

Under PRIA 1, the Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs was required to process applications within timeframes specified for each of the 50 categories of registration actions. That number has since increased, and would be set at 189 under the proposed reauthorization.

PRIA retained and increased the product maintenance fees that support re-registration and tolerance reassessment authorized under the Food Quality Protection Act. Pesticide registrants paid \$110 million in maintenance fees during the authorization of PRIA and registrants are scheduled to pay \$139 million in maintenance fees for the five year period to be covered by the proposed "PRIA 3."

PRIA established a prohibition against the collection of other registration fees, as distinct from registration service fees, authorized under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, FIFRA. PRIA also suspended the Agency's authority to collect tolerance fees which had been authorized by the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, FFDCA.

In the absence of this reauthorization, substantially higher fees whose authority is suspended by this legislation would be collected with the revenue going directly to the U.S. Treasury where it would be unavailable to EPA's Pesticide Program. This would necessitate the discretionary appropriation of new funds to carry out pesticide review activities and eliminate the transparency and accountability measures enacted in PRIA which have placed effective checks on the EPA.

The legislation before us today: extends the authority of EPA to collect maintenance fees until 2017; extends the prohibition on collection of other registration and tolerance fees to 2019 and 2017, respectively; establishes a small business cap; allocates funds for EPA to use for the enhancement and improvement of "IT" systems for the registration of pesticides and tracking of key information; amends the percentage of maintenance fees devoted to review of inert ingredients; increases registration service fees during the life of PRIA 3 by 2.5 percent; provides that the Administrator shall identify reforms in processing that would allow it to improve decision times beyond those provided for in the Act; and cites new schedule of decision review times.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

□ 1230

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend from Virginia, the majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring

about the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland, the Democratic whip, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday and Tuesday, no votes are expected in the House. On Wednesday, the House will meet at noon for morning-hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m. On Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning-hour and noon for legislative business. On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. Last votes of the week are expected no later than 3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of bills under suspension of the rules next week, including a prioritization of visas for foreign graduates of American universities in the STEM fields, an issue being championed by Chairman LAMAR SMITH, the gentleman from Texas, as well as BOB GOODLATTE from Virginia and RAÚL LABRADOR from Idaho. A complete list of suspensions will be announced by the close of business today.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the House will consider H.J. Res. 118, sponsored by Chairman DAVE CAMP, which provides for congressional disapproval of the rules submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services relating to waivers of work requirements with respect to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

The House will also consider H.R. 3409, the Stop the War on Coal Act, sponsored by BILL JOHNSON of Ohio, which is a package of bills to expand domestic energy production and help create American jobs.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, Members are advised that with the Senate's expected passage of the continuing resolution, we no longer anticipate votes in the House during the week of October 1. This is a change from the original House calendar.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his information with respect to what we're going to consider next week, and also I was going to ask him, but he has already indicated, that he does not expect the scheduled week of meeting in October to occur. I thank him for that information. That would indicate essentially then, therefore, that we have approximately a little over a day and a half or a day and three-quarters remaining before the election.

I want to ask the gentleman, first of all, there's been a lot of talk about the work that has not been done:

We have not done the jobs bill that I've been urging us to consider.

We have not addressed the middle class tax cut in a way that we'll deal with that and on which I think both sides agree. We have disagreement on tax cuts for those who are not in the middle class.

The farm bill, I want to discuss that in a second. The farm bill.

The Violence Against Women Act and the middle class tax cut have both passed the United States Senate.

Postal reform, there is also an agreement on that in the United States Senate.

Obviously sequestration.

And I want to talk a little bit about the fiscal cliff, Mr. Leader.

But in the farm bill, as you know we have a discharge petition that is pending, which is somewhat unusual in that our party has initiated a discharge petition to ask you to bring to the floor a bill that your committee reported out of committee. That's somewhat unusual in these discharge petitions. A number of Republicans have signed on to that as you know.

As a matter of fact, we understand your suggestion to some that they do sign—not you, personally, excuse me. But that there's been some suggestion they sign on to that as an indication of their support for the farm bill.

The Senate passed a farm bill, 64-35, Mr. Leader. We are hoping that that bill can be brought to the floor next week. It's not on the calendar. But in light of the fact that 16 Republicans voted in favor of it in the Senate, it's clear that it does have broad bipartisan support.

The Ag Committee here in this House reported out a bill 35-11. That bill has, of course, not been brought to the floor.

