caucus of adding or subtracting.

Looking at that agenda this week, I was hoping when I got back from the 5-week break that the Speaker's office would have responded to what is happening all over the country, which is a hue and cry demanding action on a farm bill.

But the fact is, as I think the gentleman from Iowa knows, is that there is nothing on that agenda that indicates we are going to take up a farm bill this week. Incredible. I mean, just amazing, that, you know, at a time when the American Farm Bureau has been doing a circuit throughout the Midwest holding hearings, holding events, drawing attention to this fact. Even in New England and Connecticut, which is not viewed as a sort of agriculture powerhouse, I mean the fact is I had roundtables with the Connecticut Farm Bureau who are just dumbfounded that an issue like this could get sort of swept up in just sort of the do-nothing record of the Republican majority in this Congress.

I also think it's important for people to remember the Senate farm bill which passed, as the gentleman indicated, on a bipartisan basis actually saves the taxpayers \$23 billion over the next 5 years.

□ 1930

It came in with a lower cost than the baseline from the last farm bill, so it actually helps the deficit situation.

The House Agriculture Committee bill that you mentioned that got reported out also reduces the deficit. Again, I think it went a little too heavy in terms of the reductions on the nutrition side, but I am confident that that can get worked out in a conference committee if the House would take up a bill and send a bill to a conference committee.

But the fact of the matter is is your leadership, in terms of bringing out a discharge petition, is probably not something that you woke up thinking you'd love to do 6 months from now, but it's really an act of necessity because this majority will not even send a signal that anything is even being planned to take up a bill this week.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. I think the thing that is so disturbing to so many of us who represent parts of rural America that are heavily dependent on agriculture is this has never been a partisan stalemate in the past. Usually, the farm bill bogs down over regional differences over how you structure a bill that's going to get the necessary support to get the necessary votes on the floor. There is strong bipartisan support here in the House among our colleagues.

Earlier, Congressman WELCH initiated a Dear Colleague letter—they got 60 signatures—calling on leadership from both the House Democrats and Republicans to come together, get this bill to the floor, bring it for an up-or-down vote so that people get to see who's willing to put their vote behind crafting a bipartisan bill that can get support and move this country forward. That's the disturbing thing is I'm confident that there would be broad support across this Chamber to get a bill on the floor, to have an amendment process, to allow people to offer amendments to improve the bill. That's what happens in committee. That's what happened in this particular case. But when we can't even get a bill to the floor—and everything we're hearing is that there's no plan to bring a bill to the floor before the election—and then you look at everything that's being pushed back into the so-called lame duck session—which you know, Congressman COURTNEY, is one of the worst times to bring people together with everything going on—it's very frustrating, because this is a bill that could have and should have been passed before the August recess, and that's why it's so frustrating.

Mr. COURTNEY. This week, I think we are going to see the impact outside of the beltway, because it's my understanding that over 30 to 50 groups are going to be converging on Washington, advocates of American agriculture ranging from the real traditional American Farm Bureau to the Farmers Union, to specific commodity crop groups who, as you point out, sometimes have some pretty heated disagreements about regional issues and about allocations within the farm bill; and they may still have some today in terms of the way the Senate bill was voted out in the House committee, but they all agree on one item, which is that it is time for this House of Representatives to act.

This is not a debate club here that people were sent to, and it's also not a place where political strategists can sort of play games with people's lives about how the agenda is handled. I

mean, this is a place where so many sectors of American society depend on us, again, at the end of the day, rising to our constitutional duty, sometimes having to really compromise on some very difficult measures, but, nonetheless, we have a duty to act. We have a duty to really make sure that the people who sent us here can rely on the fact that we're not here just to fight and sort of try and get political gain out of every issue that comes to the floor.

Again, what the Connecticut farmers were saying to me when I was back home is that they just cannot believe that the farm bill has now become a partisan issue, but the Republican leadership controlling this House apparently believes it is. They won't even bring up a bill for a vote.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Well, I think one of the things that's helpful is to talk about some misconceptions about the farm bill. This isn't just something that affects farmers. At every one of my farm bill listening posts, I started off by pointing out that in 1900, my State of Iowa had 11 Members of Congress in the House of Representatives and Florida had two, and there were about 40 percent of Americans at that time who lived on farms. After the next election, we will have four Representatives from my State of Iowa in the House and Florida will have 28; and now, less than 1½ percent of the American population lives on farms. So that illustrates why it's such a big challenge anymore to put this bill together.

But when you look at who showed up at my farm bill listening post, it wasn't just people engaged in agriculture. There were plenty of farmers there. There were representatives from the corn growers, the soybean producers, the cattlemen, and the pork producers, but there were also people there from Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited. There were people from nutrition groups who were involved in providing food to underserved portions of the community. There were people there from school lunch programs impacted. There were people from rural electric cooperatives who serve not just rural America today, but even medium- and small-size cities. You had people there from all these different groups who came together, from energy groups who were part of the energy title of the farm bill.

Everybody who eats in this country is impacted by what's in this bill. Everybody who puts fuel in their vehicles is impacted by what's in this bill. For many people in America, this is one of the most important economic development bills we pass every 5 years.

The reason we do it every 5 years is because when you're involved in the types of operations that produce the food, fiber, and fuel we depend on, you don't just do it on a week-to-week, month-to-month business plan. You have to know right now what you're

going to put in the ground next spring and what it's going to cost to do it and what type of risk you're taking on in order to be successful and continue in that operation.

And so you can't just kick the can down the road—which we are so good at in this body—and hope it all works out in the end, because for many farmers that will be too late. That's why it's time to come together and work in a bipartisan manner to solve this problem and get it done, because the American people are depending upon us. If we don't do it until after the election, it's too late.

Mr. COURTNEY. To follow up on that point, one of the aspects of this farm bill which I think is actually so exciting is that there's a major reform in terms of how we're going to reduce, to some degree, the American taxpayers' liability for crop production in this country. We are definitely eliminating crop subsidies once and for all, direct cash payments to farms, in both the Senate bill and in the House Agriculture Committee bill. We are eliminating direct payment subsidies. That's where the largest portion of savings are actually being generated, the \$23 billion in the Senate and the roughly \$33 billion in the House bill. We are basically going to be using much more of a crop insurance, risk insurance model where the farmers have a little more skin in the game. The producer is going to have a little more skin in the game and the taxpayer is going to have a little less.

From almost every angle, when you look at the hard work that's been put into the measure this year in terms of, again, lowering costs, trying to wean the system away from direct cash payments, doing some important, I think, exciting reforms in terms of promoting farmers' markets and marketing specialty crops—which, again, I'm sure Iowa is just like New England and California and other places where there has just been this renaissance of local agriculture. Food security issues and the growing awareness about the fact that healthier foods for school cafeterias or family dinner tables is something that people are just really engaged in as almost never before.

This farm bill promotes all of that positive change in terms of nutrition habits all the way to school cafeterias, but also, again, helping producers deal with a different structure in terms of how their business model is going to run. As you point out, you can't do that with a 3-month extension or a 9-month extension or a 12-month extension. We need a 5-year farm bill. We need something exactly along the lines of what the Senate produced on a bipartisan basis.

Again, it is just incredible that this leadership, the Republican leadership, doesn't hear what is out there right now both on the producer side and on the nutrition side. People want this Congress to get this item done, and it just should not be a partisan issue.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. One of the other common themes that I heard at all of my listening tours—and this is uniform across the country, whether you're living in Connecticut or Iowa or California or any other part of the country—the average age of the farmers in Iowa is 59, and we have a lot of people who are nearing the end of their farming careers. We need to have opportunities for young farmers and young people who want to get involved in agriculture to get their foot in the door.

So that's one of the exciting things about this farm bill is, for young farmers and beginning farmers who may be doing it as a second career, they may be working at a John Deere factory in Waterloo and farming on a part-time basis because it's in their blood, it's what they love the most out of life, but to give people that opportunity to get started, we have to be focusing on some innovative new ways of allowing them to earn an income from farming.

□ 1940

Whether that's specialty crops, which you mentioned earlier, whether it's dealing with orchards and other types of new and innovative ways of raising money from production agriculture, all of those things are at a standstill if this bill doesn't move. And that is one of the reasons why it's inspiring, at a time when so much that focuses on Congress is about partisan bickering, that there is actually an enormous opportunity here to reach across the aisle to our friends on the other side and say, join us, make this happen, bring this bill to the floor. We will work with you to improve this bill and get it to a conference committee so that we can get an up-or-down vote on the future of agriculture in America.

