

We're not talking about every American's basic right to bear arms, because that is sacred, it's in our Constitution, and I believe in it. But when we start talking about assault weapons with high-capacity magazines, we're talking about weapons of mass destruction.

If you look at Newtown, if you look at Aurora and you look around our country at the incidents that have happened, these are not incidents where one or two people lose their life. If we tally the number of people in the United States that die because of gun violence, if another country entered our soil and did that to us, we would declare war and we would go out and find those people responsible. But here in the United States, we have taken the Second Amendment to protect things that are just indefensible.

I will join with my colleagues, and I will say, when I was in the Louisiana State Legislature, I authored, every year I was there, an assault weapons ban, a bill to close the gun show loopholes, to have a gun registry. I'm not suggesting here today that we do everything I did in the State legislature, because some things went very far, but what I am challenging America to do is to challenge the NRA, the liberals, the gun control lobby, whatever you want to call them. We should all come together in the name of the citizens of the United States that we've lost and have an adult conversation about can we do better, because we can.

We don't need clips that allow people to take out a whole neighborhood. We don't need guns that you can shoot through police vests and through the police car door and through their shield and hit their body sold in our sporting good stores in this country.

At some point, we have to come together. We can't just come together and pray and mourn. People are tired of mourning, and people are not fed up, but people have given up on prayer. When you see incidents when you have to bury your children—when you drop a child off at school you expect to go there that afternoon and pick them up and talk about what they learned today and do they need help with their homework, you never imagine that you're going to go there and find your child deceased with multiple gunshot wounds because of assault rifles with high-capacity clips.

We are the United States of America, always in search of a more perfect Union. We can do better, we have to do better.

I will close with my own little paraphrase from a song, and it's to the Members of Congress. We had an incident that shed light on this earlier in our term in which our colleague was a victim of gun violence.

We should be careful of what we do, because the life we save may be our own.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Thank you, Congressman RICHMOND.

The three of us have been here on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus

to add our voices to those across our Nation who are mourning the loss of those who were killed last week in Newtown.

The gentleman said more access to guns than schoolbooks. It's really true. There's more access to guns in most communities than schoolbooks and computers for many children; more access to guns than to decent housing; more access to guns than a decent job; more access to guns than quality health care, especially mental health care.

So, colleagues on both sides of the aisle, we need to act, and we need to act in the name of those beautiful first graders and all of those across this country who have been lost to gun violence over the years. I hope that we will take that kind of action.

With that, Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### WISDOM THROUGH PRAYER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, first I think it's important to let the people of Connecticut who have suffered so and lost loved ones know that they will continue to be in our thoughts and prayers. It is such a difficult time, and they need our support. It is a difficult time. I think so often when we look for wisdom in different places, I believe what Proverbs said, Solomon should have known:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

In the early days of our country, people sought wisdom through prayer. The Constitutional Convention, when they could not reach an agreement after nearly 5 weeks, 80-year-old Ben Franklin stood up and the contentiousness stopped.

□ 2130

Someone wrote that George Washington looked like he had a very much relieved look on his face. 80-year-old Ben Franklin was overweight, suffering not only from gout but from arthritis, had a cane, had to have help getting up and down sometimes; but his mind was still brilliant. That's when he pointed out why we have not once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understanding. We have his whole recorded speech because he recorded it. He wrote it in his own handwriting. Madison was taking notes, but we have Ben Franklin's speech, and it has provided such solace to me.

He pointed out to his friends that there were times when every one of them could remember back during the Revolution when they asked God for specific things and God answered their prayers. That was all part of the Constitutional Convention, and he said these words:

Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it possible an empire could rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings that, unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

Then he went on. He said:

I also firmly believe, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in our political building no better than the builders of Babel: We shall be confounded by our local partial interests, and we, ourselves, shall become a byword down through the ages.

Then he went on to make a motion that just as they had during the Revolution with the Continental Congress that this Constitutional Convention Congress should begin every day with prayer.

