

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.

□ 1220

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—

and extending into the seventies, Albania was the worst, brutal Communist dictatorship on the face of the Earth. They broke with the Soviet Union because it wasn't doctrinaire enough, and they broke with China because China wasn't doctrinaire enough. As to the lies they told the Albanian people all these years about Americans, do you know what? The Albanian people never bought it.

It has been my experience as the founder and the chair of the Albanian Issues Caucus here in Congress for 24 years that Albanians are the best friends Americans have anywhere in the world. They love Americans. I am so happy that, today, they celebrate their 100th anniversary.

Albania is a member of NATO, and Kosova is a free and independent nation that we hope one day will be a member of NATO and the European Union for both Albania and Kosova. Albanians around the world, be they in the Balkans, in Serbia, in Macedonia or Montenegro, are all sharing in this wonderful day. As to the great Albanian American community that we have in the United States, particularly in New York, I am just so proud to work with them.

So let's hold up a glass and celebrate this wonderful 100th anniversary, and let's use the Albanian phrase, "Gezuar"—"Cheers."

AVOIDING THE FISCAL CLIFF

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

Ms. HAHN. This morning, The New York Times featured an article about California's resurging economy, which was one of the States hit hardest by the recession. After years of struggle, our housing market is bouncing back, and our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been since 2009. Yet this fiscal cliff threatens to drive my State and the rest of the Nation back into the recession we have been climbing out of. The inability for us to compromise would mean that millions more would be unemployed, that there would be higher taxes on the already struggling families, and that there would be cuts to the programs that so many livelihoods depend on.

We are putting the progress that our economy has made at risk. Now is not the time for politics as usual. This holiday season, our constituents deserve better, and I am calling on Democrats and on my friends across the aisle to come together to do what needs to be done to keep our country on track.

Let's put our politics aside. Let's find a way to come together. We know we have differences. Let's work on our common ground so that we can move forward for the American people, whom we love and serve.

FAILURE TO YIELD

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, according to a report by the National Economic Council, if the economy goes over the fiscal cliff, it could cut consumer spending by over \$200 billion. In other words, if we come to a consensus with a financial plan and agree, it could be a \$200 billion stimulus to our economy. Having a plan in place would also give certainty to businesses and our markets, adding an additional stimulus.

Failing to take action could slow the growth of our real GDP by 1.4 percentage points in 2013, and allowing the middle class tax cuts to expire would increase Federal taxes on a typical middle class family of four by \$2,200 in 1 year. Continued gridlock would throw the U.S. back into a recession and would cause the jobless rate to go up. Congress would be stuffing a big piece of coal into the stockings of Americans by not coming together and getting a consensus plan.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Natural Resources:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 28, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER: The purpose of this letter is to accept a position on the Agriculture Committee and tender my resignation from the Natural Resources Committee, effective immediately.

Sincerely,

JOHN GARAMENDI,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.
There was no objection.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1255

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT) at 12 o'clock and 55 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair

will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

THOMAS P. O'NEILL, JR. FEDERAL BUILDING

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6604) to designate the federal building currently known as Federal Office Building 8, located at 200 C Street Southwest in the District of Columbia, as the "Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6604

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION.

The federal building currently known as Federal Office Building 8, located at 200 C Street Southwest in the District of Columbia, shall be known and designated as the "Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building".

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the federal building referred to in section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 6604.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I'd like to thank the majority for bringing this bill up. This is a nice way to honor the longest-continuously-serving Speaker in the history of this country.

For those of you who didn't have the pleasure of knowing Mr. O'Neill, I'd just like to remind everybody that I don't look at him as the historic figure up on the podium. I look at him as a man that I knew a fair amount of my adult life, anyway, and as a man who never forgot where he came from. And I know that's in a phrase that people hear all the time; but for me personally, when people say that of them, it's probably the nicest thing they can say. Everyone who serves in Congress