

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I missed several votes today to attend an Interfaith Service in Boston. I wish to state for the record how I would have voted had I been present:

Rollcall No. 113—"Yes"

Rollcall No. 114—"Yes"

Rollcall No. 115—"Yes"

Rollcall No. 116—"Yes"

Rollcall No. 117—"No"

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS  
IN ENGROSSMENT

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that in the engrossment of the bill, H.R. 624, the Clerk be authorized to make such technical and conforming changes as necessary to reflect the actions of the House.

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

There was no objection.

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to my friend from Virginia, the majority leader, for the purposes of inquiring about the schedule for the week to come.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman from Maryland, the Democratic whip, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, the House is not in session. On Tuesday, the House will meet at noon for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m. On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for morning hour and noon for legislative business. On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for legislative business. Last votes of the week are expected no later than 3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a few suspensions on Tuesday and Wednesday, a complete list of which will be announced by the close of business tomorrow. Of the suspensions, I'm proud to announce that the House will consider a bill by Representative TERRI SEWELL to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the four young girls who lost their lives in the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham 50 years ago, which served as a catalyst for the civil rights movement.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we'll take up H.R. 1549, the Helping Sick Ameri-

cans Now Act. This bill, authored by Representatives JOE PITTS, MICHAEL BURGESS, and ANN WAGNER, will help Americans with preexisting conditions obtain insurance coverage without delay.

We will also consider H.R. 527, the Responsible Helium Administration and Stewardship Act, a bipartisan bill sponsored by Chairman HASTINGS. This legislation applies pre-market principles to future sales from the Federal Helium Reserve and will protect thousands of American jobs.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the majority leader for the information on the business for next week.

I would observe that he and I co-chaired, the honorary cochair, with JOHN LEWIS, of course, the chair, our leader, along with TERRI SEWELL, SPENCER BACHUS, and Congresswoman ROBY, a delegation to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to recognize the Voting Rights Act and the acts that led up to that. I thank the majority leader for bringing the gold medal bill to the floor, sponsored by Congresswoman SEWELL, recognizing those four little girls who at the Birmingham church lost their lives to what could rightfully be referred to, I think, as a terrorist act, a bomb going off, with no specific objective in mind other than to kill people inside that church.

□ 1310

The little girls were the closest to that explosion, and they lost their lives. And as the majority leader has pointed out, that event and the events that occurred in the square just across the street from the church led to this country living out its principles better than it had done to that date. But some lost their lives, these four little girls, and some gave dearly to accomplish that objective. So I thank the majority leader for facilitating that bill coming to the floor.

Mr. Leader, I noted on the schedule, however, that there is no motion to go to conference on the budget. As the gentleman knows, the House has been requesting for some years now a budget, which the Senate has passed. That budget has now been sent to the House and it is ripe for us to go to conference.

The gentleman, the Speaker, and others have been talking about regular order for some period of time. I agree with them. Regular order leads to better results. Regular order leads to an ability to sit down and try to come to compromises on where there are differences and to make progress. I would hope that we would follow regular order now that the Senate has acted.

Speaker BOEHNER said, in January of this year, "Regular order works best." I think he was absolutely right. There was a headline in Politico just a couple of days ago where it says, "GOP Clammers for Regular Order." Speaker BOEHNER said on December 8, 2011, regarding a bill we had passed:

The House has passed its bill. Now the Senate has passed its bill. And, you know, under

the Constitution, when we have these disagreements, there could be a formal conference between the House and Senate to resolve our differences.

You said that same year:

We have committed and the Speaker has committed to make sure that our committees will go through regular order.

PAUL RYAN, the chairman of the Budget Committee on November 29, 2011, said:

We're going to restore regular order.

I think you were correct in all those instances, and I want to associate myself with those remarks.

Now we have an opportunity for regular order, and we're going to be meeting next week, and then we'll be taking off a week. That is all time that a conference could be working to try to get us to an agreement so, frankly, we could not only have an agreement, which I think the country would welcome, but we could also, I think, substitute that agreement for the sequester, which is currently having and will have a very negative effect on our economy, on jobs, and on the confidence that Americans have that we're pursuing rational policies. The gentleman and I both have agreed that sequester is not a rational policy in that it deals with high-priority and low-priority items in very much the same way.

So my question, Mr. Leader, is there a possibility—it's not on the calendar and you didn't announce it, but I would urge you that we go to conference, preferably the first day we're back after this weekend, so that we could get to work on trying to get to an agreement on one of the most pressing problems confronting this country, and that's getting ourselves on a fiscally sustainable path.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I appreciate the spirit with which he recommends that we proceed along the lines asked for by those individuals he spoke about.

I would say to the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that I'm told that our chairman and the chairman on the other side of the Capitol, Mrs. MURRAY, they're meeting and looking to see the path forward so that we can effect a meeting of the minds and do what the American people are asking us to do, which is to get the fiscal challenges addressed at the Federal level so they can go on about making their life work and continue to create their dreams and live the life they want and have the life they want for their kids.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I want to say I have a lot of respect, as the gentleman knows and I have expressed on this floor, for Mr. RYAN. I think Mr. RYAN is a very able and dedicated and conscientious Member of this House. I have equal respect for and confidence in Senator MURRAY, who chairs the Senate Budget Committee.

And while I'm appreciative of the fact they're having discussions, frankly, the American people need to have a

transparent view of discussions that would occur in a conference committee. So not only would the chair of the House Budget Committee and the chair of the Senate Budget Committee—now, that implies, therefore, that in the Senate there are no Republicans participating in those discussions and in the House there are no Democrats participating in those discussions.

