

SEQUESTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring note to the fact that for the fourth time in 5 years, President Obama is, once again, late in delivering his budget to Congress and the citizens of America.

Americans throughout this country tell me over and over again that our national debt is unacceptable. They tell me it is holding America back from achieving economic prosperity and robbing their children of the American Dream. They tell me it's time for Washington to pass a budget.

The President has turned a deaf ear to the pleas of these Americans. He has been asked to take this country's economy seriously. He chooses instead to spend his time in other countries, taking family vacations, and playing countless games of golf.

Hardworking taxpayers know that work must come before play, Mr. President. That is the practice of millions of taxpaying Americans who must foot the bill for Presidential vacations while they forfeit their own vacations due to the uncertainty in the economy.

While the President crisscrosses the world avoiding Americans' top priorities, back at home Americans are nervous. Every year that our country goes without a budget, the national debt skyrockets, the uncertainty for American businesses grows and, with that, unemployment goes up. Without a Federal budget, businessowners cannot plan. They cannot plan for the President's new regulations or his unforeseen tax increases; and, therefore, it is all the more difficult for them to expand their businesses and create jobs in America.

To add to the uncertainty, the President's proposed sequestration is set to take effect this March. Despite his promise—his promise—to the American people that it would never actually happen, the President has yet to take any steps to undo this harmful measure. He has shown absolute indifference to the millions of Americans whose livelihoods would be severely impacted by his sequestration.

House Republicans have twice passed legislation to replace the President's sequester with commonsense reforms that would reduce spending and preserve and strengthen our safety net for future generations and ensure our national defense.

This week, the House will not only renew our commitment to the American people to pass a budget, but it will be a responsible budget that will balance. It will be one that will aim to grow the economy, drive down unemployment, expand opportunity and prosperity for the private sector, and ensure that America maintains its leading role in the world as a strong national defender.

Americans can do this. We just need a President to put work before play.

FREEDOM LEADS TO PROSPERITY

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

Mr. BENTIVOLIO. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak today. I have said it before, and I want to say it again: the job of a Member of Congress is to protect the rights of the people, not take them away.

I want to explain what I mean by that. Those rights are outlined in our Declaration of Independence: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights were not given to us by a King or developed after extensive debate by a Congress. They come from God. They exist in the same way that gravity exists. They are natural.

But too often what gets left out is why we must protect those rights and why those rights are still relevant today. The reason is simple, and it's as practical today as it was in 1776: we protect those rights because in America we know that freedom leads to prosperity. Our country was built by Forefathers who believed in, and defended, that idea.

Every generation that came after them has followed their lead, rising to tackle whatever challenge came before them in order to protect the freedom of this Nation. Every American generation has left the country a little better off than they found it and handed it to their sons and daughters with the hope that they would do the same.

Thinking both about those who came before us and those who will follow us long after we're gone is in the very DNA of our country. That's why our Constitution's preamble explicitly states that it doesn't secure liberty for just the founding generation but also for prosperity.

Generations don't simply disappear. Instead, like an aging photograph, they kind of fade away until they are all gone. Right now, one of America's greatest generations is doing just that. In World War II, hundreds of thousands of Americans risked their lives on battlefields half a world away while the rest of them worked and sacrificed at home to make sure our troops had everything they needed.

The reason they acted so valiantly was because they understood the truth to American exceptionalism: that freedom leads to prosperity. They knew it, and they fought for it because it had been passed down to them from their parents, who had received it from their parents and so on. To them it was something worth fighting for, it was worth making sacrifices for, and it was worth dying for. Not a day goes by when I don't think about their sacrifices and remember what they did for me and everyone else in this great country.

They deserve to be taken care of. That is why I urge my fellow Members of the House from both parties to join me in supporting the Full Faith and Credit Act. As we work to cure the gov-

ernment's addiction to debt, we must ensure that the Greatest Generation is protected. They have already made their sacrifices in the defense of our ideals. They have already passed down freedom to us and given us a country that is better off.

We cannot be the first generation to fail America. We must follow the path of our Founding Fathers by preserving the American Dream for our children and grandchildren.

One great idea to preserve our great Nation was developed by our Speaker, JOHN BOEHNER. In the days before the midterm elections of 2010, Speaker BOEHNER proposed "taking a different approach" regarding how Congress voted on budgets. He maintained that rather than having a "comprehensive budget" that encompasses all—or at least most of—government appropriations, the whole Congress should treat every budget for each Federal agency as an independent spending bill.

Speaker BOEHNER said:

Members shouldn't have to vote for big spending increases at the Labor Department in order to fund Health and Human Services. Members shouldn't have to vote for big increases at the Commerce Department just because they support NASA. Each Department and Agency should justify itself each year to the full House and Senate and be judged on its own.

