

TEXAS SENATOR KAY BAILEY
HUTCHISON

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON has been a fighter for the State of Texas long before she came to the U.S. Senate. As a graduate of the University of Texas and the University of Texas Law School, she first served in Austin, Texas, in the House of Representatives. She then served as State treasurer, and then she made up her mind to become the first woman to ever represent the great State of Texas in the United States Senate.

Texans have been fortunate to have KAY as a feisty advocate for them. She's been a leader here in the Senate for almost 20 years. My grandmother used to always say that there's nothing more powerful than a woman who has made up her mind. Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON is one of those women. She is a leader and a role model for all of us. She will be missed.

Thank you, KAY, for your service to the great State of Texas and the United States.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1220

PROTECTING CRITICAL PROGRAMS

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, critical initiatives that help the Chesapeake Bay will be among the hardest hit by sequestration. These programs, including the Small Watersheds Program, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and the Section 319 Program, provide much needed resources for on-the-ground restoration and conservation efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

These programs are some of the most important tools we have for addressing pollution and storm water runoff in the bay. An 8 percent cut would cost thousands of jobs and exacerbate the already crumbling public water infrastructure that is so prevalent in Maryland and across the country, adding pressure to State and local governments to pay for Federal programs that have been slashed. As we all know, the budget process is entirely about choices. We must make clean water and clean air a priority. I urge my colleagues to protect these critical programs from reckless cuts that will destroy jobs and destroy the environment.

SEQUESTRATION IMPACT ON
ENVIRONMENT

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

Ms. CHU. Sequestration wasn't written to be good fiscal policy. It was

never intended to be policy, period. These automatic cuts would deeply hurt our environment. This Congress has already tried to roll back our strongest environmental laws. Now we're on the verge of setting a new low.

Sequestration could force the national parks and forests to turn away visitors. Our Forest Service, which fights wildfires, might not have enough money to put out all the flames. Agencies protecting us from harmful toxic waste may have difficulty going after our worst polluters. This is no solution to our deficit problems.

Now is the time for both sides to work toward a responsible compromise. As I said before, sequestration was never intended to happen, so let's not let it.

NATURAL DISASTER HELP

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, you can't walk two steps in this Capitol without getting into a discussion these days about the fiscal cliff. The fiscal cliff is comprised of a lot of very serious issues, but it is a metaphor. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of my constituents and hundreds of thousands of people in the States of Connecticut, New Jersey and New York are suffering as a result of a natural disaster which was anything but a metaphor. Hurricane Sandy devastated communities across those three States.

Traditionally, when our constituents were homeless, when they were hungry, when they were standing amidst the wreckage of their homes, they looked to this body for help and this body always said, yes, we will help. As we speak, there is a bill in the Senate that would provide that assistance to so many distressed constituents, Republican and Democrat, rural and urban. When that bill gets to this House, I urge my colleagues to remember that whether it was Hurricane Katrina or Andrew or the earthquakes of the west coast, we have always set aside considerations of the budget, or offsets, or whatnot, to do the decent and moral thing and help our constituents.

Let's do it again.

PAY AS YOU EARN PROGRAM

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, while the whole world is waiting to see whether the House Republicans say "yes" to extending middle class tax cuts, President Obama, on Friday, moved ahead with following through on a campaign promise to help people with student loan payments which are at record-high levels.

The Pay as You Earn program, starting next Friday, will accept applica-

tions to cap repayment at 10 percent of discretionary income. So, for example, an individual with \$30,000 in income and \$26,000 in debt will see their monthly payments drop from \$166 a month to \$110 a month.

Individuals can contact the U.S. Department of Education's Web site to apply for this assistance or call your Member of Congress. And while you're at it, tell them to extend middle class tax cuts, sign on to the Walz bill, and let's get away from this fiscal cliff.

Congratulations to the President for following through for young Americans to make sure that they're going to get needed help to pay for college.

PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT
EXTENSION

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I rise today to highlight the critical importance of extending the Production Tax Credit for wind energy, which expires this month. The Production Tax Credit is essential for energy independence, the environment, and public health; and it is critical for job creation and our economy.

The Production Tax Credit has helped to create good-paying jobs across the country, including 7,000 in my home State of Illinois. Because of uncertainty, the wind industry is hurting and job losses have already begun. The failure to extend the Production Tax Credit will result in the loss of 37,000 of the 78,000 American wind jobs. Those are not just numbers on a sheet of paper; they represent people and families and communities.

This is not a partisan issue. Eighty-nine percent of Americans, including 84 percent of Republicans, want more wind power. We must act to extend the Production Tax Credit for wind without delay. The American people can't wait any longer.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, impending budget cuts under sequestration pose a serious risk to America's leadership in a variety of areas. The one in particular that I want to focus on today is the serious risk to America's leadership on a clean-energy economy and to developing grid-scale energy infrastructure, made possible in part by the Production Tax Credit. These investments help to ensure our Nation's energy security and independence while spurring growth in a wind industry that supports over 70,000 jobs nationwide, including hundreds in Rhode Island.

