

he has picked on this particular depreciation schedule as offensive and antithetical to the American way of life.

Mr. President, the revenue that is generated in 1 year if we eliminated the provision about which we think you're speaking, Mr. Speaker, would generate enough revenue to run the government for a single day—1 day. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the President continues to use this language of class warfare against an industry that has created so many tens of thousands of jobs all across our country. It is unexplainable why anyone would be critical of this industry.

The President has also proposed a new tax, a general aviation fee, of \$100 per flight segment, which would require an entire new bureaucracy to implement and to execute. It is incomprehensible to me why anyone would think that was the right approach.

Mr. Speaker, I have invited the President of the United States to come to Wichita, Kansas, to see Beechcraft, to see Cessna, and to see Learjet and to see all the suppliers and all of the people who work so hard to make these airplanes. He has not taken me up on that yet, Mr. Speaker. I urge that he do so. But, sadly, if he continues to decline and continues to talk about this industry in the way that he does, he will not suffer, but tens of thousands of Americans who work on these airplanes all across the country will.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the President will change his direction, change his course of action, and recognize the value of this important industry.

THE CRISIS OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. I rise to speak about yet another phony, created crisis, and that would be the crisis of the United States Postal Service, which we have heard is hemorrhaging—hemorrhaging—money.

Well, it's kind of interesting. If you look back since in 2006, Congress forced the United States Postal Service to prepay health care retirement benefits for people who have not yet been born who might some day go to work for the Postal Service. Now, if you had trouble following that, I'd understand it. No one else in America, no other business, no other agency of government, as far as I know, no entity in the world is prepaying the anticipated health care costs of people who haven't yet been born, let alone if they're a specific entity, people who haven't yet been born and might go to work for them some day and might retire and might then need health care, but we're making the Postal Service do that.

Now, I'm not, but the Congress assembled deemed that, snuck it into one of those midnight special bills in a lame-duck session of Congress. So, now the hemorrhaging.

Well, they're hemorrhaging money, hemorrhaging money. Oh, my God, we must do away with them. That's basically the Republican line here. They, so far, have done nothing to either unshackle the post office so it can deal with some of these problems, and, in fact, have encouraged the most destructive instincts of the idiot who is running the Postal Service, who should be fired by the President, to go to 5-day delivery and to close all the sorting centers.

□ 1230

Under the plan of the Postmaster General, it will take longer for a first-class letter to go from my town of Springfield across the river to the city of Eugene than it took Thomas Jefferson to mail a letter from Monticello to the Continental Congress. Yes, really, that's what he's planning. Now, that's not going to cause a bunch of people to abandon the Postal Service—of course not, that will help their revenue. No, it won't.

With this benign neglect, the indifference, the refusal to act over here in the House, we're watching the Postal Service spiral down the drain, both the good and the bad of the Postal Service.

If you didn't make them prepay health care retirement benefits for people who haven't yet been born, who haven't yet gone to work for them, over the last 6 years, instead of saying they lost \$41,200,000,000, actually, it would come down to about \$9 billion. They prepaid \$32 billion of health care retirement benefits, \$32 billion. That is by far the large majority of their red ink. Just about 80 percent of their red ink is due to them being forced to do something that no other entity on Earth is being forced to do.

If you want to look for a phony, manufactured crisis, this is it. Yes, they still have a small problem. That would be about a billion and a half dollars a year. If we unshackled them a bit, let them get into some new lines of business—which the Republicans are refusing to do—if we allowed them to set rates rationally—they've got a couple of lines of business as they call them that make money, and they have others that lose money. But they're allowed only to increase rates—even if it is losing money to deliver junk mail—by a cost-of-living increase, which it would obviously be less than a penny on junk mail delivery costs. The same on first-class.

If we allowed them to set their rates reasonably, if we took away this mandate of prefunding retirement health care costs for people who haven't yet been born, who haven't yet gone to work for them, and if we settled up on the old dispute over their overpayment for the civil service retirees who got rolled into the FERS system with the Postal Service, actually we could have a viable entity and one that would continue to serve America into the next century.

The post office pioneered optical scanning. They used to have some vi-

sionary leadership over there. They need new leadership. They need to be unshackled by Congress. They need to have unfair burdens lifted. But they don't need to be destroyed. That's where we're headed, towards the destruction of the Postal Service at this point in time. Some say young people don't use it, no one needs it, who needs it. They're delivering packages for FedEx and UPS to places where FedEx and UPS doesn't want to go. They've partnered with FedEx and UPS. They deliver packages for small businesses and with their one-price package that FedEx and UPS can't afford, which are vital to thousands of small businesses in my State and millions nationwide. They deliver prescriptions. Yes, they deliver prescriptions on Saturdays for veterans and others.

We need to fix the Postal Service, not destroy it.

LET'S RECTIFY THE FISCAL SITUATION

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

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address that issue which will have a significant fiscal impact on the economic well-being of this country in just 16 days. That is the issue of sequestration.