That is the kind of leadership that Americans across this great land support. Those are the types of ideas that we need to enact in order to take on the challenges that are ahead. I urge my fellow Congressmen to appeal to the better angels of their nature as we spend the next few months talking about our government's addiction to debt. Let's solve this problem.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 49 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, You are compassionate and merciful. We give You thanks for giving us another day.

During these days, when the House itself continues to organize itself for the 113th Congress, we ask Your blessing upon the Members of this assembly,

There are many issues which press upon our Nation now, and more lie upon the legislative horizon. Pour

forth an abundance of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding upon the Members of Congress and upon Your people so that, together, solutions for the betterment of our Nation might be forged.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WELCH led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 52

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION.—Ms. Lofgren and Mr. Vargas.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

THE WHITE HOUSE MUST STICK WITHIN A BUDGET

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

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, it has been more than 4 years since the White House operated under a budget. It's not a coincidence that each of these 4 years has brought a \$1 trillion deficit.

Tennesseans are frustrated over the fact that they must stick to a budget in operating their homes and businesses, yet the Obama administration

cannot seem to do the same in running the country with our hard-earned tax dollars.

Last Congress, House Republicans passed two responsible budgets while the Administration and their allies in the Democratic-controlled Senate twiddled their thumbs.

In an effort to finally get this administration to act, Republicans have introduced the Require a PLAN Act. This commonsense proposal will mandate the White House produce a balanced budget within a 10-year window or submit a plan explaining in what year the budget would balance.

Unfortunately, it seems that we have no other choice but to force this administration to finally address the debt crisis that is destroying jobs and mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Family and Medical Leave Act, FMLA. After years of hearing talk about family values, it took President Clinton and the 103rd Congress to adopt policies like FMLA that actually value families.

As many people know, FMLA allows up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year due to an employee's own illness, to take care of a sick family member, or to be with a new child. For 20 years, this law has recognized the needs of hardworking families, particularly working women who often are heroically trying to balance their job and their role as primary caregiver.

The latest data from the Department of Labor demonstrate the importance of FMLA. In 2011, over 14 million workers took leave under the Act. And this leave is not disruptive to employers, with 40 percent of workers being away from the job for 10 days or fewer.

I know workers around the country are grateful for the protections of FMLA. Now over 20 years they have felt confident they could take time off as needed without fear of losing their job to care for themselves or their family.

As we debate the fiscal and budgetary issues of the day, I hope FMLA serves as a reminder that we can and should be valuing families, not just in our words, but in our deeds as well.

GOT ROBOT?

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, on December 8, 2012, "Got Robot?", FTC Team No. 5037, a group of high school students from Elgin, Illinois, won an

award at the FIRST Tech Challenge Illinois State Tournament. Now "Got Robot?" will represent Illinois in the FIRST World Championships in St. Louis, Missouri, this upcoming April.

Out of 2,500 participating teams around the world, "Got Robot?" is one of only 128 to qualify for the World Championships.

At a time when we need to do everything possible to promote science education and basic scientific research, I'm so thrilled to be able to say that I've met this team, seen the robot, and it's fantastic. We are so proud of these students and we wish their team the best of luck.

Go, "Got Robot?"

SPENDING AND BUDGET DEFICITS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today we will consider a House Republican message bill that makes a point about spending and budget deficits. The problem is all those who support this bill about spending did all the spending: two tax cuts that gave us the worst period of job growth in the past 75 years and our Nation's worst recession; two wars, unpaid for, that took \$1.5 trillion out of the American economy; a drug prescription program, unpaid for, cost \$1 trillion over ten years.

The big spenders, who falsely claim to be concerned about the job creators are, in fact, the debt and deficit makers.

RESPONSIBLE BUDGETING

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

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, last week unemployment rose to 7.9 percent, and consumer confidence in the economy fell to a 14-month low. During the last 3 months of 2012, the economy shrank for the first time since the depths of the Great Recession.

All of these indicators confirm what the American people know all so well: the economy is still suffering. And yet the President began the new year by raising taxes on hardworking Americans and by closing down his jobs council, confirming another thing that Americans know all too well as well: that Washington truly is disconnected from the struggles of hardworking families who pay their taxes, work hard, and are struggling just to survive.

Now the President is calling for even more revenues to pay for \$4 trillion in new debt that he has heaped on the backs of hardworking Americans during the past 4 years.

More and more, my constituents in south Alabama tell me they don't want to charge more money in their names as taxes rise and red ink pours from the streets of Washington, D.C.

While the House has passed responsible budgets for the last 2 years, it's