Mr. Speaker, Rhode Island receives 7 percent of its State revenue from Federal grants that are subject to sequestration. Unless averted by Congress, it

could threaten the health of Rhode Island's local economies and risk another national recession.

I know we have difficult choices ahead; but if there's one mandate both parties can claim from the November election, it is to solve our Nation's economic and fiscal challenges together. Although we may not agree on all aspects of a solution, we can all agree on the need to address the impending problem. The clock is ticking.

SUPPORTING RENEWABLE ENERGY RESEARCH PROGRAMS

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

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, let me thank all of the members, first of all, of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition for working so hard to protect vital funding for environmental programs, including renewable energy initiatives from the so-called fiscal cliff.

Renewable energy research is the first step for job creation and building up American manufacturing. I'm proud to say that in my own district we're leading the way with a vibrant renewable energy research industry led by the University of California at Berkeley, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, the PolyPlus Battery Company, and the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. They and others work day and night on innovations that will power our future and fuel our economy.

Mr. Speaker, we must end the billions we give in special tax breaks and subsidies to Big Oil and instead invest in manufacturing and green renewable energy projects here at home. And ending the Bush-era tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires will create more revenue for ending our dependence on foreign oil.

DON'T RAISE ELIGIBILITY AGE FOR MEDICARE

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, we're in these fiscal cliff talks, and the President and the Speaker are trying to work out a solution. They're talking about tax rates for the top 2 percent and taxing their wealth. That's something they should do because it's fair and it gives the other 98 percent tax relief. But at the same time they're talking about increasing the Medicare age from 65 to 67. That's taxing the wealth of the less fortunate people who are 65 and 67. For them and for everybody, your health is your wealth. Jimmy Copeland, a friend and semi-philosopher, said that "your health is your wealth." If you raise the Medicare age from 65 to 67, you're going to sacrifice the health of people who are not the most fortunate. So while we tax the income of the most wealthy, we'll be taxing what wealth the less wealthy

have—their health. That's wrong. Mr. President and Mr. Speaker should not increase that age and tax the poor.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Speaking in the instance of deliberations, redundancy is sometimes good. So I join my colleagues in again placing the defining word "nonstarter" on any idea to raise the eligibility age for Medicare for hardworking seniors, but hardworking Americans.

Let me clarify that Medicare is earned; it is not a handout. The word that we use as "entitlement" sometimes now has become on the order of what ObamaCare used to be. An entitlement is entitled because of earning it, and that goes to Social Security—which is solvent until 2037—and even Medicaid for seniors who are in nursing homes who have worked.

So if we move that aside to look long term at how we begin to look at entitlements, we're open-minded. But the bottom line is let's pass the middle class tax cuts that are for 100 percent of Americans. Let's join Senator TOM COBURN: I'm for raising revenue because we have to; or Senator CORKER: There's a growing body of folks who are willing to look at the rate on the top 2 percent; or KAY GRANGER: Extending middle class tax cuts is just the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, let's get busy in a bipartisan way.

□ 1230

MANTI TE'O

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, much of Hawaii was waiting this past Saturday for word of whether one of our own, Manti Te'o, would win the Heisman trophy. It would have been a first for Hawaii. Manti shares Punahou, the same high school alma mater as President Obama, and his story is compelling.

Manti is someone who has trained so hard with his parents solidly by his side to play football well. You should hear the stories by his father. He plays the game for the sense of camaraderie and the building of friendships. He is not only gifted, but a very humble young man. But many may not know that he may not have played his senior year because he lost his girlfriend and grandmother within 4 days of each other. He did play because he promised his girlfriend that he would.

Manti, you have made many of us all proud, especially those of us from Hawaii. And to you and your teammates from Hawaii, Robby Toma and Kona Schwenke, we say, go fighting Irish! Mahalo and aloha.

TAX CREDITS AND TAX CUTS

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, the permission I request is to make two simple requests to my friends in the Republican leadership and to the Rules Committee, and that is to bring to the floor two bills. One is to extend middle class tax cuts for 98 percent of the country. So that has been passed by the Senate. It provides relief to so many Americans. It should be done immediately, and it will be passed overwhelmingly here in the House of Representatives. So the request is the middle class tax cuts. Let's bring them to the floor. That deals with a big portion of the budget conversation that's going on today in Washington.

Second is for the production tax credit to be brought to the floor. Thousands of jobs all across the country are dependent upon that tax credit. Again, it would be passed overwhelmingly if it were brought to the floor. There's no reason to hold these up any longer. We need to pass these. I ask the Republican leadership and the Rules Committee to bring them to the floor.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 827 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 827

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time through the legislative day of December 28, 2012, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules as though under clause 1 of rule XV. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Fairport, New York, my dear friend, the ranking member on the committee, Ms. SLAUGHTER, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. I rise today in support of this rule, which will provide this body the ability to consider legislation under suspension of the rules for