

of the House of Representatives. I look forward to how we can move quickly because time is of the essence, and every day that we can remove all doubt about the full faith and credit of the United States of America, our investments in the future, our creation of jobs and our respect and support for the economic and health security of our seniors, every day we can do that, but more quickly, is a good day.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen of America, every day that I'm on the floor, I can't help but be reminded that facts are a stubborn thing, and I simply want to talk to you about the facts today. You see, the President and the Democratic leadership spent the last 4 years blaming George Bush for driving our economy into the ditch. Now, as President Obama drives our economy towards the fiscal cliff, I'd like to share with you some remarks, remind you, remarks that he made during his Fiscal Responsibility Summit held on February 23, 2009, at the White House.

The President said:

We cannot and will not sustain deficits like these without end. Contrary to the prevailing wisdom in Washington these past few years, we cannot simply spend as we please and defer the consequences to the next budget, the next administration, or the next generation. We're paying the price for this budget right now.

He continued:

In 2008 alone, we paid \$250 billion in interest on our debt—1 in every 10 taxpayer dollars. That is more than three times what we spent on education that year, more than seven times what we spent on VA health care. So if we confront this crisis without also confronting the deficits that helped cause it, we risk sinking into another crisis down the road as our interest payments rise and our obligations come due. Confidence in our economy erodes, and our children and grandchildren are unable to pursue their dreams because they're saddled with our debts.

That's why today, I'm pledging to cut the deficit we inherited by half by the end of my first term in office. Now, this will not be easy. It will require us to make difficult decisions and face challenges we've long neglected. But I refuse to leave our children with a debt they cannot repay. That means taking responsibility for it right now, in this administration, for getting our spending under control.

Now, let's do the math, Mr. Speaker. The deficit that the President is talking about is this 1.4, the \$1.4 trillion deficit that he's talking about. Now, according to his own proposal, if he gets all of the tax increases that he has asked for, and I want to make this clear, his revenue estimate right here assumes that he gets the tax increases that they're asking for.

□ 1220

You still have a \$900 billion deficit, ladies and gentlemen. He promised it

wouldn't be any bigger than \$700 billion. That means that the President owes the American taxpayer \$200 billion in cuts, not over the course of 10 years, but over this year right now, the fiscal year 2013 that we're in.

Mr. Speaker, the President made a pledge to cut spending not to the Republican Members of Congress. He doesn't even speak to us, if you want to know the truth of the matter. He made a pledge to cut spending to the citizens of the United States of America so that our children and grandchildren would be able to pursue their dreams instead of being saddled with our debts.

Mr. Speaker, a pledge from the President of the United States to the citizens of this country should mean something. Instead, his plan in his budget, assuming his tax increases, leaves our children and grandchildren with a debt of more than \$21 trillion. That, ladies and gentlemen, is something that we simply cannot allow him to do to our country and to our children.

THE HIGHEST BUDGET DEFICITS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of my colleague from Georgia. He was the president of this freshman class that the American people elected in 2010, about 99 new Members, mostly Republicans, but Democrats as well. It was one of the largest freshman classes we've had in history.

I remember when the President spoke those words that my colleague from Georgia just quoted, when he said by the end of his first term he was going to cut the deficit in half. I remember chuckling just a little bit and thinking what a low bar to set, having run such a huge campaign as he ran in 2007 and 2008, just to cut the deficit in half. I thought we could do better. I didn't realize at the time, of course, that we were going to begin, during the Obama administration, running the highest budget deficits in American history. Formerly, the Bush deficits had been the highest deficits in American history. Of course, President Obama took those deficits not just to that level, not to just twice that level, not to just three times that level, but almost four times the level of what were formerly the highest deficits in American history.

This campaign, Mr. Speaker, he spent the entire campaign campaigning on raising taxes on the 1 percent. He said he had a mandate to do that because he talked about that for 2 years and folks elected him President, and they did. Candidly, Mr. Speaker, that's not a new idea.

I show you here this red line, which represents the tax burden, the bills that the top 1 percent of America pays; this blue line represents the bills that the 80 percent of the rest of us pay. It goes back to 1979 and Jimmy Carter.

You will see that every single President in my lifetime has gone with that tried-and-true formula of asking the top 1 percent to pay more. Every President in my lifetime has gone with the tried-and-true formula of telling the American voter that they can have all the government they want, and they won't have to pay for it.

In fact, as we sit here today, Mr. Speaker, the last year for which the Congressional Budget Office has numbers, the bottom 80 percent of America, most of us, pays only 6 percent of the income tax burden in America. Eighty percent of us pay 6 percent of the burden. The top 1 percent today are paying 39 percent of the burden.

Mr. Speaker, raising taxes on people is easy. In fact, if we give the President every nickel that he wants in tax increases, it doesn't even solve 1 month of deficits in this Congress, not 1 month. In fact, it solves about two-thirds of 1 month, and that's if we don't spend any of it. And as the Minority Leader just so eloquently said, he wants to spend a lot of it on investment in this country. So this whole discussion, this whole business of tax increases that the President spent 2 years building a mandate for, solves less than 1 month of the problem.