We don't have much time left, as you've just announced. Even if we count Thursday as a full day and even if we count Friday as a full day of next week, we have essentially 2 days and then suspension votes on Wednesday night.

Many farmers are facing the worst droughts they've seen in many years. We passed a drought bill here that is not agreed to by the Senate. In fact, the farm community, as I think the gentleman probably knows, perhaps not unanimously, but in large number, opposes the drought bill that we passed, and the reason they oppose it is because—and I think you were absolutely right, Mr. Majority Leader, when you talked over the past years about certainty. The farmers are opposed to the drought bill that we passed in the House because it doesn't give them any certainty. They think a 5-year bill is preferable. They've seen two-thirds of the Senate, almost, pass a bill, and they hope we would pass that.

I would ask the gentleman, therefore, if there is any, I was going to ask for assurance, but if there is any possibility that we're going to consider a farm bill, either the House bill as reported out overwhelmingly from the Republican-chaired committee or the Senate bill that was passed in a bipartisan fashion, is there any possibility that before we leave here, in consideration of the crisis that confronts many in the farm community, that we will consider that bill?

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman.

Before I get to the farm bill, I would just like to respond to the initial statements about the House's work in terms of jobs and taxes.

□ 1240

The gentleman well knows that we have sent to the Senate well over 30 measures that are job-creating bills that will help improve the environment for small business men and women to actually begin to invest and create jobs again.

We've also, as the gentleman knows, passed H.R. 8, the Job Protection and Recession Prevention Act. We did that on August 1. It was a bipartisan vote, including 19 House Democrats. This followed up on over 20 hearings on tax reform in this Congress. What we did in that bill, Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman recalls, is we made sure that taxes are not going to go up on anybody right now because of the economic situation that exists throughout this country. We don't believe that it is a desirable outcome to see taxes go up on anyone and to take more of their money right now while they're having a difficult time getting through the month.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we continue to stand on the side of the hard-working taxpayers, and we ask the gentleman to please, when he cites the fact that we didn't pass his job bill, we passed a jobs bill. We passed numerous jobs bills—in fact, over 30 jobs bills—sitting in the Senate. The inaction has been on the Senate.

So, Mr. Speaker, with the gentleman's question about the farm bill, I, in fact, just came out of a meeting with one of his members to talk about the farm bill. We're trying to look for ways forward. Yes, there can be a possibility that we act again on the issue of the disaster of the drought. As the gentleman rightly said, we passed a drought relief bill on the livestock issue. It's sitting over in the Senate. Again, inaction.

The gentleman indicates the reason for opposition to that bill. There is nothing in the bill that is controversial. It's a fact that some who insist on having something else in the bill didn't have it. Well, one thing we know in common is we're all for allowing the relief on the livestock issue for the farmers.

Why can't we get that done? Why can't we just finally decide to say, You know what? There are some areas of disagreement, and we realize that, reasonable people do, and certainly in election season it sort of emphasizes that, unfortunately. But we also know there are things in common. Addressing the livestock drought issue is something we do have in common. We passed that out of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman any indication that he could give that perhaps there would be some movement on that would be, I think, a positive thing for the farmers. We continue to work on how to go forward, and, yes, there could be a possibility there is some action next week on the issue of the farm bill, looking to find ways that we can work together on issues that we all support, not issues that divide us.

Mr. HOYER. I think the comments of the gentleman are interesting and I appreciate his comments.

We do have agreement in the Senate on a farm bill; they voted for it with 64 votes—almost two-thirds of the Senate. We may not have agreement, but we had a bill that came out of the Republican-led committee, your committee, with over a two-thirds vote, and neither one of those have been brought to the floor? So we're arguing on something that we had pretty significant disagreement on—yes, there were some Democrats that voted for the drought relief, particularly from farm country. I can understand their view. But the farm community is opposed to the drought relief bill—not unanimously, but in significant part.

So the gentleman points out that we ought to pass that on which we have agreement. Let me suggest to him that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small business people agree on not having a tax increase. The gentleman is worried about those people who are making about \$20,000 a month. Some of them don't feel well off, I understand that; but I'm worried about the people who are making \$2,000 a month, very frankly. I'm worried about the people who are getting by and who are having trouble. We need to give them assurance.

