

because there has been no jobs legislation put on this floor since we've been here this year.

FDA:

2,100 fewer food safety inspections, an 18 percent reduction in making sure that the food we eat is safe and healthy.

On top of these, it also erodes our military readiness, with one-third of our combat aircraft on the ground, not being flown, training not being done.

As the Washington Post columnist David Ignatius pointed out last Friday, sequestration is forcing the military to cut back on training programs vital to our defense readiness, and yet we fiddle while Rome is burning.

David Ignatius writes:

The Army is sharply cutting training above the basic squad and platoon level. All but one of the combat training center rotations scheduled for brigades this fiscal year have been canceled. Depot maintenance has been halted for the rest of the fiscal year. The Army will cut 37,000 flying hours from its aviation training.

The list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

In February, Army Chief of Staff General Ray Odierno told Congress:

Should a contingency arise, there may not be enough time to avoid sending forces into harm's way unprepared.

On July 12, Mr. Speaker, civilian defense personnel at the Pax River Naval Air Station, which I represent, are scheduled to begin furloughs as a result of the sequester. That's a personal concern to me, it's a concern to their families, but more broadly than that it's a concern to the national security of every American citizen. Those folks are among the hundreds of thousands of civilian defense workers in Maryland and across the country who are set to be furloughed next month unless—unless—Congress acts. Congress can end these arbitrary and irrational cuts by replacing the sequester in its entirety as part of a big and balanced solution to deficits.

We had a deal. It was called the Budget Control Act. OMB now estimates it cut \$1.4 trillion. It's not as if we've ignored the deficit—\$1.4 trillion. But we didn't get all the way to where the Speaker said we needed to be and, therefore, we adopted the sequester, which irrationally cuts across the board the highest priority and the lowest priority.

□ 1020

Our ranking member on the Budget Committee, Democrat CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, has tried seven times to bring to this floor legislation to exactly modify this policy so that we have a rational, national security protecting, vulnerable citizens-protecting alternative while saving and getting to the same budget deficit reducing number—the same. However, our Republican colleagues have refused the opportunity to consider that on this floor.

We hear a lot about the Speaker saying, Let the House work its will. Seven times we have asked this House leader-

ship to give us the opportunity to work our will. The best way to achieve the balanced alternative to the sequester and put America's fiscal house in order would be through a bipartisan agreement on a budget. Leader PELOSI is going to name our conferees in just a few minutes. This Saturday will be the 100th day since the House passed its budget and after we demanded that the Senate pass a budget, Mr. Speaker. Still, 100 days later, no action on this floor by the majority party to go to conference—to sit down and try to come to an agreement. That's what democracy is about, coming to an agreement. This House should not be going into recess without first appointing conferees.

Ten percent of Americans think we're worth anything. I need to talk to them because they're not sure what's going on here, apparently.

I believe there is a bipartisan majority of Members—I hope that's the case—who will support a balanced approach that restores fiscal discipline and ends this irrational, commonsense-defying sequester. Let the House work its will, Mr. Speaker. It's time to appoint budget conferees. It's time for a balanced alternative to the sequester. As the sequester continues, there is no time to waste; and we ought to stay here and get the job done. Regular order, regular order, regular order—I hear it all the time. The problem is we are not following regular order—to the detriment of our country and our citizens.

ATTACK ON SHIITE MUSLIMS IN EGYPT

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. First of all, I want to say nice job to CHUCK FLEISCHMANN for his comments on his father.

Then, before my colleague from Maryland leaves, I want to make sure that he understands that we understand the history of this whole budget process.

The Nation is \$16 trillion in debt. It was the President's proposal to sequester; and it was his vote, along with my vote, that passed the Budget Control Act that enacted sequester. So, many of us are not just going to come to the floor and get lectured to on this process of how do you eventually get control of this national debt.

Sequester is a tough process. It's a tough pill to take. It's the first time we've ever cut real dollars. As I tell my colleagues, in the big picture of a \$16 trillion debt, it's pocket lint. It's such a small percentage of our future obligations, and that's where the debate on entitlement programs has to go. It's Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and the interest payment on our debt that, if we don't get control actuarially in the out-years, we will continue to have to cut the discretionary budget, which is damaging to all of those things my colleague mentioned.

