

the insurgents to “accept” the Afghan Constitution to one that they “respect” it.

“Any outcome of the peace process must respect the Afghan Constitution and must not jeopardize the rights and freedoms that the citizens of Afghanistan, both men and women, enjoy under the Constitution,” the plan says.

The plan comprises five steps. The first step, which now appears underway, calls for Pakistan to end cross-border shelling of Afghan villages and to free Taliban detainees. Nine were released last month after Rabbani’s visit, and Pakistan has agreed to free more.

In the first half of 2013, Afghan, U.S. and Pakistani officials are to agree on terms for removing Taliban leaders “willing to engage in peace talks” from a U.N. terrorism list and giving them safe passage. Pakistan would “facilitate direct contact” between Afghan officials “and identified leaders of the Taliban and other armed opposition groups.”

Afghan, Pakistani and U.S. officials would “explore and agree to terms for initiating direct peace talks” between the sides “with a focus on Saudi Arabia as the venue.”

The negotiations would begin in the second half of 2013 “preferably through one consistent and coherent channel, with the aim of securing agreements on priority issues, such as ending violence, allowing space for the provision of basic public services, e.g. education, humanitarian aid, and security in the conduct of the upcoming elections,” the plan says.

The sides would agree to a ceasefire and terms for the release of Taliban prisoners by the government “in return for their agreement to disengage and renounce violence.”

The sides also would “reach an understanding on issues related to security and the withdrawal of international forces,” and agree on rules for the insurgents’ participation in 2014 provincial council and 2015 parliamentary elections.

Another provision would confer considerable political power on the insurgents by allowing them to become cabinet members, provincial governors, district administrators, police chiefs and other key officials.

“The negotiating parties to agree on modalities for the inclusion of Taliban and other armed opposition leaders in the power structure of the state, to include non-elected positions at different levels with due consideration of legal and governance principles,” the plan says.

That provision, combined with one for an agreement “creating immediate space for education and humanitarian and development aid and public services,” could effectively cede political control of the Taliban’s southern and eastern heartland to the insurgents.

The agreements would be implemented in the first half of 2014, and the final phase, set for the second half of 2014, would be used to build international cooperation on preserving the long-term stability of Afghanistan and the region, the plan says.

Correction: Paragraph 10 of this version has been revised to provide the correct date for the assassination of former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Sgt. Matthew H. Stiltz
Capt. James D. Nehl
Kenneth W. Bennett

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ALABAMA STATE REPRESENTATIVE DR. YVONNE KENNEDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the life and legacy of an Alabama State representative, Dr. Yvonne Kennedy, a lawmaker from Mobile, Alabama, who passed away, sadly, on Saturday at the age of 67.

Dr. Kennedy was a pillar in the community and a tremendous public servant. She was the epitome of a servant leader, and she blazed the trails in Alabama politics that so many of us now follow. She led by example and was motivated by a drive and a passion for public service and education.

□ 1010

I am deeply saddened by her passing and know that her legacy of service will live on.

Yvonne Kennedy was born on January 8, 1945, in Mobile, Alabama, to Leroy and Thelma Kennedy. At a young age, she displayed a commitment to academic excellence, and upon graduating from high school, she earned her bachelor’s degree from Alabama State University, a master’s degree from Morgan State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Alabama. These early accomplishments were the beginning of an illustrious career both as a lawmaker and a community leader.

First elected to the Alabama State House of Representatives in a special election in 1979, Dr. Kennedy was one of the longest-serving members of the Alabama State legislature. She served the 97th District of Mobile for more than 33 years. She was a prominent lawmaker who fought against Alabama’s egregious voter ID laws, and she also championed the restoration of voter rights for rehabilitated ex-felons. She was the former chair of Alabama’s legislative black caucus and was well respected by her colleagues. Her tireless commitment to public service and her advocacy for quality education in Alabama was unparalleled.

In 1981, Dr. Kennedy became the president of Bishop State Community College in Mobile, Alabama, and she served in that role for over 25 years. Under her leadership, Bishop State expanded from one campus to three campuses, and flourished until her departure in 2007. Dr. Kennedy was a premier educator whose commitment to education knew no bounds.

Dr. Kennedy was a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and was their 19th national President from 1988 to 1992. She served on the boards of the Association of Higher Education, America’s Junior Miss, was

a trustee for Miles College, and she was a longstanding member of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. She was chairwoman of the Mobile County United Negro College Fund and youth director of the Board of Christian Education-Southeast Alabama Conference.

