



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013

No. 47

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RIBBLE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

April 10, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable REID J. RIBBLE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

ELIMINATE THE SEQUESTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, most of us came here to this place to serve the American people and to ensure that the most powerful law-making body answers the needs and the cries of those who cannot speak for themselves, and yet, as we languish in those values, they may be more on paper than they are in action.

I rise today to ask, maybe even plead, that this House puts on the floor H.R. 900, which is to eliminate the se-

quester from the Budget Reconciliation Act and to go to regular order because the people of the United States are hurting, and even more so, I would say that they are crying.

It's very easy for us to be able to say there is no impact; we see no impact. I hope for those who have been in their districts for the last 2 weeks that they will realize how inaccurate and untrue that is. In fact, it hurts me to see the pain in my constituents' faces and homes because of sequester—a reckless scheme to move Congress to act and it did not work.

Some will say whose fault it was, whose idea it was. We really don't care because right now there are people who have lost Head Start seats, whose parents have been told their children cannot come back to school anymore. Grown men crying—grown men crying because their little one cannot go back to a Head Start class, and they have nowhere else for them to go.

The WIC program that is so desperately needed for women, infants, and children—cut to the bone. This is a scheme that is long overdue for us to get rid of.

Food inspectors. Just recently, a food business was shut down in my district. The thought of it is horrible. Many of their products in our local grocery stores. If we had not had food inspectors from the FDA, which we probably won't have anytime soon because they're being slashed and eliminated, this product would still be on the market. \$85 billion in cuts is too non-descript.

The Federal emergency management under Homeland Security, \$1 billion being cut, which means those who are still suffering from Superstorm Sandy, many of whom are homeless, 40,000 are still in hotel rooms in New York, they won't be able to be helped.

Department of Transportation, \$1.943 billion, and that means the New Starts, mobility, people waiting in line for

light rail, jobs cut immediately. I spoke this weekend to FAA members, air traffic controllers. Don't think it's not being felt, and it will be felt more and more in the summer increase of travel because of \$637 million in losses, and almost \$500 million of that is jobs.

We are in trouble. \$512 million cut from Customs and Border Patrol over the international ports of entry. We're talking about comprehensive immigration reform and border security. There's your border security—cutting the very personnel that are ensuring the security of America. That's wrong-headed, and it's time to stop now.

But it really pains my heart, if you will, to see the cuts to those innocent families with those children in Head Start, to see the cuts to workers who have done nothing other than to come to work every morning, those Federal workers, and the impact on contractors to the Department of Defense, work that is forward-thinking in dealing with technology, cut to the bone, slashing employees. We will see the surge of the economy going down.

This is not the fault of the administration. This is the inaction of us in the United States Congress, and I think it is immediately necessary for Speaker BOEHNER to put on the floor of the House for a full debate H.R. 900, eliminate the sequester, simple sentence, and go to regular order. Begin the process of the budget. Whether you like this budget or that budget, begin the appropriate process of appropriations, for if you don't think that we're going to have one of the darkest seasons forthcoming, you wait and see what \$85 billion in reckless cuts means. It's a trickle-down effect. You cannot recoup. Jobs will not come back, and we were moving up, creating jobs.

Everybody wants to point the finger as to whose fault it is, and I believe it is something where we have to come together.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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I want to finish on the note that medical research funded by the National Institutes is also being cut, and we were number one in medical research. The time is now. Get rid of the sequester and help the American people.

BUREAUCRATIC CODESPEAK

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let's say I take one of my 10 grandkids, Barrett Houston, to a basketball game he is playing in. He gets hit in the face with a basketball, so we go to the doctor to see if his nose is broken. The doctor asks Barrett Houston this question: Is this the first time you've been hit in the face with a basketball, the second time, or do you have a habit of being hit in the face by a basketball? Barrett says, I don't know. Doctor says, I've got to know because, you see, I've got this codebook here, and the law requires that I make sure I put in the codebook the way you were hurt by the basketball and how many times because there are five codes for being hit in the face by a basketball. And let's say he doesn't know. Well, the doctor has to be accurate in how he diagnoses being hit in the face by the basketball or the doctor's in trouble.

Let's say I take another one of my grandsons, Jackson, to go hunting, but he happens to get assaulted by a wild turkey. We go to the doctor, and the doctor says, Hey, I've got to know exactly how you were hurt by that turkey because there is a code for being assaulted by a turkey for the first time. There is a code for being assaulted by the turkey a second time. There is a different code for being pecked by a turkey rather than being bitten by a turkey. There are nine codes. The doctor must get the right code or he is in violation of the law about being assaulted by that turkey. It seems nine codes for a turkey assault is a bit silly.