So he made the motion and there was great discussion; but unlike the Revolutionary days, they didn't have money. This was a Constitutional Convention that had just convened. These people came together to write a Constitution. They didn't have money as a body. They had no chaplain. They couldn't afford to hire a chaplain, and they figured only with an independent chaplain that they could agree on could they have somebody come in and lead each day with prayer as they had during the Revolution. So that was put off until such time as they could hire a chaplain, which happened as soon as we became a Nation and the Constitution was ratified.

But Randolph from Virginia followed up Ben Franklin's motion. He said, Okay. Basically, they're saying we don't have money to hire a chaplain, but one thing we can do: Here we are at the end of June 1787. We're about to celebrate our country's birthday again, our anniversary; so why don't we just agree to all go to church together—listen to the same pastor, hear the same sermon, worship God all together as a Constitutional Convention? They all went to the Reformed-Calvinistic Church, and the pastor apparently did an excellent job because, when they came back, there was a new spirit. They had their disagreements, but there was a spirit of cooperation.

I heard some of the comments of my friends earlier across the aisle, and I know their hearts. I know DONNA CHRISTENSEN has been extremely gracious to me, personally. Good people. Good people with the best of intentions. I think the world of JOE LIEBERMAN. I was visiting with him on Sunday morning of his ideas to have a commission come together and not just jump quickly to some politically correct solution. Let's do the right thing by America, not a knee-jerk, which like the assault weapon ban did nothing. In fact, Columbine occurred during the middle of the so-called "assault weapon ban." Every gun is an assault weapon.

The machetes in Rwanda—the worst genocide that we know of in human history. 800,000 or so with machetes? Of course, we know during World War II that the genocide wasn't just 800,000,

that it was millions—6 million Jews. They were killed by all kinds of means. So we need to be smart about the way we deal with this issue of mass murders and violence in our society, and everything should be on the table.

As we continue to remember the loved ones of those who were victims of the tragedy at Newtown, Connecticut, things go on here in this town. This body tomorrow, we've been alerted, will vote on what's being called "Plan B." Plan A was to try to reach an agreement with the President. From my experience as an attorney, I've negotiated small deals, multimillion-dollar deals. I was a district judge, a chief justice, a certified mediator. I don't know if there is anybody else in the congressional body who has been through the training and process of becoming an international arbitrator. I have a lot of experience in negotiating from all sides when you see Speaker BOEHNER go beyond what anybody I'm aware of and our conference really wanted him to do initially.

He said, Okay. We will come up with \$800 billion of revenue, Mr. President, because that's where you had gotten up to. \$800 billion is what you were demanding before, so we'll cut to the chase. We'll just quit negotiating, and we'll give you what you want—\$800 billion in new revenue.

The President responded by saying, No, no, no, no. Now I'm at \$1.6 trillion. Now that you're at \$800 billion, I'm at \$1.6 trillion of new revenue wanting.

What most people who really look at our problem in this town realize is that it really isn't a tax problem, that it's a spending problem. When we went from the Speaker Pelosi-Harry Reid budget of 2008 that ended on September 30 of 2008, I heard no one that year complain that the Federal Government is not spending enough money. We were spending more money than we had then. Yet in January of '09, after President Obama comes in and the Speaker is PELOSI and the majority leader in the Senate is HARRY REID, we began spending about \$1.6 trillion more than we had coming in. We had 2.3 or so trillion dollars coming in in Federal revenue, and we were spending about \$1.6 trillion more than that?

That's one of the reasons 2 weeks ago I couldn't believe that we were voting to eliminate the use of the word "lunatic," because it seems to me only a lunatic body would come up with the idea of, gee, we're in financial trouble; let's spend more than \$1 trillion more than we have coming in. That's financially irresponsible.

As my friend RANDY NEUGEBAUER pointed out again this week: A vote over taxes that doesn't deal with the massive spending is a vote to defer taxes in order to let our children and grandchildren and future generations pay the tax because we don't have the moral consistency to take care of our own debts. We're going to lay it on future generations.