The gentleman just said that we ought to be able to act on that on which we agree. Maybe I'm incorrect, but I would tell the gentleman on this side of the aisle, we will produce the overwhelming majority of votes on our side of the aisle for a bill that ensures that there will be no tax increase on those who are making, either individually under \$200,000 a year, or as a husband and wife \$250,000 a year. I assure the gentleman that I will produce and we will produce on this side well over 180 votes for that proposition. So I tell my friend all he has to do is produce 40 votes, but I think he will produce many more than that. Because unless he says I'm wrong, I think when you say nobody ought to get a tax increase, we have agreement—and that's just what the gentleman is talking about, where we have an agreement—we have an agreement that nobody under \$250,000, couple, \$200,000, individual, should get a tax increase on January 1 of this year.

We could pass that bill, in my opinion, next week. We could pass it under the suspension calendar, in my opinion. We could send it to the Senate. They've already passed a bill. They've already passed a bill through the Senate which adopted that proposition. So we have the majority votes in the Senate, and I would hope we would have almost unanimity in the Senate on that proposition. But I think what I hear the gentleman saying is, unless we have agreement on 100 percent, the fact that we agree on 98 percent and 97 percent, we're not going to move the bill.

Now, I agree with the gentleman, if we have agreement, that's something

central that we have agreement on, I would hope we could move it.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I would say that there is not agreement right now that we ought to raise taxes in this economy. The reason is, Mr. Speaker, that we are concerned about those individuals that the gentleman speaks about that perhaps may be out of work, or underemployed, or trying to make it and having a real difficult time. We're concerned about those people, and the best thing we can do is create a job and see them go back to work.

We saw that this summer Ernst & Young put out a study demonstrating that his tax policy—the gentleman's tax policy, the President's plan to raise taxes—is going to destroy 710,000 jobs, slash \$200 billion from the economy, and lower wages for all working Americans by 1.8 percent. That's what that study said.

So, no, there's not agreement that we should raise taxes like that because if you raise taxes, there are going to be less jobs, there is going to be less growth. We're trying to focus on those people who need to get back to work, who want to get back to work. That's where the agreement is—that we all want to help people. We just don't believe that you help people right now by laying down a tax increase, putting more money into the government that can't seem to figure out a way to fix the problem once and for all. That's what we want to do, fix that problem, help those people.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his response—I don't think it answered my question.

We understand that you want to see no tax increases, no additional contributions from people making \$1 million net taxable income or more, or \$10 million taxable income. We understand you don't want to do it. We don't agree on that. You're correct. But we do agree on the fact that 98 percent of Americans who make less than \$200,000 individually, less than \$250,000 as a couple, those 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses ought not to get a tax increase on January 1. Very frankly, you didn't respond to me; I presume you agree with that.

What you don't agree with is that, if we don't do it all on something we disagree with—that's what's causing gridlock in Congress. That's what's causing this Congress to be the least productive Congress in which I have served in 32 years. That's what's causing us to not listen to one another, talk by one another, and not agree. That's why the farm bill hasn't been passed; that's why the Violence Against Women bill has not been passed; that's why the postal reform has not been passed; that's why middle class tax cuts have not been passed; because if you don't get it all, you don't want to do any of it.

I say respectfully to the majority leader, we agree that 98 percent of

Americans ought not to get a tax increase. We do disagree on whether or not those who are better off can make a contribution to bringing this deficit down and dealing with our debt. What the gentleman responded was, unless we're for 100 percent, we're not going to be for any. That's what I hear you saying.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Again, no, that's not why these bills haven't passed. First of all, the Violence Against Women Act passed out of this House. It's sitting over in the Senate because the Senate's got its own bill that has a blue slip problem. Let the legislative process work over there, send us a bill, and we'll get something done. The gentleman did not, on his side, overwhelmingly join us in the VAWA bill. Okay. So the fact that the minority didn't get their way, they wouldn't join us on the bill. We went and did our work.

And I'll say more to the gentleman, Mr. Speaker. The postal reform bill, the fact of the matter is his side, Mr. Speaker, the minority will not agree to reforms. Everyone knows the post office needs reforms. Everyone knows the debt that that organization continues to incur and lays on the U.S. taxpayers. We're trying to fix that problem. But because the gentleman and his colleagues refuse to go along with reforms like a 5-day delivery—this is something that the President supports. But because his side refuses to go along with trying to reform that organization, we can't move. Again, it's this insistence: We can't do that. We all know that's common sense. Common sense is reforming the postal service—something everyone knows needs reform. That's why that bill didn't pass, Mr. Speaker.