Yet for him to come down and profess outrage over a proposal that the President presented to this body and then to profess outrage when he voted for the bill, I think it's just the height of hypocrisy.

That's not what I came down to the floor to talk about, but this gives us an opportunity to respond. I did want to talk about the recent occurrences in Egypt which identify persecution.

The Middle East is a continually changing region. We have had citizens protesting their nondemocratic governments numerous times in calling for change and freedom across the region. In 2012, the world would watch incredible change in Egypt following the election of Mohamed Morsi, when he became the President. This country continues to struggle in instituting a democratic government. However, the work of the Morsi government is not met without opposition, and attacks on minority groups are still an ongoing issue.

In the recent past, Coptic Christians have been persecuted; and on Sunday, June 23, Shiite Muslims were attacked by a mob of Sunni Muslims in the village of Zawyat Abu Musalam. Four Shiites died in this attack, and many others were injured. Shiite Muslims make up roughly 2 percent of the Egyptian population of 80 million people.

While President Morsi has condemned these attacks, further steps need to be taken to address the ongoing persecutions of Egypt's religious minorities. Persecution will continue if sentiments towards minorities are not changed. For Egypt to have a successful, lasting democratic government, people of all religions will need to be included.

The United States was created on the principle that all people should have the right to practice their religions freely and openly and without fear of persecution. As a Christian and as a Member of the House of Representatives, which is composed of a vast array of Members with different beliefs, it is my hope that this country will continue to be an example that Egypt can look to.

I urge the Egyptian Government and the people to continue to condemn these religious-based attacks and to take positive steps towards religious freedom. I will continue to keep the country of Egypt and their religious minorities in my prayers, and I ask my colleagues to do the same.

END HUNGER NOW

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to address the House on the need to end hunger now. This is the 14th time that I've done so this year.

Next week, the Members of this House will return home to their districts for the 4th of July district work

period. There will be parades and fireworks and picnics for all of us, but for too many of our neighbors there will be no such festivities. They will be too busy working two or three jobs just to make ends meet.

They will be worrying about their children, who, during these summer months, are too often forced to go without enough nutritious food to eat because school is out of session, because in our country, Mr. Speaker, in the richest, most powerful Nation in the history of the world, the reality is that 50 million of our fellow Americans struggle with hunger.

I am also sure that, during the 4th of July activities, many Members will be getting quite an earful from the farmers in their districts. Those farmers are now facing confusion and uncertainty as they prepare for yet another season without a long-term reauthorization of the farm bill. They will wonder why this House of Representatives can't seem to get its act together.

I hope that my colleagues will tell them the truth, which is that the reason the farm bill failed in the House last week is that it would have thrown 2 million people off the SNAP program. It would have caused over 200,000 children to lose access to the free school breakfast and lunch program. It would have made hunger worse in America. It would have forced struggling Americans to jump through all sorts of hoops, like drug testing, while not requiring the same of wealthy farmers who receive Federal subsidies. It would have not only allowed but actually encouraged States to find ways to kick people off the SNAP program. In short, it would have continued the Republican majority's assault on hard-working, struggling poor people; and for many of us on our side of the aisle, that price was simply too high.

As columnist E.J. Dionne wrote after the defeat of the bill:

This is, above all, a story about morality. There is something profoundly wrong when a legislative majority is so eager to risk leaving so many Americans hungry. That's what the bill would have done and why defeating it was a moral imperative.

Mr. Speaker, I want a farm bill. Our farmers deserve a farm bill. I am honored to represent hundreds of small farmers, and I am honored to serve on the Agriculture Committee. I know that Chairman LUCAS and Ranking Member PETERSON worked incredibly hard to thread a very small needle. If the Republican leadership really wants a farm bill, it should do away with these draconian SNAP cuts and bring a bill to the floor that acknowledges the struggles faced by millions of our neighbors.