So, in seeking wisdom, it's part of my belief that you pray; you seek wise

counsel and read scripture. In doing that, I find as an old history major—I went to Texas A&M. I knew I was going into the Army for 4 years. I loved history, so why not major in history? You learn so much from history. I thought I remembered these words, and I was able to find them. So, Madam Speaker, I want to finish the evening tonight with these words. These are brilliant words.

□ 2140

These are words of wisdom from a man named JOHN BOEHNER. This is an article. It's basically a transcript that was done by Major Garrett, October 25, 2010. This was 8 days before the 2010 election, which turned out to be the largest conservative-wave election in American history. So I will just read basically the transcript. It's an article, but it's really a transcript. It says that Representative JOHN BOEHNER is interviewed in his Capitol Hill office March 10, 2010, but the article is dated October 25, 2010.

The National Journal representative said:

About 3 weeks before the 1994 elections, I asked you if House Republicans were ready to win the majority and ready to govern the House. You said then that sometimes the wave takes you into power whether you're ready or not. It did then. It may now. What is similar to you about the 1994 cycle? And more important, are you ready to lead now and will you lead differently if you win?

Minority Leader BOEHNER said:

Well, all kinds of things have changed, and there are a lot of differences. But maybe the biggest thing that's different now is near 10 percent unemployment. I mean, we're going to have to start making tough choices on spending to give our economy a chance to start moving and creating jobs again. As for me personally, you know I had a front row seat to what worked and what didn't in 1994. And I like to think that I learned a thing or two.

National Journal:

If you become Speaker, you will be the first since Tom Foley to have previously chaired a committee. (Foley chaired the Agriculture Committee.) How will your past as chairman and legislator with many bills—No Child Left Behind chief among them—influence your approach to allowing committees to set the agenda and give signals instead of receive them from leadership?

Minority Leader BOEHNER said:

We need to stop writing bills in the Speaker's office and let Members of Congress be legislators again. Too often in the House right now we don't have legislators, we just have voters. Under Speaker PELOSI, 430 out of 435 Members are just here to vote and raise money. That's it. That's not right. We were each elected to uphold the Constitution and represent 600,000-odd people in our districts. We need to open this place up, let some air in. We have nothing to fear from letting the House work its will. Nothing to fear from the battle of ideas. That starts with committees. The result will be more scrutiny and better legislation.

The National Journal:

Related to this it has often been said by those closest to you that you respect and admire and believe in regular order. What does that mean to you and how much institu-

tional value do you place on placing regular order at the center of House procedures and House reforms?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

Yes, I do, absolutely. The House is the body closest to the people. That's by design. We're the crucible, the testing ground for new ideas and new policies, and the institutions of the House that have grown up over 200 years of trial and error are the best way to test those ideas and policies. We don't need five Members sitting behind a closed door writing a bill like they did with the stimulus or ObamaCare. It's nuts.

National Journal:

If you are Speaker, will you ever bring a bill to the floor that hasn't been true to the 3-day rule?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

No.

National Journal:

That's it? Just no?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

Right. I can see a scenario like right after 9/11 when we would have to act immediately in a true national emergency, I guess, maybe, but this is a serious commitment. I know it's going to be a pain in the neck, but we're going to do it.

National Journal:

Enough about procedure. How worried are you about facing a government shutdown fight with President Obama over cutting spending as much as the Pledge to America promises?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

Look, Major, our goal is to cut the size of government, not to shut it down. If we take the majority, the President is going to have to realize that he can't keep ignoring the American people. They're out there looking at what the President and PELOSI and HARRY REID are doing, and they're shouting "stop" at the top of their lungs. We're going to listen to them, and the President better, too.

National Journal:

Deputy Whip ERIC CANTOR has virtually ruled out a government shutdown. Do you rule it out as a negotiating tactic or as a possible outcome of a budget disagreement?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

I've said the same thing as ERIC. Our goal is to make government smaller, not to shut it down. JEB HENSARLING has a bill that would prevent a government shutdown in the event of a budget standoff. We're going to stay focused on doing what the American people want, and what they want is less spending.

