

Higgins	Miller, Gary	Rothman (NJ)
Hinchey	Neal	Schilling
Johnson (IL)	Nunes	Sullivan
Kline	Paul	Towns
Mack	Pence	Waters
Marino	Platts	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1431

Mr. MCINTYRE changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the motion to adjourn was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 614, 615, and 616, I missed the votes due to stopping to assist at an automobile accident scene. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye” on rollcall No. 614, “aye” on rollcall No. 615, and “nay” on rollcall No. 616.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. MCHENRY. I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FARENTHOLD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. FLEMING. For 2 years, President Obama and Democrats have clamored for a so-called “balanced approach” to fix the budget deficit by raising taxes in exchange for entitlement reform. We must reform entitlements. We know that, without reform, Medicare becomes insolvent in just 10 years. Then there’s welfare. For the first year ever, we spent over \$1 trillion on welfare, and food stamp usage is up now to 15 percent of the population. All of this is creating annual trillion-dollar deficits, which, along with anemic economic growth and stubbornly high unemployment, means 23 million Americans still have no jobs.

Now some Republicans say they’d consider a balanced approach, but how much revenue is gathered from the tax increases proposed by Democrats? About \$80 billion a year. That’s barely enough to run Washington for 8 days.

Mr. Speaker, we are less than 4 weeks from falling off the fiscal cliff. It’s time for Democrats to come to the table with something more than job-killing taxes. If they have serious ideas for entitlement reform, the American people deserve to hear them. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the reason we haven’t heard Democrat ideas for entitlement reform may be because they have no plans to cut or to reform entitlement spending at all. This is just another

game from their playbook—raise taxes and increase spending, as always.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND HOLIDAY CARDS FOR OUR TROOPS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Christmas Day, most of us will wake up with our families, the smell of Turkey in the oven, and homemade apple pie, but on the other side of the world, there are men and women who will wake up in the middle of the desert who are representing and protecting America’s liberty. Those are our great American warriors.

In 2005, I went to see our troops in Iraq during the Christmas season. Before I left, I asked my staff to get local schoolkids to make some handmade Christmas cards that I could give the troops, and I took about 5,000 Christmas cards to our troops in Iraq and in Kosovo. Every year since then, Mr. Speaker, kids in southeast Texas have been making Christmas cards and holiday cards for our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and in other parts of the world.

I want you to know that schoolchildren in southeast Texas made 69,000 handmade Christmas cards for our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and in other parts of the world that will be taken to them this Christmas. I want to thank all of those numerous schools, teachers, and chambers of commerce in southeast Texas.

God bless every one of you for helping our men and women overseas have a better connection with our families and our young people in this country and for letting them know that Texans are thinking of them.

And that’s just the way it is.

Hargrave High School JROTC; Humble ISD; Timbers Elementary; Douglass Learning Academy; KARW; Norma’s Bookkeeping and Tax Service; Haude Elementary; Salyers Elementary; Crockett Elementary; Girl Scout Troop 21157; Tarkington Primary School; Cadette Girl Scout Troop; Goose Creek CISD; Brownie Girl Scout Troop 16253; Spring, 4-H, Girl Scout Troop 26184; Girl Scout Troop 26015; Marauder Composite Squadron; Holy Trinity Episcopal School; Hi Neighbors Group; Ronald Reagan Republican Women; Village Learning & Achievement Center; McAdams Associates Real Estate.

Schochler Elementary; Rikki Wheeler and the Baytown Chamber of Commerce; Operation Independence; Ross Sterling High School; Horace Mann Middle School; Alamo Elementary; San Jacinto Methodist Hospital; Kingwood Middle School; Woodland Hills Elementary; Sterling Middle School; Timberwood Middle School; Beaumont Independent School District; Lamar University; Boy Scouts; Deerbrook Baptist Church; Port Neches Elementary; Chambers County Pilot Club; Neverland Rec. Center; Westbrook High School; Marshall Middle School; St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Beaumont, TX.

□ 1440

ADDRESSING THE FISCAL CLIFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of Jan-

uary 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker and colleagues and the general public, there has been a lot of discussion in the last several days about what to do with the fiscal cliff. Is it a cliff? Is it not a cliff? Is it a slope? Is it the end of America as we know it, or whatever. But in this debate, there are a few things that are absolutely critical—tax policy, the President has laid it out very, very clearly, as did the election. We’re going to do tax reform, yes. And it’s time for those at the upper end of this wealthy country to pay their fair share. So the President has made it very clear: we’re going to raise the rates on those making over \$250,000 a year. And by the way, we ought to be very clear understanding what that means. That means 100 percent of Americans get a tax break on the first \$250,000 of income. Over that, yes, they’ll pay a higher rate, marginal rate, for that over the top.

Hey, but what I really want to talk about today with my colleagues who will be joining me in the next few minutes is another part of this debate, and that is on the reductions in Federal expenditures. What’s the best way to do it? How are we going to reduce Federal expenditures? There are those that say take on the entitlements. Make the seniors pay more. End Medicare as we know it. Turn it into a voucher program. Or maybe turn it into a premium support program which, as a former insurance commissioner, I know exactly what that means. That means if you’re over 65, hey, you’re going to get to go buy insurance from the rapacious health insurance companies. Good luck. Premium support, just another way to end Medicare as we know it. Voucher programs, another way to end Medicare as we know it.

In the last election, this was a central part of the debate here in America. And it was clear: no way, no how are we going that way. There are others who proposed, well, why don’t we just raise the age to 67? Interesting, very interesting proposal. Well, it will save Medicare a little bit of money, but what does it do to those people who are 65 to 67 years of age? It denies them the opportunity to get affordable health insurance in the Medicare program and simply throws those people off to the wolves, again, to the rapacious health insurance companies. And by the way, those are exactly the people that the health insurance companies don’t want. They’re the people who have higher expenditures. They’re the ones who are beginning to get health issues, so the health insurance companies don’t want them. How are they going to get insurance? They’re going to get insurance at a very high cost, if at all.

And, oh, by the way, there are those that want to do away with the Affordable Health Care Act. In the Affordable Health Care Act, there’s this thing