We've got another issue on the farm bill. There are issues of policy differences. And the gentleman knows throughout last year we went through a lot of these policy differences in the SNAP program and the rest. We have GAO recommendations year in and year out about that program, but unwillingness on the part of the minority to ever engage in a discussion of real reform in those programs.

Again, let's remember what we're talking about in a farm bill. Most of it by far are not farm programs, they're food programs. Again, raising the question of how it is we're going to go forward, we need to understand the specifics and know there are real policy differences. Yes, we're all willing to work together—or at least we are on this side. So I really take exception with the gentleman's assertions that somehow we're sitting here demanding everything. No. We want to work together and set aside differences and agree on things we can find in common. That's how anybody in everyday life tries to run their business or run their family. It's not all or nothing. It's not black or white.

Mr. HOYER. I said we agreed on 98 percent. The gentleman has not said we don't agree on 98 percent.

He brought up a lot of stuff on the farm bill and other pieces of legislation. The farm bill, you're not bringing your own bill to the floor. Forget about what we think on this side. You reported out a farm bill. You reported out a farm bill some 4 or 5 months ago—I'm not sure exactly when, but it's been months ago—and you haven't brought it to the floor. It's not a question of whether we agree or not; your own bill you haven't brought to the floor.

Now, in terms of the Violence Against Women Act, you knew that the Senate wouldn't do that and the President said he was going to veto it. You didn't sit down with the President to do it because you wanted to exclude some people. You wanted to exclude some people who were subject to domestic violence in this country when all the experts say if you exclude people, we don't get reports, we can't get domestic abusers out of circulation, if you will. So I think the gentleman's characterization is not accurate, I would say with all due respect.

Mr. CANTOR. Would the gentleman yield for that fact? Because that's not true, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOYER. Which is not true? I said a number of things.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members will please address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman, it's not true. We don't want to exclude anybody from the benefits under VAWA, and he knows that. It was simply a matter of new language inserted by the Senate that, really, we don't want to deny those benefits to anyone. We want everyone to have the benefits and not exclude some by specifically identifying others, and the gentleman knows that. It's unfair to characterize anything we're trying to do to exclude people from benefits when they are subject to domestic abuse. All of us care about those victims.

□ 1250

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his observations. We have a difference of opinion on whether or not they want to exclude people, because the Senate bill was inclusive, and every woman Member, Republican, of the United States Senate voted for it. Every one. That was the difference between the two bills, those who were included, and a more specific group that are now included, which we think they ought to be. But we also think there aren't people who were included who need to be, and that was the difference between the two bills.

So, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I think my characterization was absolutely accurate. But it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we still haven't answered the question. We tend to want to talk about other things.

Ninety-eight percent of Americans should not get a tax increase on January 1 who are making less than \$200,000 individually, or \$250,000 as a family. I think we agree on that, Mr. Speaker. Now, I haven't heard that we don't agree on that. But we agree on that, which means that there are 2 percent on which we do not agree, and that bill has not been brought to the floor, that passed the United States Senate, dealing with that 98 percent or 97 percent of small businesses.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me if we have agreement on 98 percent, and the President of the United States will sign that bill, the majority leader knows that, I know it and the American people know it. He will sign that bill.

That bill has not moved, not because of the 98 percent, but because of the 2 percent. That's my contention, Mr. Speaker. I believe that is accurate because the Senate has passed a bill that deals with the 98 percent.

We ought to pass that bill. We ought to pass it before we leave here next week, which will be the last few days of this session before the election. And the American people at least ought to have that on the floor.

And, yes, if you want to assert that we want to raise additional revenues to meet our debt so that our children are not put deeply into debt; and, yes, those of us who are doing better can pay a little more to make sure that our children aren't in debt when they get to be adults; yes, we can have that debate.

Bring the bill to the floor, and let us pass the Senate bill. And I would hope our Republican colleagues would join us and say, at least we're going to take care of the 98 percent, and then we'll argue about the 2 percent. We'll argue about whether or not that's good policy or bad policy, whether it hurts the economy or grows the economy.

Very frankly, I tell my friend, the majority leader, I was here in 1993, and the gentleman was not, I believe. But I was here in 1993 when we raised revenues on the upper 1½ percent, 1¾ percent of the American taxpayers. Your side said, as that study which we think is a flawed study said, that it would hurt the economy, it would increase the deficit, and it would increase unemployment. And as the gentleman well knows, it did exactly the opposite, in conjunction with an extraordinary growth in the private sector, which your party said would be hurt by the action in 1993, which your party unanimously opposed.