□ 1010

Right now, Mr. Speaker, there are 18,000 of these codes. Doctors must be accurate when they fill out the diagnosis of a patient who comes and sees them.

Stay with me, Mr. Speaker.

Soon, there will be 140,000 of these medical codes that doctors must get right or they're in trouble by the Federal Government. The new code system is called ICD-10. For example, you're injured at a chicken coop; that's code number Y9272. You are injured at an art gallery, you fall down; that's Y92250. There are even three new codes for being injured when you walk into a lamppost. You walk into a lamppost for the first time, that's one code; you walk into a lamppost for the second time, that's a different code; you walk into a lamppost habitually, that is even a different code. And the doctor

must get it right, because he's in violation of Federal regulators if he doesn't get it right.

The doctors I've talked to say this is an expensive distraction from treating patients. Well, no kidding. It's red tape, it's bureaucracy, and this is what happens when clueless Big Government here in Washington starts telling people out in the workplace—doctors and patients—what they must do. And when the government intrudes into our lives with more regulations, the government continues to make things more complicated. It finds problems in every solution.

Doctors are really in the business of helping the sick and the injured and saving lives. Do they really have the time and money to translate a complicated 140,000-codebook when they diagnose everything that happens? But they don't have a choice. If they miscode, they do not get paid. Even more so, they face the threat of being fined by the Federal Government.

There's more. To set up this new 140,000-code philosophy, it's going to cost an average single practitioner doctor \$80,000. Now, isn't that lovely? If it's a practice of 5 to 10 people, that's going to cost that practice \$250,000 to comply with Federal regulations, the new codebook.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, when regulators go to work every day down the street in one of these big office buildings, they sit around a big oak table, they pull out their lattes and their iPads and they ask the question to each other: "Who shall we regulate today?" They type out a few regulations and send it out to the fruited plain and the masses. They don't care about the cost or the effect or whether the regulations make any sense; they just do it anyway. And we have to deal with it.

These new codes are not going to make one sick person well, but yet doctors must comply with these new codes or the code police are going to punish them. Doctors want to take care of patients, but the Federal Government is forcing 140,000 complicated, unreasonable new codes on all of us that are hard to decipher. Maybe we should sequester these new codes. Where are those World War II code breakers when we need them most?

And that's just the way it is.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I welcome the President's budget submission, which will mark the first time since 2009 that the House, the Senate, and the President have all submitted budgets. It's an encouraging development, but the larger question is whether Congress can actually use the budgeting process to show how we will do business differently.

Despite the media sideshows about the artificial sequestration crisis, the major issues we have to address to fix the budget and our current deficit are spending on defense, health care, and the tax system itself.

Although the administration has started us down a path to manage Pentagon spending in the future, we have barely scratched the surface. There are too many unnecessary bases at home and abroad that should be phased down or closed. There's far too much invested in an antiquated nuclear arsenal that we haven't used in 68 years and contains many, many times more weapons than we would ever need for deterrence. The \$700 billion scheduled to be spent over the next 10 years must be reduced dramatically. We have yet to come to grips with the long-term costs of an all-volunteer Army and the right balance between reserve and regular forces. Until these fundamental issues are addressed, the challenges of the future are going to be difficult to face because we spend too much time and energy and money preparing for the conflicts of the past while we avoid hard budget reality.

Health care expenditures continue to be the greatest overall threat to the budget, but not because the United States doesn't spend enough money on health care. We spend more than anybody else in the world—twice as much as many countries. But even spending far more than anybody else, we're still not able to deliver quality health care for most Americans. Instead of fighting health care reform, we should be working together to accelerate that process so that we can reward value over volume of health care. If the Oregon model of health care that we are working on diligently to implement were applied on a national scale, it could save over \$1 trillion over the next 10 years—as much as was fought about in the battle over sequestration.

We must also reform the Tax Code, which is unfair, complex, and costly, with over \$160 billion just to administer it. I would suggest that we think about implementing a carbon tax, which has the potential of reducing the deficit and tax rates for individuals and business in a fair and comprehensive form. The carbon tax has the added benefit of being the most direct way to reduce the threat to the planet caused by extreme weather events promoted by carbon pollution.

It's very encouraging that the President's budget again speaks to infrastructure improvement and investment, but we need to be bolder and more comprehensive in our approach, especially at how we deal with funding rebuilding and renewing America. At a time when 17 States have stepped up to increase transportation funding, it's unacceptable that we pay for the highway trust fund with a gas tax that hasn't been increased since 1993 and is increasingly collecting less money as fuel efficiency improves.

The introduction of the President's budget is an important step forward. It