In light of the fact that we have 315 million to 320 million people who are represented by both Democrats and Republicans, Mr. Leader, I think it would be very useful and would accelerate—not impede—the process of getting to an agreement so the American public could weigh in with their views as they saw a conference committee debating and discussing the alternatives between the Ryan budget and the Murray budget and, indeed, the President's budget.

I've seen press reports that Mr. RYAN wants to have discussions and he wants to have parameters, but, frankly, you and I both know that if we wait to have Mr. RYAN and Ms. MURRAY agree, we're going to be probably waiting a long time. Senator MURRAY participated along with JEB HENSARLING in the supercommittee which met for many months and ultimately came to no conclusion. That's not good for the country; it's not good for our economy; and it's not good for jobs and growth.

As I understand, Mr. RYAN has said he's having discussions with Senator MURRAY; but I would urge us to have the ability to go to conference, move to go to conference, appoint conferees, and pursue regular order.

If the gentleman wants to respond to that, I yield to the gentleman; if not, I'll go on to another subject.

Mr. Leader, I don't think it was on the announcement, but I do know there is discussion in your memorandum and you've been quoted about a debt ceiling, a debt prioritization piece of legislation that would be considered. I would hope, as I said last week, that we could deal with, in a nonpartisan, bipartisan, nonpolitical fashion, the protection of the creditworthiness of the United States of America and to the maintenance of America's credit rating. It was reduced for the first time in history when we had a debt cliff debate in 2011, and we were reduced by one point in the creditworthiness of our country. That was unfortunate, and I think it hurt our country.

President Reagan said in 1986:

Unfortunately, Congress consistently brings the government to the edge of default before facing its responsibility. This brinkmanship threatens the holders of government bonds and those who rely on Social Security and veterans benefits.

Interest rates, et cetera, would skyrocket if we did that, and he was urging the then-Democratic Congress and Republicans to support an increase in the debt, which, as you know, was done.

In addition, Keith Hennessey, who was George Bush's National Economic Council Director, said on January 14:

Payment prioritization doesn't stop payments; it just delays them. Then the aggrieved party sues the government and probably wins, and it turns into a bloody mess.

That was Keith Hennessey, who was Bush's National Economic Council Director.

Tony Fratto, Deputy Press Secretary for President George Bush, said:

Prioritization is impossible. Is the government really going to be in the position of withholding benefits, salaries, rent, contract payments, et cetera, in order to pay off Treasury bondholders? That would be a political catastrophe.

I suggest not only would it be a political catastrophe, with which I agree—and I presume he's referring to the Republican Party, as he's a member of the Republican Party—but also a disaster for our economy and not, I think, something that would be helpful in growing jobs and expanding confidence, which the gentleman has talked a lot about and with which I agree with him on. We need confidence.

□ 1320

This constant utilization of the debt limit for political leverage, I think, is not in the best interest of our country or the people we represent, and I would hope that bill would not be brought to the floor but that we could together, in a bipartisan fashion, resolve that the debt limit will not be put in question by this Congress.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his desire to see a satisfactory resolution of issues surrounding the fiscal challenges.

Obviously, the debt ceiling is another point with which we will be faced on how to deal with the spiraling debt and out-of-control spending in Washington. I know that the gentleman shares with me the desire to see the reduction in the need to borrow, the balancing of our budget and, actually, a return to a real growth in America of jobs and the economy, of economic opportunity for all. It is in that spirit that I know that he approaches this issue, and so do I.

I would say to the gentleman, when the rating agencies look at the creditworthiness of our Nation—and I think some have said as much—it is, yes, to observe a political system that works, but it is also to make sure that there is demonstrable evidence that we are making progress in dealing with the problem, and that is the focus that we must all maintain.

I mean, we know that the disproportionate problem of the debt in this country and the deficits we are running have to do with the unfunded liabilities of the entitlement programs, and we can see the White House and the President call for tax increases every other day—every day for that matter—and those are not going to deal with the spiraling, out-of-control spending that raises the need for more debt.

Again, the differences on this subject, Mr. Speaker, are well known, and I am hopeful that we can work towards setting aside the differences and focus-

ing in on how far we can work towards accomplishing success in dealing with the problem of the mounting unfunded liabilities of the Federal Government.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his observation. If I can, there is some irony in the gentleman's response.

We've been talking about two items: one, the going to conference on the budget, which does, in fact, deal with prospective spending, a prospective increase in debt or deficit, because we buy more or spend more or cut revenues more. The debt limit, as the gentleman so well knows, deals with what we've already done. It doesn't have anything to do with increasing what we're going to spend. The budget does that.

Now, we're not dealing with the budget, but there is discussion about dealing with this prioritization. Frankly, we should have made that determination when we spent the money, and both sides have spent a lot of money. Our country is determined to spend a lot of money. Two wars cost us a lot of money we didn't pay for. I'm not going to go through the litany—the gentleman knows that litany—but it is somewhat ironic when we're not dealing with going to conference on the budget deficit, but we're talking about a prioritization of the debt that we've already incurred.

I think the American public will understand that raising the debt limit is simply a recognition of what we've already done and that we're going to pay our bills—that we're not going to default—that the most creditworthy, greatest Nation on the face of the Earth is going to pay for what it bought.

So I would urge the gentleman to not do prioritization, but let's deal with raising the debt limit so we pay our bills, and let's go to conference so we can make sure that, in fact, we keep that debt from going higher and, in fact, decrease it through reforms that we can adopt in a budget conference. I would hope the gentleman would agree with that.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### --- HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 11 a.m. tomorrow; and when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet on Tuesday, April 23, 2013, when it shall convene at noon for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

#### --- BOSTON TRAGEDY

(Mr. FORTENBERRY asked and was given permission to address the House