You're taking the same contention now, and that study took the same proposition. It was wrong then; it is wrong now.

I would hope, very sincerely, that we could agree on that on which we agree, because we agree on 98 percent, and let that move and not hold it hostage to the 2 percent on which we do not agree.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding again.

First of all I'd ask, was there over 8 percent unemployment then? That's the first thing, Mr. Speaker.

We are about trying to do something to get people back to work. And if you're worried about the 98 percent, which we all are, the best thing we can do is to make sure there are more jobs. And so our objection to the gentleman's proposal to raise taxes is the fact that that tax hike that he's advocating is going to affect 53 percent of all small business income. The Joint Committee on Tax says that.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, just so we're accurate, but not 53 percent of small businesses, and the gentleman knows that. It's a misleading figure, because 53 percent of the income comes from a very small percentage of so-called small businesses that are not, in our opinion, small businesses at all.

The gentleman can correct me if he believes that 53 percent of small businesses, because it is our contention that 97 percent of small businesses, really small businesses, people who are working hard making it from day to day and trying to grow businesses and create jobs, 97 percent of small businesses will not be affected by our proposal.

If the gentleman thinks I'm incorrect, I'll be glad to hear that.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, the point is about jobs. Okay?

And the jobs come from the small businesses who are generating income. If you want to help people who are creating jobs, don't raise their taxes, especially when unemployment is over 8 percent.

It's about jobs. I mean, that's the thing, Mr. Speaker. We always hear somehow that we're favoring some big bad business. No, we're about the businesses who create jobs. Small businesses, according to the Small Business Administration definition, create jobs.

So, Mr. Speaker, just because, in the gentleman's mind, somehow somebody he doesn't like because they're so successful gets a benefit, the overwhelming majority of the people who will not get a tax hike under our plan will go out and create a job.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, it is an absurd assertion that people I don't like. I would hope the gentleman would retract that. It has nothing to do with people we like or don't like.

Mr. CANTOR. I absolutely retract that, Mr. Speaker. I absolutely retract that. But the gentleman continues to malign people who he feels don't deserve the same treatment on taxes. And what we're saying, if they're successful, that means they're creating jobs. That's the prescription we need right now is more jobs.

Our policy is about helping those small businessmen and women who are creating jobs so we can finally do something to bring this unemployment

down and get people back to work. That's all.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest challenges to growing our economy is our debt and deficit and the uncertainty of the tax policy. That is one. Every economist will tell you that; and certainly every businessperson will tell you that, large, medium or small.

And none of us on this side of the aisle have used pejorative—I have not used pejorative terms with respect to large, medium or small businesses. That's not an issue at all.

It is an issue as to whether or not we're going to continue to explode this deficit and debt, Mr. Speaker, or whether we're going to ask some of us to contribute, some of us, i.e., perhaps Members of this floor, to pay a little more so our children don't confront large deficits and debt.

We heard a lot about personal responsibility in the Republican convention; we ought to take personal responsibility.

And the gentleman continues to talk about job creation. We want job creation. We have a Make It in America agenda that, unfortunately, hasn't moved. We have a jobs bill that was offered by this President that economists say would have created a million more jobs. It lays, still, on a desk somewhere, untended to, unconsidered and unpassed by this House—notwithstanding the fact that the leader and I have discussed that, moving that bill to the floor on numerous occasions.

I lament the fact when we talk about this again, he has not said once that we don't agree on the 98 percent, that we don't agree on the 97 percent. I think the reason he hasn't said we don't agree on it is because we do agree on it. He said he doesn't want anybody to get a tax increase.

And by the way, that tax increase, as the gentleman well knows, will result as a result of the 2001 and 2003 tax bills passed by the Republicans in this House and in the Senate and signed by George Bush. That's why those taxes are going up on January 1, because you sunsetted that tax increase. You didn't make it permanent.

Why did you do that?

For scoring purposes, because you knew that it would score great deficits.

I want to tell the gentleman, additionally, Mr. Speaker, that unemployment was 7 percent. The reason Bill Clinton won the election was because the economy was going downhill. That's the same reason Barack Obama won the election.

And he talks about jobs. A policy that was unanimously opposed, Mr. Speaker, by the Republican side of the aisle in the House and in the Senate created 22 million private sector jobs. We know something about creating private sector jobs.

Notwithstanding the fact your contention on your side of the aisle, not yours personally, Mr. Leader, was that if we adopted that program, you took

the same argument you're taking right now, right now, that raising additional revenues to bring our deficit and debt down would undermine the creation of jobs.

