

all of the precious children who have lost their lives to gun violence in our Nation, especially those babies we lost most recently in Connecticut.

Put down those guns. Don't even think about it. Because one bullet—just one bullet—will kill the party. Please, America, put down those guns.

□ 1010

WORK TOGETHER FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. It will be very hard to wish the American people happy New Year unless this Congress reaches and passes an agreement that keeps taxes from going up on the 98 percent who have already had to sacrifice during the recession, that extends unemployment, enables doctors to continue to care for their Medicare beneficiaries, fixes the AMT, provides disaster recovery money to help our fellow Americans, and passes the farm bill.

Democrats agreed last year to \$1.5 trillion in cuts over the next 10 years, which are already in place. President Obama offered several concessions. Now Republicans need to give up at least an equal amount on the revenue side.

And right now—but definitely early in 2013—my constituents in the Virgin Islands need relief from the highest energy costs in the country and a fair Medicaid match so that everyone can have access to quality health care.

Whatever partisan differences we have and the Republicans have with our President, let's set them aside as this difficult year comes to a close and work together to give our constituents a happy New Year.

AVOIDING THE FISCAL CLIFF

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to implore the House GOP leadership to address the looming fiscal cliff. We have only a few hours left, and we owe it to the American people to find a solution, pass legislation, and send it to the President for his signature tonight.

There is too much at stake to let this critical situation devolve into the same politics as usual that we have seen throughout this Congress. The consequences of failure or inaction are dire. According to the Congressional Budget Office, going over the cliff would raise the unemployment rate from 7.9 to 9.1 percent in 2013. We would also see devastating cuts to programs that pay for education, food inspection, and air travel safety, nearing \$55 billion.

Madam Speaker, there is no more time, and the American people are de-

pending on us for a solution to avoid this fiscal cliff.

SENATE NEEDS TO GET TO WORK

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

Mr. SCALISE. Madam Speaker, here we are on New Year's Eve working to avoid this latest fiscal cliff. Of course, if you wonder why we're here, just look at the fact that we shouldn't have to be here.

Back on August 1, this House, with a bipartisan vote, passed a bill that would have avoided this fiscal cliff. It would have protected every American family from seeing a tax increase. The bill passed on August 1, and it's been sitting over in the Senate every day since then. But here we are on New Year's Eve, and the Senate is finally rolling up their sleeves and working to avoid this crisis.

Well, here we are at another crisis, and, unfortunately, as we look towards this New Year tomorrow, this is not the last time that we may be here. We passed a budget here in the House months ago. It's been more than 3 years since the Senate passed a budget, yet months from now we'll be hearing another cliff approaching of a government shutdown because the Senate hasn't passed a budget.

It's time for the Senate to start doing their work and stop creating these crises and forcing American families to wonder what's going to happen next and what's going to be the next crisis. We should not have any American family facing a tax increase. Let's get the American economy on track.

FISCAL CLIFF DEADLINE

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, the American people are looking at Congress with disdain—and rightfully so. With the deadline on the fiscal cliff only hours away, we have failed to reach a reasonable compromise to move the economy forward and ward off painful tax hikes on the middle class.

The majority of Americans have sent us a clear message of what they want—a fair tax system, an economy that works for everyone, and a strong social safety net. These are classic American values, and throughout our history Members of both parties have made compromises in order to protect them. Those compromises reflect not just the will of the people but the way normal people do business.

Every day of their lives American workers solve problems and collaborate with their coworkers to meet objectives. They don't get to wait until after the deadline passes to get the job done; if they do, they lose their jobs. The American people can't just go home if they don't get their way. And yet

that's exactly what House Republican leadership did earlier this month. I hope it's not what they plan to do again this week.

Madam Speaker, if my colleagues don't wake up and respond to what the American people want, they will be the ones to ultimately lose their jobs—and rightfully so.

FISCAL CLIFF

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Madam Speaker, when Chairman Bernanke first coined the phrase the "fiscal cliff," he was really describing the perfect storm. The fiscal cliff is not only sequestration, the impact of the Budget Control Act, but also includes and is not limited to the expiration of the Bush tax cuts, unemployment insurance, the SGR, the AMT patch, the debt limit, other tax provisions. Ergo the perfect storm—major issues that this Republican-controlled House will not address until the wealthy are protected.

We must address a sufficient number of these provisions to avert the perfect storm. To do so, we must look to the building of public confidence so that we can continue steady growth in the economy and jobs, the true way to avert the cliff. This is why we must do what is best for the middle and working class first: extend the Bush taxes for the middle class, extend unemployment insurance, SGR, the AMT patch, delay the sequestration—those items which we can all agree upon. We've got to get to work.

IMPENDING FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. TONKO. Madam Speaker, well, here we are on the last day of calendar year 2012 with an impending fiscal cliff challenging all of us.

The women and men who serve in this great body assemble and express great differences, but those differences ought not divide us; they should build us with the best consensus.

We need a bold and balanced approach to this fiscal cliff. We need to make certain that the 33 consecutive months of private sector job growth are not disrupted. We need to make certain that the unemployment rate does not rise as the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, suggests, to 9.1 percent. We need to avoid taxes growing by \$2,200 for an average family of four in 2013. That's what's impending here. It is important for us to go forward and take the initiative and avoid the consequences of that fiscal cliff.