Mr. COURTNEY. Just to kind of put the period on that is that right now the House Republican leadership is looking like we've only got 8 days of real, full floor action for the whole month of September. Again, incredibly, after basically leaving town and passing a motion to recess, the Republican leadership, now that we're back, has only scheduled 8 full session days, which, again, really shows why your discharge petition for the farm bill is so critical in that we really need to get this thing moving, because there clearly will be a conference. There's going to be some disagreement with the Senate. But on the fundamental structure of the bill there really isn't. I mean, the reform of subsidy payments, there's overlap in both bills.

The savings that that will generate, the dairy issue which I mentioned earlier, how we are again going from a historic change in terms of an industry that's had total cash payment subsidies to a risk insurance model, which, again, commodity crop folks like yours have dealt with that for decades. We're now putting dairy into that same model.

But 8 days does not give us much margin for error in terms of the way

this place operates. And again, that's the Republican schedule which came out.

I know, as far as yourself and myself and our colleagues on our side of the aisle, you know, we're prepared to roll up our sleeves and stay here as long as it takes, and frankly, we've got other issues which I think all of us would be more than happy to plunge into, whether it's the fiscal cliff, whether it's sequestration, whether it's the postal reform bill, which the Senate has passed, whether it's the Violence Against Women Act that again, incredibly, even though law enforcement leaders all across the country are imploring Congress to move on the Violence Against Women Act, the leadership hasn't set a conference group to get that bill done.

This is stuff that should be just baseline givens, in terms of just running the country. And yet we have got an agenda this week which, other than maybe doing a CR to keep the government from closing on October 1, that's it in terms of what the Republican leadership has put forward.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Well, I think that one of the things that we need to make sure everybody understands is, as of September 30, September 30, which is just a couple of weeks away, there is no farm bill. We revert back to a 1949 farm bill that nobody in this country wants to see happen, including the Secretary of Agriculture, who would be given extraordinary powers that were given under that old farm bill to determine markets, to determine prices, to select winners and losers.

It would be a horrible situation. And that's why the American people are depending on us to put aside our partisan bickering, to come together and solve this problem. And that's why I'm looking forward to working with my Republican colleagues to get support for this discharge petition and work to get signatures so that we can bring this bill to a vote on the floor, which is what should have happened before August 1.

Mr. COURTNEY. And it is a shame because really, if you look at the U.S. economy right now, particularly in terms of balance of trade, agriculture is probably the brightest spot, even with all the challenges that have happened this summer. I mean, export of American farm products, whether it's beef or commodities, is actually really helping the balance of trade for this country.

There was a story this morning in The New York Times about Mexico, about how their rising middle class now—I mean, made in America, particularly for food products, is something that the consumer market is really stampeding towards.

And again, to allow this September 30 deadline to happen and to suddenly, you know, have complete almost chaos in terms of pricing mechanisms, in terms of, again, insurance payments, in terms of cash payments, which, presumably, would somehow have to con-

tinue, really would hurt growth in this country, which American agriculture has actually been helping sort of pull up for other sectors.

I want to thank the gentleman for joining me here this evening to talk about that point.

Again, there was a Bloomberg News report also earlier today that said that telemarketers now have a higher approval rating than the U.S. Congress. And again, the colloquy we just listened to this evening about the farm bill, it's no wonder. The work schedule which the Republican majority has put forward over the last 18 months would make Homer Simpson blush.

I mean, the fact of the matter is we've had repeated recesses. We've had a work product, in terms of actual numbers of bills that have been discussed and brought forward on the floor, at historic lows. We've had a shutdown crisis in April of last year where, literally, the country was on the edge of its seat in terms of whether or not the U.S. government was going to shut down last April of 2011.

We had, for the first time in American history, the prospect of a default on the full faith and credit of this country, when the debt limit issue was run up to, again, the final seconds before Treasury would have no authority to sell bonds to pay the bills for this country. First time in American history we confronted that prospect.

Under Ronald Reagan, the debt limit was extended 18 times with little or no fuss, yet this majority has intentionally sort of pushed these sorts of pressure points over the last 18 months, 2 years, to score political points. And that's something which MITCH MCCONNELL, the Senate minority Leader, made very clear was the number one priority of the Republicans in Washington: to cripple this President and to deprive him of reelection in a second term.

And now, as we stand here on September 10, we are now looking at another cliff that's facing this country, the fiscal cliff which is at the end of December, the Tax Code reverts back to pre-2001, raising taxes for middle class families all across the country.

President Obama has put out a plan which would protect the income of all Americans up to \$250,000. And I want to repeat that. Every American would still retain their tax cuts from 2001 up to \$250,000. For those who are fortunate enough to be above that threshold of adjusted gross income, then the rates would revert back to the Clinton era for people to pay a little bit more. And the Congressional Budget Office has scored that change as helping the deficit by roughly 800 to \$900 billion.

You know, a couple of nights ago we had an opportunity, as a Nation, to listen to William Clinton, to President Clinton talk about his record in office, when his fiscal policies put the Nation's public finances in the black for the first time in decades.

I mean, a lot of us who grew up in the fifties and sixties could not sort of remember a time when America was paying its bills and paying down its debt. President Clinton presided over policies which got us to that point.

It was also an economy which produced 22 million jobs. We had unemployment rates below 4 percent in many States like my own, in the State of Connecticut, where unemployment was between two and three percent in 1998 and 1999. And he did it in way that was fair and balanced.

And the speech that he gave in Charlotte the other night reminded us that when you actually invest in the middle class, when you make sure that middle class families have the tools to raise their family, to educate their children, to cover their health care needs, to buy a house and afford a house, to provide the means so that seniors over 65 won't be bankrupted by health care bills, the fact of the matter is that's the formula for success for growth in this country.

And, again, the 1990s is Exhibit A for the success of those policies, which the President, when he gave his acceptance speech, reemphasized that, again, he is willing to extend the tax cuts for income up to \$250,000 for all Americans, rich and poor, that we would revert the rates back to the Clinton era, which now even Mr. Romney is talking very positively about the Clinton years and praises President Clinton's tenure in office.

Well, he ought to adopt the plan that President Clinton is suggesting.

□ 1950

That's a plan which will put the public finances of our country back into better balance and which will provide a more solid footing. Even more than that, if we were able to come together with that reasonable compromise—averting the fiscal cliff—it would give this country and particularly the business community the confidence of knowing that their tax exposure—that the fiscal status of this country—is not literally going to be driven up to the cliff, up to the brink, over periods of short, monthlong time periods, just as it was in 2011 and 2012.

That really, unfortunately, sadly, is the legacy of the 112th Congress under Speaker BOEHNER's tenure. That's why telemarketers are more popular than Members of the U.S. Congress, which is according to the Bloomberg News report that came out earlier today. We have a leadership which has shown itself quite willing to defy all of the hopes of the American people that we would get people working together and compromise and extend a horizon for people so that they can make decisions to invest and to hire. Rather, we have seen under the direction of folks like MITCH MCCONNELL that the number one priority is not what matters for the American people; the number one priority is to bring down this President.

That was the number one issue everywhere I went when I was home over

the last 5 weeks: When are we going to see some compromise out of the Republican leadership to come together for fiscal policies that will avert the fiscal cliff? When are we going to come together to diffuse the sequestration chain saw that's sitting out there on January 1, which is going to cut through the Federal Government both on the defense side and on the non-defense side?

I think it's important to remember nondefense interests, whether it's hospitals or medical providers, are looking at a 2 percent across-the-board cut in Medicare payments if sequestration goes into effect. Education, whether it's K through 12, whether it's student loans, are also going to get hit with that chain saw. We're going to see it with the National Institutes of Health, which is doing incredibly exciting work in terms of coming up with cures for cancer by using genome research. That chain saw is going to cut through NIH in terms of the great research projects that are going on in that institution. We would also see the chain saw hit defense.

In industry after industry in which you need to have a horizon, whether it's building F-35 fighter planes, whether it's building surface ships down in Virginia or nuclear submarines up in the State of Connecticut, the fact of the matter is the sequestration option, as Secretary Leon Panetta—the Secretary of Defense—has said, would be catastrophic for the national defense of this country. There are proposals on the table which would avert the implementation of sequestration. I sit on the Armed Services Committee. We had a hearing with leaders from the aerospace industry. We had leaders from the administration—the head of the Budget Office, the Undersecretary of Defense, Ashton Carter, who handles budget policy.

If you look at the budget which President Obama put out in January and if you look at PAUL RYAN's budget resolution in 2011, what you will see is, in fact, there is overlap between the two that could easily get us to the point of diffusing the sequestration chain saw that I mentioned out there. We have to hit a target of \$1.2 trillion in terms of deficit reduction to avert sequestration from going into effect. If you look at the savings from the draw-down in Afghanistan, which PAUL RYAN and the Republican majority put in their budget resolution in 2011, according to the Congressional Budget Office, it totals roughly about \$800 billion, and that's post-2014. That was in the Ryan budget. President Obama, in his budget plan, had exactly the same measure, which would save roughly \$800 billion. If the two sides would come together and agree that we could pass a measure that locks in those savings, then you've really gotten to about two-thirds of the sequestration target set up under the Budget Control Act.

We can do this. We can do this this week if people would actually, basi-

cally, put down their cudgels—again, 8 weeks away from an election—and say: Let's do something that's for the benefit of the country; let's eliminate that uncertainty that's hanging out there; let's tell those firms that are wrestling with whether or not they have to issue WARN notices, layoff notices, to their workers because of sequestration sitting out there on January 1.

Let's come together. Let's get this thing done. Let's look at the President's budget, and let's look at PAUL RYAN's budget. Let's find the areas of common agreement, which do exist, and let's get this thing fixed so that the American economy is not facing another one of these runups. Unfortunately, the majority back in April of 2011 was willing to push this country to a government shutdown, and later, in August, was willing to default on the full faith and credit of this country. Let's not do that. Let's allow the American people the opportunity to have some security, which is that their jobs, that our national defense, that health care providers, that educators, that people who are in the critical areas of research and development over at NIH are not going to have the rug pulled out from under them because of sequestration, which was part of a package from which Speaker JOHN BOEHNER proudly announced he got 98 percent of what he wanted. Again, when the Budget Control Act passed, the Speaker was interviewed, and he was boasting about the fact that the Republicans got 98 percent of what they wanted. Within that package was the sequestration mechanism. Mr. RYAN, the candidate for Vice President, actually also publicly boasted about the fact that sequestration was a compromise which the two sides agreed to.

So everybody has got their fingerprints on it. The fact of the matter is that it's sitting out there, and it's creating uncertainty in the U.S. economy. There are measures that are both within the Ryan budget and the Obama budget which overlap and from which we could easily implement a compromise to diffuse that sequestration chain saw that's sitting out there. All it takes is the willingness of this Chamber, led by the Speaker, who is now trying to distance himself from the deal that he embraced back in August of last year, to come forward and say, okay, let's sit down and hammer this out. You could do it on the back of an envelope within a matter of a day or two in terms of the areas of agreement that exist between the Obama budget and the Ryan budget.

The failure to do that—the failure to bring up a farm bill, the failure to bring up a postal reform bill, the failure to bring up a Violence Against Women Act for conference and for final resolution, the failure to implement budgets on the health and labor and education subcommittee, which the majority just basically, I guess, decided they're just not going to do—is why Bloomberg News came out with

their report today saying that Congress is now less popular than telemarketers.

This is one of the most despised Congresses in American history, and it has been led by Republican leaders who, again, have shown that they are more interested in trying to weaken this President than in trying to strengthen our country. This is with regard to issue after issue, whether or not it's the farm bill, whether or not it's the postal reform—where we have a system that is literally now technically in bankruptcy—whether it's the Violence Against Women Act, whether it's getting budgets done in regular order, whether it's diffusing sequestration, whether it's averting the fiscal cliff.

We went home for 5 weeks without acting on any of these measures because of a recess motion that the Speaker put forward. The country is basically sitting there, waiting to see whether or not we have either a short-term future or a long-term future, which all of these issues are so critical to determining. We are going to be watching this agenda over the next few days. What we saw today from the majority leader's office indicated no farm bill, no postal reform bill, nothing related to any measures to try and deal with sequestration. We have seen a do-nothing agenda this week by the majority following 5 weeks of being back in the districts.

The American Farm Bureau was doing a cross-country barnstorm about the fact that we need to get that measure passed so we can create some certainty and horizon for the men and women who are getting up every morning and milking cows and planting crops and harvesting crops, those who desperately, particularly with the drought conditions in the Midwest, need to have some certainty that there is going to be crop insurance in place to make sure that they are not going to go bankrupt.

We have a measure which passed in the U.S. Senate—it's a bipartisan bill—which saves the taxpayer \$23 billion, and yet we have a leadership which won't even bring up a farm bill for consideration. The bill that came out of committee wasn't perfect, but it is a measure which we need to act on to send to conference so that the agriculture sector of this country can have some confidence about what kind of future they're going to have beyond the next few weeks or until September 30, which is when the law of this country reverts back to that of the 1949 farm bill.