□ 1300

In 1993, you were demonstrably wrong. I don't mean you personally. Mr. Speaker, I'm simply referring to the Republican Party's position on that. They were demonstrably wrong—22 million new jobs. In '01 and '03, you argued that if we bring taxes down on the people you're talking about and everybody else that we would explode the creation of jobs.

You lost jobs in the private sector over those 8 years, Mr. Leader—I'm sure you know that—about 600,000 net. You lost 4 million jobs in 2008, in the last year of the Bush administration. You lost 818,000 jobs in the last month; 818,000 jobs were lost in the last month of the Bush administration and under these policies, which we apparently have to pass again, or we won't take care of the 98 percent of Americans who are hoping that they will be assured that they will not get a tax increase as of January 1 and the 97 percent of small businesses that will be assured that they will not get a tax increase, which will stabilize our consumers, stabilize our small businesses, and help our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we, perhaps, have exhausted this conversation—I understand that—but it is lamentable that this is another instance when we continue to talk about bills for message purposes that we know the President won't sign—that he said he won't sign—and that we know the Senate won't pass; and we allow those 98 percent of Americans to twist in the wind because we will not deal with the other 2 percent. We are prepared to debate that, of course, and discuss it and vote on it; but I am very sorry that we, apparently, will not see in the next 2½ days remaining before the election that we address the middle class tax cuts.

I yield to the gentleman if he wants to say anything further. I have one more subject I want to cover.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I think the differences are very plain. The gentleman has a way of simplifying things. According to what I took from what the gentleman just said, if we'd just raised taxes, all those jobs wouldn't have been lost, and everything would have been fine. Again, our proposition is completely the opposite.

We believe that we've got a real spending problem here, Mr. Speaker. We've got a problem with an unwillingness to reform some programs. The gentleman talks about Members having to pay more when, in fact, it was our side that put forward the proposal that we should actually allow and require Members as well as Federal employees to pay more towards their retirements. The gentleman wasn't supportive of that. We've got some serious unfunded obligations at the Federal level. The

American people know that. We are trying to solve problems. The problems are not solved by raising taxes.

Now, if the gentleman is so intent on raising taxes—again, because there is a 2 percent that he just wants to pay more—I ask the gentleman to join us in actually fixing the problem that all experts say you can't tax your way out of and you can't grow your way out of.

You've got to reform the programs. Mr. Speaker, we've been the only ones to put forward a plan that even begins to solve the problem—the President has not; the Senate has not; and the gentleman has not.

It's about solving problems, producing results for the hardworking taxpayers of this country who so desperately want to see us go forward, reclaim America in its true aspirational sense and be that place of opportunity.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I hear the gentleman. I presume he refers to the Ryan budget as the plan to do that. Of course, the Ryan budget does not balance the budget in a quarter of a century. The gentleman knows that. The Ryan budget, of course, undermines the security of Medicare for people.

The majority leader mentions Federal employees. The fact of the matter is—and this is my position, Mr. Speaker, and is the subject I wanted to talk about—we need to get America on a fiscally sustainable, credible path. That is the single most important objective that this Congress ought to be addressing. Very frankly, it was addressed in a plan called the Simpson-Bowles plan. Perfectly? No. Would we all agree on every aspect? No, but it was a plan that said we have to have a balanced approach to doing this. We had to deal with entitlements; we had to deal with revenues, and we are now collecting 14.8 percent of revenues. That's lower than at any point in time in the last 70 years.

We have underpriced our product; and if we were a business, we would have been bankrupt a long time ago. We have deep pockets, and we can keep borrowing so that we can keep spending without putting in a PAYGO discipline that we had in the nineties that helped balance the budget 4 years in a row—the only administration in the lifetime of anybody hearing, seeing, or knowing that we are here, but that has been done. It was done because we paid for what we bought.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have an opportunity—not in the next 2 days of this session before the election—but we are going to have a lame duck. We are going to have to come back here, and we are going to have to do some serious things. We need to as Americans—not as Democrats, not as Republicans—have a conviction that we need to come back here and not walk away from our responsibilities.

Very frankly, with the Bowles-Simpson, every Republican member of that group from the House walked away from it—voted “no” and said, No, we will not agree. So it didn't get the 14

votes that it needed to be brought to this floor. I think that's a sad fact. That should have had a robust debate and perhaps a modification, but it was a plan that said to all Americans that we're all going to have to be in this together—a balanced plan, Mr. Speaker, to get a handle on the debt and deficit that confronts this country that is hurting our economy, hurting our people, hurting our credibility.