I'm concerned because FEMA, as an example, would be cut by some \$878 million. Having witnessed the destruction in my district, we can ill-afford that. Cuts to nutrition programs, cuts

to Medicare. I implore our leadership in this House, bring a bold and balanced approach to solve our fiscal cliff crisis here today.

DROPPING THE BALL

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

Ms. HAHN. Madam Speaker, tonight in Times Square hundreds of thousands of people will be there at midnight to watch that ball drop, but here in Congress, we've also dropped the ball.

We're in the final days of the 112th Congress. No one expected us to be here on the House floor on New Year's Eve, but here we are racing towards that fiscal cliff—towards higher taxes on the middle class and slashed investment for the American people, including nutrition for mothers and infants, education for our children, and our infrastructure.

What part of the cliff sounds like a good plan? I know I'm not the only one who has spent time with families that it will hurt. I know I'm not the only one who has visited the businesses that are worried that our country could have another recession. We should not be playing this game of chicken.

There's too much at stake to have politics as usual. We have an opportunity to prevent the fiscal cliff, but in order to do so we must act as a unified Congress.

So I say to all my friends and colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, let's get this thing done. Tonight, when that ball drops, let's make sure that we haven't also dropped the ball.

□ 1020

PASS THE SENATE SUPPLEMENTAL

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, it has now been 9 weeks since Superstorm Sandy swept across the east coast. Twenty-four U.S. States were in some way affected by Sandy. The storm killed at least 131 people in eight States. Hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed. The unprecedented disaster caused billions of dollars in loss and economic disruption.

Just 2 weeks after Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast, this Congress approved more than \$62 billion in Federal aid to help the devastated area get back on its feet. After Hurricanes Ike and Gustav hit in 2008, a supplemental appropriations bill passed this Congress overwhelmingly. All of these aid packages were approved by strong bipartisan majorities in both Chambers.

The needs were obvious and the speed imperative. We need to pass the Senate supplemental. Nothing has changed. That is what we did for others. That's what we need to do to help this devastated area.

HELP FOR HOMEOWNERS

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, my hope is that tonight we will do what is right for the Republic and pass a responsible measure dealing with spending and our debt. But there's another cliff tonight at midnight that should concern the millions of homeowners who have forgone their mortgage foreclosure reviews. They have a deadline of midnight tonight as reported by USA Today yesterday on the front page of the business section. It's important to millions of Americans who literally could receive up to \$100,000 in compensation because of mistakes that were made by servicers in the processing of those loans.

So, I would like to tell people who might have had foreclosures facing their families in 2009 and 2010, they can call 888-952-9105 or go to the Web site IndependentForeclosureReview.com.

The Office of Comptroller of the Currency will help them review those mortgage foreclosures. Far too many Americans, millions, 4 million to be exact, have received these notices, but only a little over 300,000 have replied. Millions of people could have those mortgages reviewed and perhaps receive compensation and hang onto their houses.

Again, that phone number is 888-952-9105. Let's help the millions of Americans who have been harmed with their mortgages by irresponsible servicers.

FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the start of a new year is supposed to be a joyous occasion. It is time to reflect on the past year, to take pride in our accomplishments and learn from our stumbles. There's a novel thought.

Similarly, the start of a new Congress offers us an opportunity to look forward with hope and aspiration for the opportunity to work together—again, a novel thought—to deliver on behalf of those who have put their trust in us.

Let's not pull the rug out from underneath both of those things before they've even had a chance to begin. The start of the new year and the new Congress do not have to be colored by the partisanship that's characterized the past year. There is a last-minute absolution to be had if we can seize the spirit of the season and do that which we have done all too little of this past year: compromise, come together.

Let's ring in the new year with a fix, albeit a modest one, of the fiscal cliff and start off our new year and new Congress with a proper welcome for our constituents and our colleagues.

FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, many years ago our friends on the conservative side of the political aisle told us that if we cut taxes for the wealthiest among us, what would happen is that they would get more money which they would use to invest in plant and equipment, and then all the rest of us working class and middle class folks would benefit by rich people having more money because then they would hire us and we'd have a stronger economy. They put this plan into implementation in 2001 and into 2003, and what followed was the most anemic decade of job growth that we have seen in many, many, many decades. If you can contrast it with the 1990s when the tax rates were actually higher, we had a much more robust economy. In fact, when President Clinton handed President Bush the reins to the government, he handed him, also, a surplus.

The fact is the conservative experiment based on the ideas of a guy named Arthur Laffer and others has failed. They don't work. They're wrong for this country. It's time for us to have some balance and to pay the bills of this country, and that means taxes.

CONGRESS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO AVOID FALLING OFF THE FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, if we fail to act on the remaining day of the 112th Congress, this Congress will be remembered as one which ignored the will of the people. If we fail to act, a typical middle class family of four would see its taxes rise by \$2,200 starting in 2013. This means less money to buy groceries, gas and pay the bills.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, going over the cliff would raise the unemployment rate from 7.9 percent to 9.1 percent in 2013. Losing that many jobs would plunge our Nation back into a recession and put an economic recovery even further out of reach. We would be putting jobs on the altar for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans who have already seen their tax rate plummet to historic lows.

It's time that we put an end to the era of trying to balance budgets on the backs of the middle class, and it's time that we take steps to avoid setting our economic recovery up for failure. We all want a better resolution than simply jumping off the fiscal cliff.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings