

Mr. Speaker, Bo Hicks' body was returned to his beloved South Carolina Monday, to his family and to his friends. He is in the presence of the Lord. He died fighting for this country, doing what his country asked him to do. And he fought, lived, and died with honor. He died, Mr. Speaker, before his 25th birthday.

The decisions we make in this assembly have real life eternal consequences. May we strive to make the service and sacrifice of Bo Hicks meaningful. May he look down and say, "It was worth it."

Thank you, Bo Hicks. God bless you and your family.

CEOS INSTRUCT WASHINGTON HOW TO AVOID THE FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Highly paid CEOs are in town to tell America how to avoid the fiscal cliff. The top priority of the "fix the debt" CEOs is to cut the essential commitments of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. No skin off their noses.

Sorry, you 50 million Americans who are in poverty. Too bad, you millions of children, elderly, and poor who rely on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Unemployed? You're out of luck if you lose unemployment benefits.

These 71 CEOs who come to Washington to preach fiscal austerity have average retirement assets of \$9.1 million. That's about a \$65,000 check each month for the rest of their lives. Meanwhile, in contrast, the average Social Security check for retired workers is \$1,237 a month.

Of all these debt-cutting CEOs, only two have sufficient assets in their companies' pension funds to meet their obligations to their own workers. The rest who pay any pension at all have underfunded their workers' pension funds by \$103 billion. Those who have already shoved their own retiring workers off the fiscal cliff want to do it to the rest of the middle class and the poor in America. No way.

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PRAIRIE STATE ENERGY CAMPUS

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tremendous contributions of the Prairie State Energy Campus in Washington County, Illinois. This state-of-the-art coal-fired electricity-generating facility is making great advancements in environmental stewardship while at the same time benefiting the community that serves in helping live longer and better lives.

Some in Congress have questioned and even attacked advanced coal plants like Prairie State. I have no doubt Prairie State and projects like it are

smart investments for our energy future. Here are just a few of the many great benefits of Prairie State: Prairie State will serve more than 2.5 million families in nine States with affordable power for over 30 years. It has created 4,000 real jobs and will employ 500 full-time employees upon completion next year. Prairie State has invested more than \$1 billion in ultra-efficient environmental controls that already meet or exceed Federal and State regulations. Even with these investments in efficiency, it is projected to offer consumer electricity at only 5.5 cents per kilowatt hour.

Prairie State is the largest contributor to the tax base in Washington County, generating over \$785 million in regional economic activity.

I urge my colleagues to take the time to learn the facts about Prairie State and what additional great projects like this could mean for our Nation.

GIVING THANKS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Let me say good morning and wish America a wonderful season, but more importantly I hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving. That is what I'd like to speak about, this whole idea of giving thanks and recognizing where we are today. Before I start that, very briefly let me encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting the Congressional Gold Medal for Malala.

We often speak of children, but we often as well fail to recognize children. Malala is a little girl in Pakistan who was willing to stand up to the Taliban to say that we too deserve an education. She is being promoted as the person of the year. I hope Congress will celebrate her, as well.

I mentioned Thanksgiving, and I believe it is important to focus on that because I call upon my colleagues to gather their wits about them as we reflect on what will approach us in January of 2013. It will not be the decline that everyone is being frightened about, because in essence they do not start those cuts right at the beginning. Why don't we be deliberative? Why don't we lay down on the table that we will protect Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid, what people have earned? Why don't we explain to people that everyone at \$250,00 and below will get a tax cut, everyone will, no matter what your wealth level?

Why don't we stop throwing at each other various stones and other things and be deliberative on behalf of the American people. We should be thankful to live in the great country that we live in.

TAXING IS NOT THE SOLUTION

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, William from Humble, Texas, wrote me this about tax increases and how they will affect him and his family. He says:

It seems to me that too many of us are going to be hit with a big tax increase next year. I can't afford to pay any more taxes. My family lives paycheck to paycheck. We stand to lose everything we've worked for. Stop taxes from going up.

With ObamaCare and tax increases, I feel my family stands no chance to get ahead. Tell me, is there any chance for my grandchildren to have a good life? I don't see it. I cannot sleep at nights worrying about the condition of this country and what condition it is in, and there is no end in sight.

Help hardworking people.

Mr. Speaker, Washington has a taxing problem and not a spending problem, because the power to tax is the power to destroy.

And that's just the way it is.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, history has shown that our Nation experiences robust economic growth when we invest in America and in Americans, in education, in scientific research, in roads and bridges.

In order to experience this growth, we cannot allow sequestration to make dramatic cuts to medical research. If the looming budget cuts are allowed to occur, my home State of New York could lose more than \$131 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health to conduct lifesaving research.

Mr. Speaker, western New York is the home to Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the Nation's first cancer center, home to promising advances in cancer research. It lies along the Buffalo-Niagara Medical campus, an economic engine for our community. However, in order to achieve medical or economic success, funding must be sustained over the long term.

We should be increasing, not cutting, funding for medical research. And I urge this House to reject sequestration for this critical investment.

BALANCED SOLUTIONS

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is at a precipice. We find ourselves at this point after years of government neglect in addressing the fiscal challenges facing our Nation. With uncontrolled spending, explosive entitlement obligations, and a cumbersome Tax Code, our Nation is drowning in red ink and red tape.