The S&P downgraded us not because we didn't have the resources to solve our problems. Standard & Poor's downgraded the United States of America for the first time in the lifetime of anybody I know—and perhaps in history—because they didn't know whether we had the political will and courage to address this debt and deficit that confronts and puts our country in danger.

Mike Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, when asked what was the biggest security problem confronting America, didn't respond, Iraq, Iran. He didn't respond, terrorists. He didn't respond, other enemies around the world. He said the biggest security concern that he had—the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—was the fiscal challenge that was not being addressed in America. Mr. Speaker, we need to address it.

My friend the majority leader, he and I have worked together on a number of things. We've worked on a number of things this session that we've passed in a bipartisan fashion. I would hope that he and I would both commit ourselves to, during the lame duck session, doing our responsibility to America and to our constituents in reaching a Bowles-Simpson, Domenici-Rivlin, Gang of Six. Almost every economist who has spoken to this issue has said you need a balanced plan. If we simply have sold our souls to Grover Norquist on asking people to help bring this debt and deficit down, we will not succeed; but if we summon the courage and the will to solve this problem, we can do it.

I am hopeful that my friend the majority leader and I will work together over the next number of weeks, between now and November 6, to establish the preface for acting in the lame duck session in a responsible, cooperative, consensus-seeking fashion to get this country on a fiscally sustainable, credible path. If we do that, we could redeem this Congress' performance, and I hope we will do that.

I don't know whether the majority leader wants to make a comment on that.

□ 1310

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

I'm going to try and make sure that I don't bring on even more because I know our colleagues are waiting to speak.

I would say to the gentleman there is not unanimity on his side, as he knows, on Bowles-Simpson. In fact, the minority leader rejected Bowles-Simpson and

the President has not endorsed Bowles-Simpson, which is part of the issue that the gentleman seeks some clarification on, which is: Where is the plan to get us out of this? The President was unwilling to even adopt that.

The gentleman I think knows the reason why our side rejects Bowles-Simpson. We believe there are some good things in Bowles-Simpson, and I do look forward to working with the gentleman to see if we can work together in a cooperative fashion to get some results and resolve this cloud hanging over the economy. I'm looking forward to that.

But Bowles-Simpson, number one, is not this so-called balanced approach, unless you say \$1.22 in new taxes with \$1 in cuts is balanced. We don't believe so, because we believe it has a detrimental impact on the growth of the economy.

We also believe that the Bowles-Simpson revenue target of 21 percent of GDP is the highest target and something that exceeds that which we've been at pretty much over the last 70-something years, save for 3 years. We believe that that is too much of a revenue flow into Washington for Washington to make the decisions.

We've got an issue there about the amount of taxes and the size of government. Yes, it's a totally legitimate discussion point, but it's an issue. It's not just rejection out of hand like the minority leader and the President have said. They reject that. We say this is why, and then we also say the disproportionate driver of the deficit is health care entitlements. The gentleman and I both agree upon that. How are we going to deal with it?

Bowles-Simpson leaves in place the structural nature of those programs now and doesn't address this fundamental problem of growing unfunded liabilities. We want to solve that so that the safety net programs are there for the future and save them. That's our position.

So I do look forward to working with the gentleman. There are some great things about tax reform in Bowles-Simpson. I want to work with the gentleman on that, and, if we can, have a conversation about resolving the deficit and the spending.

Again, I'm trying not to invoke any more time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOYER. I look forward to working with him as well, Mr. Speaker, because there is a no more important issue that confronts us as a Congress or us as a people, and no act that we could do would give more confidence, not only to our own people, but to people around the world, that America has got its financial house in order. We need to do that. We can argue the specifics one way or the other, but, Mr. Speaker, we do have a difference.

We had that difference in 1993, and we argued about it. We won that argument on the vote, and we won it, in my opinion, on performance. We argued again on it in 2001 and 2003, and we believe we

lost on that argument, which is why we were in the deepest recession at the end of the last administration that this country has been in my lifetime, and I'm not one of the younger Members of this body.

I am, with the majority leader, hopeful that we can work together and come to agreement on that on which we agree and move forward. The American people, I think, hope that as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

ADJOURNMENT TO TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2012

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Tuesday, September 18, 2012; and when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at noon on Wednesday, September 19, 2012, for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

IT IS TIME TO PUT GOVERNING OVER POLITICS

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with disappointment. I'm disappointed that this Nation's leaders have once again kicked the can down the road instead of making tough and important decisions on our Nation's spending.