National Journal:

Do you anticipate a resolution of the Bush tax cut issue or a lengthy congressional issue in the lame duck session? Or are you girding your Members to deal with both issues as soon as the 111th Congress convenes?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

Hell, I don't think we need to wait until after the election. Let's come back right now and stop this tax hike and cut spending. That's what we put in the pledge that we want to do right now.

National Journal:

A reauthorization of the highway bill is due in the next Congress. Will you, as the GOP leadership, support any increase in the Federal gasoline tax to finance additional road, bridge or highway construction?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

I've never supported a tax increase of any kind.

National Journal:

Will you extend into the 111th Congress the current House GOP moratorium on earmarks? Related to that, if you win the majority, will you seek any change to the Appropriations Committee's professional staff or other reforms to signal that, in your words, "business as usual" is over when it comes to discretionary spending?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

Look, I've always had a no earmarks policy. I helped get the conference into a place where we have a current moratorium. And I think it's perfectly clear that going back to business as usual is not an option. That's the case with earmarking specifically, and with spending in general. Change is never easy, but change is necessary. It's what the American people are demanding of us.

National Journal:

You've said you are open to having spending-cut legislation come to the House floor each week or, at a minimum, regularly. How do you intend for this to work?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

Well, I think a model for that particular proposal may be the YouCut project that ERIC and the other members of our economic recovery solutions group have been doing all year. They've got a ton of specific cuts, chosen by the American people in an online poll. I also said in my speech in September at AEI that I think we need to look at breaking up all these massive spending bills—break them into smaller bills that are more conducive to scrutiny and debate. We said in the pledge that we need to set up a process that makes it easier to cut spending. In my mind that means, among other things, if a Member has an amendment that would cut spending, it should get a vote. Period.

□ 2150

Skippping down.

National Journal:

How much longer do you envision staying in Congress? And, related to that, did you learn anything valuable from the speakership of NANCY PELOSI?

Minority Leader BOEHNER:

Hell, I've already stayed here a lot longer than I ever thought I would. We'll see. I think the current majority has reinforced what I already knew. You can't run this place, at least not well, by shutting out the American people, shutting out the other party, and even shutting out your own members. You can twist arms and crack heads and cut deals for a while, but it just won't work in the long term.

Madam Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER TO UNITED STATES-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, and the order of the House of January 5, 2011, of the following individual on the part of the House to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission for a term to expire December 31, 2014:

Mr. Larry Wortzel, Williamsburg, Virginia.

#### 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 9 o'clock and 52 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2220

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah) at 10 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.

#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-707) on the resolution (H. Res. 840) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.J. RES. 66, APPROVING RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS AGAINST BURMA, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6684, SPENDING REDUCTION ACT OF 2012

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-708) on the resolution (H. Res. 841) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 66) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6684) to provide for spending reduction, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. MICA (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today after 5 p.m. on account of attending a funeral.

#### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title,

which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3783. An act to provide for a comprehensive strategy to counter Iran's growing hostile presence and activity in the Western Hemisphere, and for other purposes.

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 285. An act for the relief of Sopuruchi Chukwueke.

#### BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on December 19, 2012, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills:

H.R. 6116. To amend the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands to provide for direct review by the United States Supreme Court of decisions of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6223. To amend section 1059(e) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 to clarify that a period of employment abroad by the Chief of Mission or United States Armed Forces as a translator, interpreter, or in a security-related position in an executive or managerial capacity is to be counted as a period of residence and physical presence in the United States for purposes of qualifying for naturalization, and for other purposes.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m.), under its previous order and pursuant to House Resolution 839, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, December 20, 2012, at noon, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable Daniel K. Inouye.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

8836. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Creation of a Low Power Radio Service; Amendment of Service and Eligibility Rules for FM Broadcast Translator Stations [MB Docket No.: 99-25; MB Docket No. 07-172. RM 11338] received December 11, 2012, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

8837. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 12-160, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

8838. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 12-147, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.