□ 1030

My fear, however, is they will do just the opposite, that they will go even further, make even deeper cuts to food and nutrition programs, make even more Americans hungry in a vain attempt to convince some of their more

right-wing members to support this bill. Indeed, we see that dynamic at work with the agriculture appropriations bill before us this week, a bill that makes drastic cuts to the Women, Infants and Children program.

I would like to once again urge the White House to take an active leadership role on this. Last week, the administration issued a veto threat against the farm bill because of the devastating SNAP cuts that it contained, and I welcomed that threat. It was a positive sign. It was a positive sign that the White House understands that throwing 2 million people off of SNAP would be devastating not just to those individuals, but to our economy, as well.

But the administration, quite frankly, needs to do more. They need to convene a White House conference on food and nutrition so that we can get everyone in a room, including our farmers, to address the issue of hunger in America. Let's solve this problem. This is a solvable problem, but it needs attention and we need to have a plan.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reflect over the next week about where we should go from here. Do we want to live up to the bipartisan tradition of giants like Bob Dole and George McGovern, who came together and helped create this anti-hunger safety net that we have in this country? Their leadership almost ended hunger in this country in the 1970s. Unfortunately, we have strayed so far away from what they've done that we now find ourselves with 50 million hungry people.

Do we want to unite to provide a circle of protection around our most vulnerable neighbors? I hope so, Mr. Speaker. I hope that this House of Representatives understands that one of our obligations is to make sure that the needy and the poor and the most vulnerable are not forgotten, that we don't sit back and allow them to fall through the cracks.

We can do this. We can end hunger now. All we need is the political will.

FREEDOM IN THE BALANCE

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, three major developments have occurred within the last 6 weeks that are each disturbing by themselves, but extremely alarming when viewed together.

The first was the revelation that for more than 2 years, one of the most powerful and feared agencies of the Federal Government was used to harass and intimidate individual Americans into silence because of their political beliefs. Evidence has already established that hundreds of conservative groups were subjected to invasive interrogations when they sought to participate in the political process. This

pattern of conduct was not limited to applications under section 501(c) but included audits of established conservative groups and individuals, as well. This conduct reached the highest levels of the IRS. A similar pattern of abuse has been documented in several other agencies, including the Department of Labor and the Environmental Protection Agency. These facts are undisputed, and their implications are utterly toxic to a free society.

The second development was news that the Justice Department had surreptitiously seized the telephone records of some 20 reporters covering Congress for the Associated Press in an obvious attempt to discourage whistleblowers from talking to the press. Fox News reporter James Rosen and his family were stalked by authorities as he tried to get to the bottom of the Benghazi scandal. To obtain the search warrant allowing this, the Attorney General of the United States filed an absolutely spurious claim with the Federal court charging that Rosen had conspired to violate the Espionage Act. That's the same act under which Julius and Ethel Rosenberg was executed in 1953. The message to reporters asking inconvenient questions of this administration could not possibly have been more powerful or terrifying, and this week the head of AP reported that their news sources have indeed dried up in response to these naked acts of intimidation.

The third development is news that the Federal Government has swept up the phone and Internet records of millions of Americans in the name of state security just months after the official in charge categorically denied the existence of this program in sworn testimony to Congress.

The practice of the government searching your personal records without having first established reason to believe that you have committed a crime is expressly forbidden by the Fourth Amendment, adopted in direct response to British officials indiscriminately searching homes and records for evidence of contraband, yet this government has done precisely that on a scale unimaginable in colonial times, in this case searching for evidence of terrorism.

If I know the Web sites that you've visited and what phone numbers you've called, I know a great deal about your political and religious beliefs, your personal relationships, your sexual interests, your mental and physical health and your family finances. And with that information in the hands of officials who already have demonstrated a clear intention and ability to use their power to intimidate political adversaries into silence or to discourage reporters from asking embarrassing questions, our society could very quickly cross a very bright line between freedom and authoritarianism.

As if to underscore the point, the administration spokesman recently told a national television audience that