Yesterday, the House passed a continuing resolution without my vote to simply continue to fund government into the 2013 fiscal year at current levels as catastrophic cuts loom on the horizon set to hit in January of 2013. Sequestration, as these cuts are known, threaten our national security. An estimated 200,000 jobs in Virginia will be lost, jobs that support our warfighters and their mission around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we have 16 days to the beginning of a new fiscal year, yet Congress has delayed tough decisions again. These delays are unconscionable. These delays are unacceptable. Congress should stay in Washington and stop ignoring the reality of these looming cuts.

It is time to put governing over politics.

HONORING NEIL ARMSTRONG

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me

to rise on the floor of the House today to pay tribute to astronaut Neil Armstrong, an American hero.

Yesterday, at the National Cathedral, we paid tribute to him as a national hero and recognize that his name will forever be a testament to our Nation's will to prevail in the challenge for successful space exploration and push the boundaries, going where no man has gone before.

As a 12-year member of the House Science Committee and a member of the Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee, I can tell you that I am deeply indebted, but also embedded with the idea of human space exploration. How can I not be, representing and coming from the community where NASA Johnson Space Center is.

Today I rise in tribute to all of them and recognize the greater leadership that Neil Armstrong gave as a humble American. He, along with fellow astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collin, shared a most significant time in our history—one small step for man, but a great and gigantic step for humanity.

Right now in Houston, we are celebrating 50 years of human space exploration at the Hyatt Regency, commemorating NASA Johnson. I want to thank Dr. Mae Jemison and all those who came after this great hero for continuing the dream. They can count on me as a Member of the United States Congress to fight again for human space exploration.

Thank you, Neil Armstrong, an American hero. May you rest in peace.

WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE JOBS

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, this is not what economic recovery looks like. Last Friday's painful jobs report showed for every one American job that was created, four people simply exited the labor force. In fact, the percentage of Americans participating in the labor force today is lower than it has been at any time since September 1981.

Mr. Speaker, this is a national crisis. Over 23 million Americans remain unemployed, underemployed, or have simply given up looking for work. Our Nation's GDP growth was lower in this year's second quarter than the first. The average monthly jobs created is less this year than last.

Washington has tried a trillion dollar stimulus, 4 straight years of trillion dollar deficits, yet unemployment has remained above 8 percent for over 43 consecutive months. The American people are honestly asking themselves: Am I better off today than I was \$6 trillion ago?

Mr. Speaker, we need to work together to empower businesses to create jobs and grow our economy, which is why I've introduced a bipartisan, bi-

cameral jobs bill, the Global Investment in America Jobs Act. This isn't about politics. It's about the millions of Americans who are unemployed and seeking opportunities for a better future.

□ 1320

GRANT TRADE WITH RUSSIA

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

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I am speaking in favor today of granting Russia permanent normal trade relations. I would like to emphasize this will hold only benefits for the United States. There is no downside for us unless we fail to act.

While we wait to consider this legislation, our global competitors are racing ahead, taking advantage of their new access to Russian markets. U.S. exports to Russia could double in the next 5 years. Currently exports to Russia support over 1,400 jobs in my State. Passing this bill will increase America's export goods and services substantially, and this growth and trade will serve as a no-cost job creator.

If we fail to act, U.S. companies, farmers, and workers will not receive the benefits of Russia's membership, nor will the U.S. Government have authority to hold Russia accountable under WTO rules.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope that we can come together and pass this legislation. Grant Russia permanent normal trade relations.

112TH CONGRESS IN REVIEW

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, next week, following Senate action on a 6-month continuing resolution to keep the Federal government funded until March 27 of 2013, Congress is likely to adjourn until after the fall elections.

Really? Seriously. In other words, over the next 53 days before the election, this House will be in session about 1¾ days. It's a sad state of affairs, and the best that this House can do is to punt all spending decisions on this year's budget to the next Congress.

But that's what we just did this week. Before we adjourn, there will be no resolution on the budget, there will be no resolution on the sequester, \$1.2 trillion, that is causing disruption throughout the country and particularly among the entire Federal Government, especially the defense industry, which will have to absorb half of that sequester. It could affect directly about a million jobs, about 2 million jobs indirectly, but we're not going to do anything about it.