I know that my generation owes Dr. Kennedy a debt of gratitude. I know that my generation stands on the shoulders of trailblazers like Dr. Yvonne Kennedy. It was her light that guided the path that led me to become Alabama’s first African American Congresswoman, and for that I am eternally grateful.

She left an indelible imprint on Alabama and across this Nation, and her legacy will live on. It is indeed a great privilege and an honor that I have today to recognize the legacy and contributions of Dr. Yvonne Kennedy with this tribute on the floor of the House of Representatives. Let her life stand as a testament to the courage and strength of one individual’s ability to shape the lives of so many. On behalf of the Seventh Congressional District and the State of Alabama and a grateful Nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Yvonne Kennedy.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, to understand the Federal budget mess and the so-called fiscal cliff, it’s important to know three numbers: 39, 37, and 64.

Thirty-nine percent is the combined growth of inflation and population over the last 10 years. Thirty-seven percent is the increase in revenues in the same period. That’s despite the recession and the tax cuts. It’s not quite keeping pace, but it’s pretty close. Sixty-four percent is the number that is killing us. Sixty-four percent is the increase in Federal spending in that period. That’s nearly twice the rate of inflation and population growth over the last 10 years.

The spending side of the fiscal cliff is the so-called “sequester,” automatic cuts in Federal spending. To hear some tell it, it is the end of Western civilization as we know it. That’s hardly the case. After a 64 percent increase in expenditures during this decade, the sequester doesn’t actually cut spending at all. It simply limits spending growth next year to about a half of a percent. I opposed the budget deal that created the sequester last year because it fell woefully short of what Standard & Poor’s clearly warned was necessary to preserve the Nation’s AAA credit rating. Sadly, that fear was borne out, but now the sequester is all we have.

It’s true defense takes the brunt of it, but does our defense spending really need to be higher—inflation adjusted—

LIST OF NAMES TO SUBMIT FOR THE RECORD

Sgt. 1st Class Darren M. Linde
Spc. Tyler J. Orgaard
Lance Cpl. Anthony J. Denier
Cpl. Christopher M. Monahan, Jr.
Petty Officer 1st Class Kevin R. Ebbert
Lance Cpl. Dale W. Means
Sgt. Channing B. Hicks
Spc. Joseph A. Richardson
Staff Sgt. Rayvon Battle, Jr.

than it was at the height of the Vietnam War, when we faced down the Soviet Union and had 500,000 combat troops in the field? The sequester isn't stepping off a cliff; it is taking one step back from the cliff.

The tax increases, however, are a very different matter. Without intervention, the Federal tax burden will balloon 21 percent at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, taking somewhere between \$2,000 and \$3,000 from an average family. This summer, the House passed legislation to protect our Nation from such a calamity, but Mr. Obama vowed to veto it, and the Senate killed it. Instead, Mr. Obama tells us that he'll veto any plan that stops taxes from going up on all of those very wealthy folks making over \$200,000, who he says need to pay their fair share. I suppose fairness is in the eye of the beholder. The top 1 percent earns 17 percent of all income and pays 37 percent of all income taxes, but that's beside the point. The fine point of it is that a lot of these very wealthy folks making over \$200,000 aren't very wealthy, and they aren't even folks. They're 1.3 million struggling small businesses filing under subchapter S. Our small businesses produce two-thirds of the new jobs in our economy. So this battle is very much for the middle class.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that Mr. Obama's tax increase on the so-called "wealthy" will actually throw 200,000 middle and working class families into unemployment. That's 200,000 lost jobs. By the way, that is the optimistic estimate. An independent analysis by Ernst & Young puts that figure closer to 700,000 lost jobs. That's because the President's taxes would slam 84 percent of the net small business income in the country. That's precisely the income that is used to support and expand our labor force.

In their blind pursuit of an eat-the-rich ideology, Mr. Obama and his acolytes are imposing a policy that would utterly devastate hundreds of thousands of middle class families who depend upon the jobs that these small businesses provide. And for what? To wring enough money to fund Mr. Obama's spending spree for a grand total of 8 days. It's telling that three-fourths of the new taxes he's proposed would be used to finance the new spending that he's also proposed.