So that's the message which I certainly heard on my break and that Mr. BRALEY heard on his break. I think we're going to hear it this week when representatives of commodity crop groups—the American Farm Bureau, the American Farmers Union—are going to be gathering in the U.S. Capitol and demanding action so that we can at least allow one sector the ability and the confidence to know that

they have some future, both short term and long term.

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

□ 2000

GOP FRESHMEN HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LANDRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here this evening alongside some of my freshman colleagues.

We want to have a real frank discussion with the American people tonight about a milestone that we hit just last week. This is not a milestone of historic significance that we're proud of, and that is that our national debt has now hit \$16 trillion. This brings no pride or cause to celebrate to the American people, nor should it to any Member of this body or our friends in the Senate or in the White House. That is approximately \$51,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. It's unacceptable, and it doesn't, quite frankly, have to be this way.

I want to point you to a few of the President's own words that he said when he was campaigning to be the President of the United States:

We can't afford another 4 years of the kind of deficits we've seen during the last 8. We can't afford to mortgage our children's future on another mountain of debt.

Where are we today? Today we're at a place that is far worse than 4 years ago. With our debt now at \$16 trillion, we've not seen anything significant from this White House in an effort to reduce our debt. Instead, all we hear about is new programs that are going to require more taxpayer dollars and not an effort to rein in this out-of-control spending. I want to talk about that tonight.

Tonight we also want to focus on jobs. This is the number one issue facing the American people right now. We need to get America back to work. And this government, this body right here, we don't create the jobs, but we sure can help create an environment in which job creation is right. We have done a lot here in the House to do that. We've passed over 30 bills. They're sitting in the Senate awaiting action.

We are going to continue to highlight what we've learned, in this hour, over the course of our time back at home.

I have my friend from Colorado standing here. I would just say to you, Mr. GARDNER, that I'm sure you can say the same about what you learned over the district work period. From traveling from town to town, from county to county in Alabama's Second District over and over again, I have witnessed that the debt has stifled job creation because all it has done is create more uncertainty.

All of the regulation and red tape that has been passed in the previous Congress that this Congress has been unable to undue because of the lack of action in the Senate and ObamaCare, all of that has contributed to more and more uncertainty. People are hurting.

I've traveled around and looked into the eyes of folks, and they can't take any more. Their businesses are on the line, and that then, in turn, is a reflection of what's going to happen in their households.

Mr. GARDNER. The gentlelady from Alabama is exactly right.

Thank you for your leadership on the economy, on getting this country turned around, and getting our businesses back in shape to hire once again.

Over the past couple of years since being elected, I've traveled over 65,000 miles to be in every nook and cranny of the district of eastern Colorado and northern Colorado. We've held 74 town meetings to make sure that we are listening to everybody's voices, to make sure that people have an opportunity to address their concerns, their ideas to make our government better, to make our economy grow and healthy once again.

The points that you talk about, I don't know that anything is more relevant in the conversations that we have today than the point that was made at a town meeting just last week in Julesburg, Colorado, up in northeastern Colorado. It's just a hop, skip, and a jump from the panhandle of Nebraska. A young lady raised her hand and said:

I'm a single mom. I have three kids at home. I've had two jobs. Now I only have one. I'm looking for a second one. I can't make ends meet because my job doesn't pay enough, and energy prices continue to increase.

She's trying to find health care for her children. Talk about somebody who is the front lines of our economy who is suffering because of the past 3½ years of failed economic policies.

The Congressional Budget Office recently issued a review of what can happen at the end of this year if nothing is done to avoid the fiscal cliff to deal with sequestration and to deal with the looming tax increases. This is what the Congressional Budget Office has stated:

In particular, large budget deficits and growing debt would reduce national saving, leading to higher interest rates, more borrowing from abroad, and less domestic investment—which in turn would lower the growth of incomes in the United States.

While we talk about growing the economy, while we talk about economic growth and the need to get businesses and companies around this country hiring again, at the same time there's this negative pressure being placed on them because Congress can't do its job to control spending. We are \$16 trillion in debt. You mentioned it was nearly \$51,000 for every man, woman, and child. We've got a 10-month-old at home. Our 10-month-old