Our government is ripe for serious and comprehensive reform. As the end of the year draws near, we have an opportunity to come together as a Congress to create long-term solutions to

the challenges facing our country. Band-Aid efforts will not work and will ultimately make our problems worse. We must reform our entitlement programs, we must simplify the Tax Code, and we have to reduce spending and get our budget back in balance.

We cannot tax, borrow, and spend our way to prosperity as a Nation; but working together, I believe we can and must arrive at balanced solutions that involve ideas from both parties. Our Nation is better than the partisanship that has blocked needed reform to fix these problems.

Mr. Speaker, now is our moment. Together, let's renew the spirit and promise of our great Nation.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS AN EARNED BENEFIT

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. A group of millionaire and billionaire CEOs that call themselves the Campaign to Fix the Debt is visiting the White House today. According to Lloyd Blankfein, the CEO of Goldman Sachs, Social Security must be reduced.

It didn't contribute anything to the debt or deficit, but that's his solution. What did he say? He said:

You're going to have to do something undoubtedly to lower people's expectations of what they're going to get.

He went on to say:

Social Security wasn't devised to be a system that supported you for a 30-year retirement after a 25-year career.

Well, his arrogance is only exceeded by his ignorance. That's not the way Social Security works, Mr. Blankfein. It's an earned benefit. I know you wouldn't know about that because you've got \$11.9 million in your retirement fund, and you're not too worried about the future of Social Security. The average benefit is \$14,000 a year, and most people work 45 years to get that. And you say they need to lower their expectations?

Well, I've got a solution for you: pay Social Security tax on all your income, and you too will get a benefit. And you might need it because we're not bailing out Wall Street again.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, my Republican colleagues have talked a lot about the importance of finding common ground in negotiations over tax rates and the fiscal cliff.

The truth is we do have a lot of common ground. We all believe we should extend the tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses. We should be building on that common ground, not arguing over semantics. I'm confident there are more

Republicans like Congressman TOM COLE, who has come to the realization that we can and we must provide economic security for middle class families and financial certainty for small business owners immediately.

As my Democratic colleagues and I have been saying, that's easy, we should pass the Senate bill to extend current tax rates for middle class families and small businesses. We could do it today.

Too often in Washington we confuse principles with policies. And certainly the difference between asking the wealthy to pay their fair share by raising their income tax rate and by eliminating their deductions can't be a matter of principle. That's policy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues and Republican leadership to build on our common ground and bring the Senate bill to the floor for a vote.

HONORING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS MICAH WELINTUKONIS AND THE SIXTH GRADE CLASS OF MABELLE B. AVERY MIDDLE SCHOOL

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, every year the sixth grade class at the Avery Middle School in Somers, Connecticut, participates in the Three Points on Purpose program to emphasize the importance of giving back to the community.

This fall, the sixth grade class chose to raise funds and awareness for Sergeant Micah Welintukonis, an 18-year Army veteran who was critically injured in Afghanistan on July 9 of this year while trying to rescue fellow soldiers. Micah is now back home. He's had six separate surgeries. He's making great strides; but he and his wife, Camilla, who is now pregnant with their third child, have suffered some economic loss which these kids have stepped forward to help with. They've done a walkathon, they've done collection jars, and they've done bake sales. Next week, they will present a check for over \$4,000 to Sergeant Welintukonis and his family.

Again, Sergeant Welintukonis' recovery is continuing, and he's making remarkable progress. He has put his life on the line to save his fellow soldiers. He's a true hero. And I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Sergeant Micah Welintukonis' service to our Nation and to the Avery Middle School sixth grade class who chose to dedicate their time and service to helping him and his family.

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THE FISCAL CLIFF

(Ms. HANABUSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, what will it take to address the people's con-

cerns? The people are concerned about the fiscal cliff. We have to begin to put the people first and set partisan politics aside. What does this mean? People will pay.

The Tax Policy Center estimates that, if we do nothing, the average American will see his tax bill rise by \$3,446 in 2013. Unemployment will increase from 7.9 percent to 9.1 in 2013. We will also begin to lose the 30 months of steady private sector job growth. Sequestration will mean FEMA will lose \$878 million. Tell that to the people who are suffering from Hurricane Sandy. \$23 billion will be lost in rental assistance to the poor, and the nutritional programs will lose \$543 million.

Mr. Speaker, is this our message to the people of this great Nation? I hope not. It shouldn't be. Let's begin to work together. We have got to address the people's concerns.

WORLD AIDS DAY

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday is World AIDS Day, which is an opportunity for us to recognize the significant progress that we have made over the last three decades in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Yet, while we have made significant strides during this time, we also have to recognize that substantial work remains to be done. Although the number of new infections is steadily decreasing every year, 34 million people, including 1 million people in the United States and more than 2,000 in my home State of Rhode Island, live with HIV or AIDS today.

In the weeks ahead, as we discuss how we are going to reduce the size of our Federal deficit, it is critical that we move forward in a way that allows our country to continue to play a leadership role in the global fight against this disease. As a member of the Congressional HIV/AIDS Caucus, I applaud the progress that we have made as a Nation since the scientific community first identified this disease, and I urge my colleagues to continue to support advances in its treatment and prevention until we can live in a world without HIV and AIDS.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALBANIAN INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. ENGEL. Today is November 28, 2012, and it is exactly 100 years to the day of Albanian independence—when the people of Albania threw off the shackles of the Ottoman Empire. Now let's look at Albania today—it's a thriving democracy and it's a member of NATO.

Let's look at the fact that during the fifties and the sixties—for 50 years—