We Republicans don't want to see taxes go up on anyone, period. We don't want to see this government willfully throw hundreds of thousands of Americans out of work by this policy. The President obviously believes that in the eleventh hour Republicans will have no choice but ultimately to protect as many taxpayers as we possibly can since the only alternative would be tax increases on everyone, including those job creators. He may be right, but that would mean a bleak and bitter New Year for all of those families who will watch helplessly as their jobs

evaporate before their eyes. Let us pray that this President has a change of heart before setting this calamity in motion.

THE REAL VICTIMS OF SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we just heard a terrible cry on behalf of the wealthy in the United States, that top 2 percent. Tax them, and it will kill jobs, put people out of work.

If you want to know the real victims of sequestration, the real victims of the Republican fight to protect that 2 percent at all costs, it's the homeless, it's the poor, it's the lower income, and it's the vulnerable amongst us.

Most of the debate up until now about the fiscal cliff has focused on defense cuts and expiring tax cuts justifiably, but the ramifications for local safety nets are equally portentous. In my district, for example, Fairfax County recently kicked off its annual hypothermia prevention program. During my tenure on the county board, I worked with faith, business, and community leaders to open houses of worship and other places to offer shelter from the cold and a hot meal for the homeless, individuals, and families. It saves lives.

Last winter, the program served more than 1,000 clients in one of the wealthiest districts in the United States. Sequestration threatens support for this and other Federal homeless prevention efforts. The McKinney-Vento homeless prevention program would be cut by as much as \$156 million. You didn't hear anything about that just now.

□ 1020

You didn't hear anything about that just now, and it would leave more than 145,000 more people out in the cold and at risk of dying from hypothermia.

Similarly, families in every State rely on low-income heating assistance, which stands to lose as much as \$270 million in sequestration. That may not seem like much, but that program has already been cut by the Republicans by 30 percent. Millions of Americans in every State rely on this support, including 145,000 in my home State of Virginia.

The picture gets even worse when you look at the looming cuts to Federal housing assistance. Programs like the Community Development Block Grants, section 8 housing, and rental assistance for the needy and senior citizens already have sustained dramatic cuts over the last 2 years under Republican control. The HOME Investment Partnership Program, which supports homeownership and rental assistance, was cut by more than \$600 million, or 38 percent, last year alone. It faces another \$82 million cut in seques-

tration. Prince William County, in my district, was one of the hardest-hit by foreclosures, and it has an acute shortage of affordable housing right now. Cuts in Federal housing support would further exacerbate that situation just as the local housing market is beginning to recover.

There is an old proverb about someone always getting "left out in the cold," but in this case, people literally will be left out in the cold if we allow sequestration to go forward.

Mr. Speaker, the cuts in housing assistance are just one piece of the local safety net threatened by sequestration. I recently met with the disability community in my district, and they, too, are anxious about losing the vital support that allows disabled loved ones to live independently. One local organization, for example, is providing work opportunities and rehabilitative services to more than 650 disabled adults in our community. Whether it's performing custodial services, packing medical kits for our troops, working in food services or other duties, these Ability One workers are making a positive difference in providing autonomy for individuals in our community. I and many of my colleagues here in the House, both Democrats and Republicans, are Ability One champions, and we know firsthand the positive effect this program has had, not only on the individuals, but on their families and their friends.

Employment opportunities for the disabled and revenue from their work reached an all-time high last year, but that momentum is at risk because of looming cuts through sequestration. Community service boards, for example, could lose as much as \$52 million, which would reduce services for more than 1.5 million people in America. You heard my colleague talk about maybe a few hundred thousand jobs being at risk if we cut taxes for the rich. What about these people? What about the real cuts and real effects on real people in America?

What has been troubling to the residents of my district is the fact that, up until now, the Republican alternative to these cuts has been to shift even more of the burden, not less, onto the social safety net programs. The sequestration replacement bill, which was pushed through earlier by House Republicans, cuts \$261 billion from safety net programs. It eliminates social service block grants, which support Meals on Wheels for 1.7 million seniors. Where is the concern for that? It also provides child care assistance for low-income parents who are returning to work. That plan cut \$36 billion in nutrition assistance for at-risk families. In my district, the demand for nutrition assistance has jumped by 135 percent since the recession, and it has gone up by 73 percent in the Commonwealth of Virginia during that same time period.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to turn our backs on these families. Sequestration is a real threat. We need to