I have to agree with the minority whip from Maryland, who earlier spoke today that it's time to stop the blame game. There is no need to blame any more about this terrible fiscal policy which we are about to sustain.

You see, across-the-board cuts that the looming sequester will implement in a couple of weeks are bad policy and a result of bad politics. I believe that we must cut spending, and I rise here in support of careful, targeted cuts.

It is a shame that 850 jobs will be lost in Florida schools while we build a \$750,000 soccer field in Guantanamo Bay for terrorists. It's a shame that more than 26,000 special education students will see cuts to their education in Florida while government agencies are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on conferences in Las Vegas, Nevada. And it is a shame that more than 35,000 health care workers in Florida are projected to lose their jobs while more than \$115 billion was lost in improper payments from this government in just one year.

We must ask ourselves, for every \$1 that we are going to spend, is it worth mortgaging and borrowing our children's and our grandchildren's future for 41 cents for every one of those dollars. I submit to you that it is not.

Let's rectify this situation. I urge the Senate to take up the House-passed legislation, which would make targeted cuts to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse so that important essential government programs will not lose their funding.

The American people not only demand and deserve transparency in

their appropriation process, but they also demand and deserve that we be prudent and fiscally responsible in making sure we operate and appropriate within our means.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Loving God, thank You for giving us another day.

The people's House prepares to welcome the governmental and military leadership of our Nation. The world watches as the great experiment of civilian self-government is in high relief.

May all who populate these hallways this day be possessed of goodwill and a shared commitment to guarantee the freedoms and responsibilities inspired by the soaring rhetoric and subsequent actions of our American ancestors.

May all that is said and done in this Chamber today redound to the benefit of our Nation and the glory of Your holy name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois 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.

NO MORE BLAME, MR. PRESIDENT

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, tonight the President will ad-

dress the American people in his annual State of the Union Address. With the last quarter revealing unemployment has risen .1 percent and the economy contracting .1 percent, the President should change course. He should follow the example of President John F. Kennedy and President Ronald Reagan to lower taxes during economic hardship to promote job creation.

Last Congress, House Republicans passed over 30 job-creating bills. Most sadly died in the Senate graveyard. Additionally, the House has voted twice on a balanced approach to prevent sequestration with commonsense reforms. We should avoid these devastating cuts to occur, which will threaten our national security and destroy over 2 million jobs. House Republicans are actually passing legislation to encourage job growth through small business success.

Now is the time for positive leadership. I urge the President to begin working with House Republicans to find real solutions that will create jobs and put our country back on the path to prosperity.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

DARWIN DAY

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the birth of Charles Darwin. Only rarely in human history has someone shown a fundamentally new way of thinking about the world, an insight so revolutionary that it has made possible further creative and explanatory thinking.

In my previous field of physics, we have Galileo and Newton and Einstein. In biology, at the top of any list would be Charles Darwin. Without his insights—without his recognition that natural selection enables ever-increasing complexity and functionality and enables the development of ever-more wonderful forms of life—our modern understandings of biology, ecology, genetics, and medicine would be impossible, and our comprehension of the world around us would be vastly poorer.

I've introduced a resolution to honor February 12 as a ceremonial Darwin Day, to recognize the importance of scientific thinking in our lives and to honor one of humankind's greatest thinkers.

HONORING JOSEPH N. COOK, SR.

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

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American hero, somebody born in Channahon, Illinois, in my district, and passed away very recently.

His name is Joe Cook, Sr. Joe was a community leader, a great father, a great family member, but I would like to point out today a great veteran of the United States. He was a proud American, a decorated Korean war veteran, a member of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division. He was listed as missing in action for over 121 days behind enemy lines. By the grace of God, he was one of the very few to return home from Task Force Crombez, a recipient of the Silver Star, five Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts.

These are the kinds of Americans that we need to honor and cherish today. And I tip my hat off to Mr. Cook, and I say thank you, sir, for your service to your country.

MEDICARE

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday the Congressional Budget Office came out with their new budget projections and analysis of last year. What it showed was that the Medicare program grew at the slowest rate since 1965 when the program was created.

As this chart shows, the cost growth for Medicare is coming down. As a result of that, there are \$200 billion in new savings that we didn't know about the day before.

This is the smart way to balance our budget, by providing incentives for preventive care for more efficiency in the system, not butchering Medicare by turning it into a private health insurance program or raising the age of eligibility.

We can build on its success. We can stop sequestration by having a smart, focused health care policy which saves money for the American taxpayer, but protects America's seniors and people on disability.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, tonight the American people see if President Obama will keep his word regarding sequestration. At the third Presidential debate, President Obama said:

First of all, the sequester is not something that I proposed. It's something that Congress has proposed. It will not happen.

As you can see, the truth is that sequestration was a concept that came from President Obama's White House, and sequestration is happening unless Congress acts. President Obama must keep his promise to find the necessary cuts to get our fiscal house in order. We cannot fix this problem by taxing the American people more.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President to keep his promise to fix the current sequestration and maintain the needed cuts in spending.