Mr. Speaker, my challenge today to the White House, to my friends on the left: Make it hard on me as a freshman conservative. Make it hard. Lay out those tax increases right beside solutions to the real problem, which is spending, and make those spending reductions so large and so powerful and so helpful to the American economy that I'll have no choice but to agree to your tax increases so that we can save the country by solving the real problem, which is spending.

There is no leadership, Mr. Speaker, in raising taxes on the 1 percent. We've been doing it for a long time. The problem in this town is spending, and we have yet to see the leadership from the White House on that problem. If we give them everything they want, it solves less than 1 month of the deficit. We, Republicans and Democrats, Congress and the White House, owe the American people so much better.

Let's not kick the can down the road. Let's do it right now in these discussions.

TIME FOR LEADERSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I hadn't planned on talking, but as I conclude my service here in the United States Congress, every time somebody comes down to the well and says that they want to set the record straight, the record winds up looking like the hind legs of my dog: very crooked.

Knowing a little bit about this and caring about this issue, as everybody that serves in this Congress does, I

really feel compelled to talk about where we are. And I'm heartened by the fact that both the Speaker and the minority leader spoke today about the need to come up with a solution.

Last spring, a guy named JIM COOPER, a Member from Tennessee, and I offered in response to the budget resolutions that were going on, something called "Simpson-Bowles." Simpson-Bowles is also known as the fiscal commission appointed by President Obama to look at the Nation's fiscal problems and come up with a set of recommendations.

The fact is that, even though it was President Obama's commission, he has not sought to implement one of the recommendations. Why? Because the recommendations are tough. There's a lot of tough love. You don't get into a situation as a country where you owe \$16 trillion and not have a solution that involves some difficulty and some sacrifice.

Included in there—and sadly, as you listen to the news accounts and you listen to some of the comments on the floor—the rhetoric is that those mean, nasty, nasty, mean Republicans are so interested in protecting the rich people in this country that they're not willing to increase and ask them to give just a little bit more. As one Republican who, in fact, says give the President the 2 percent of the rate increases that he's looking for—that still doesn't solve the problem, as Mr. WOODALL so eloquently indicated—I would come at it a different way.

If you let the Bush tax cuts expire on the top 2 percent of wage earners in this country, by the President's numbers—not my numbers, not some number that was pulled out of the campaign—it raises about \$900 billion over 10 years. Not being the sharpest knife in the drawer when it came to math when I was growing up, even I can do that. If you divide \$900 billion by 10 years, you wind up with \$90 billion a year. That \$90 billion a year is enough to run the Federal Government for 11 days.

The fiscal year around here ends on September 30. The President's proposal, in terms of sticking it to the rich people, making them pay a little bit more, gets you from the end of the fiscal year on September 30 to Columbus Day. Then what? It completely ignores the fact that two-thirds of the Federal budget—the Federal budget is \$3.6 trillion.

Two-thirds of the Federal budget is what is called the "middle class entitlements." It's Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and the interest on the debt. Those checks go out automatically. There is nothing that any Member of Congress has to vote on, unless you have a proposal, which Simpson-Bowles was and is.

You may hear the ads playing on the radio from the Nation's CEOs and others saying, We can't play small ball. We've got to come up with a package that actually heals the country.

If there is a sadness that I have and one of the reasons I'm leaving is, if you listen to the people talking, the President's advisers are saying, Well, you know, going over the fiscal cliff, we're putting the Republicans in this box and the 2 percent, that's good for the President. And you hear the Democrats saying, Listen, if we can have this discharge petition, make people not like Republicans, that's good for the Democratic Party as we go forward.

□ 1230

Some people, quite frankly, in my party—the Republican Party—are saying, Hey, listen. If we can paint the President and the Democrats as tax and spenders, then that's good for our party.

Mr. Speaker, when are people going to stop thinking about what's good for themselves or good for their parties and start thinking about what's good for America?

What's good for America is that we've got to come together and solve this problem, not just with taking that \$90 billion, which really is not much, but with reforming our Tax Code. We have to look at the programs of Social Security and Medicare, not to eviscerate them, not to throw Granny out on the street, not to not have health care for people in this country, but to make those programs not only viable today—but what about the people in their forties and thirties and twenties?

They did a survey a little while ago of high school seniors, and asked: What are you more likely to see, a Social Security check or a UFO, an unidentified flying object? More seniors picked the UFO, and with some of the leadership around here, I'm not surprised that they picked the UFO.

The fact of the matter is that we can't play small ball. When COOPER and I put this thing on the floor last spring, it got 38 votes; 26 Democrats and 12 Republicans were willing to stand up and do this. It's time for the big deal, and it's time for leadership.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Throughout history, You have been ever present to all believers. In times of darkness, we readily turn on lights. Millions of Americans in this season have variously turned to the celebration of the Christmas season, with its trees and lights, and Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

Even so, in our political world, there remains the reality of considerable disagreement and contention. Where there is darkness here, send forth a spark of inspiration and grace to enlighten minds and warm hearts to respond to Your love for Your people.

Eternal Father of us all, fill Your children with the delight that comes from light. May we walk no longer in the darkness of distrust, but join together in mutual understanding and peace toward the common well-being of our Nation.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

TACKLING OUR OUT-OF-CONTROL SPENDING

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, the President and House Speaker BOEHNER met to discuss the impending fiscal cliff. The next