

giving additional food and is working to step up their provision. Many people, my family included, are giving financially to take care of people in need in this moment. Oklahomans are tough and we're caring, but I'm incredibly frustrated that it's come to this.

Regardless of your thoughts on the number of Federal workers on the payroll, surely we can agree that the families currently employed should be protected as much as possible. These families have carried the stress of this pay cut for a year now. For months they have wondered when and if it would come, and now it's here.

I've written numerous letters to the Department of Defense, asking them to exhaust every option in sequester before they reduce worker time and pay. To their credit, they've replied to all of my correspondence in writing within days, something other agencies in this executive branch could certainly learn from.

I've personally spoken face-to-face with Secretary Panetta, with now-Secretary Hagel, General Dempsey, and Comptroller Hale to find out about other opportunities to save money, like the unobligated balances in the defense budget. I asked for their reconsideration of operations that function on working capital funds. If you're not familiar with that, some departments pay other departments to do their work. Those departments should not be directly affected. The cuts have already happened in the other department. We're cutting twice when we hit on the working capital fund locations.

I asked Secretary Hagel to give more authority to individual installations to make local decisions on spending reductions rather than mandating cuts from the Pentagon.

Congress has already worked with the DOD to reprogram funds and to give maximum flexibility to the Pentagon to protect workers, just like we did with FAA and Homeland Security.

I'm grateful, I am, that the Pentagon has found a way to reduce furloughs from 24 days to 14 days and now to a maximum of 11. But I want to find a way that we can end these furloughs all together for our civilian workers as soon as possible. Three months with a 20 percent cut is tough.

In my last conversation with Senator Hagel, I was pleased to hear that he's still working on these ways. I urge him to continue to cut waste, not worker pay. It's time that we get this issue resolved.

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 35 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. AMODEI) at noon.

PRAYER

Chaplain Major Howard Bell, 932nd Airlift Wing, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we ask for Your divine blessing upon this Congress. We ask that You bless them as they share the privilege that befuddled Moses, challenged Churchill, and has driven some to amazing achievement—leadership.

We thank You for choosing leaders with integrity, who ably lead this country, who motivate us in our work, and ultimately promote freedom in the world.

Give to this Congress the wisdom of Solomon in the decisions they must make; the courage of David when faced with "giants in the land;" the strength of Samson to endure the daily grind; the patience of Job to deal with the ever-changing demands placed upon them; and the compassion of a parent with a hurting child.

Almighty God, we have confidence in our President, our Congress, and in our Nation—and especially in You as we boldly make these requests, trusting in You that they will be accomplished. It is in Your holy name we pray.

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.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. HARTZLER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING CHAPLAIN MAJOR HOWARD BELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chaplain Howard Bell who led us in the opening prayer.

The tradition of the opening prayer began with the Continental Congress in 1774 when Reverend Jacob Duche of Philadelphia offered a prayer at its start. Since that time, the House has enjoyed over 200 years of service from the Chaplaincy of the House and our guest chaplains.

Chaplain Bell has faithfully served in churches in Missouri and Illinois since 1988. While serving his church, Chaplain Bell was commissioned a chaplain captain in the United States Air Force Reserves in 2002 and was assigned as an Individual Mobilization Augmentation to the 375th Air Wing at Scott Air Force Base.

In 2008, he was deployed to Afghanistan and assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Force at Bagram Airfield as the hospital chaplain, where he received the Army Commendation Medal. Since then, he has received the Air Force Commendation Medal, the International Security Assistance Force Medal, and the Afghanistan Enduring Freedom Medal. Chaplain Bell was also appointed wing chaplain of the 932nd Airlift Wing, where he supervises the ministry for nearly 1,200 airmen in the wing.

He is married to Reverend Penelope Barber and has two children, David and Rachel. Currently, he is the pastor of the Farina United Methodist Church in Farina, Illinois, and of the Louisville United Methodist Church in Louisville, Illinois.

It is my honor to welcome a man who encompasses so many of the wonderful qualities of the people of Illinois, and I would like to personally thank Chaplain Bell for offering this morning's prayer.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on either side of the aisle.

STOP THE FURLONGS

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

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, last week, more than 650,000 DOD civilians began the first of their 11 unpaid furlough days.

Our military—our men and women in uniform—and the civilians who support

our national security infrastructure simply cannot and should not have to bear this burden. Now men and women across the country—the engineers, architects, welders, and manufacturers—who have devoted their lives to our national security find themselves losing pay and struggling to get by.

Although the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force have said they would be able to complete the fiscal year without furloughs, the Secretary of Defense would not allow the service Secretaries to make their own decisions based on their individual budgetary constraints. The entire Department is now suffering as a result.

Mr. Speaker, this body has acted multiple times to end this process, and I urge the Senate and the President to offer their real solutions to this problem so that we can relieve this costly burden on our defense civilian workforce. These men and women who devote their lives to this country's service deserve better from their government.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE PASSING OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN BILL GRAY

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a great deal of sadness. I am saddened by the passing of my friend, William H. Gray, who represented the people of Pennsylvania's Second District in this House from 1979 to 1991.

Bill Gray was an historic figure. I had the honor of serving as vice chairman of the Democratic Caucus when he chaired the Democratic Caucus. He made history as the first African American Democratic whip from 1989 to 1991. As Budget chairman, Bill Gray played an instrumental role in setting the stage for the balanced budgets of the 1990s.

He was a leading voice against apartheid. Some of us just participated in a birthday celebration for Nelson Mandela in Emancipation Hall. Bill Gray was a leading advocate of changing the apartheid system in South Africa, and it was because of his efforts that we were able to enact sanctions against South Africa.

After retiring from Congress, Bill Gray led the United Negro College Fund, helping literally thousands access higher education and the opportunities that come with it. Throughout his tenure, Bill Gray continued to minister to the families of the Bright Hope Baptist Church as their pastor. His deep faith and enduring love for his fellow man was evident not only from the pulpit but from the committee rooms and on this floor.

I join my colleagues in expressing my condolences to Andrea and their sons, William, Justin, and Andrew, and in thanking them for sharing Bill Gray with all of us and with our country. We

were privileged to serve with him, to know him, and to be his friend.

SMALL BUSINESS AND OBAMACARE

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

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, at a time when just under 60 percent of working-age Americans are employed, wherever there is potential for job growth we should seize the opportunity, and, clearly, small businesses provide opportunity. Although our economy has fluctuated and wavered over the last 15 years, in that time, small businesses have created 64 percent of net new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, just 8 percent of the President's Cabinet members worked in the private business sector prior to their appointments. This Cabinet has less business experience than the previous 19 Cabinets. It is no wonder this administration did not clearly recognize the harmful effects that ObamaCare would have on small business.

We should be helping small businesses by reforming our burdensome Tax Code and by curbing back excessive regulation. That is why, yesterday, the House passed the delay of the employer and individual mandates, but we must permanently repeal ObamaCare. The future of small businesses and families depends on it.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to appeal for immediate action. Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the heart of the Voting Rights Act.

My dear colleagues, casting a ballot is our most sacred right. We have a moral duty to come together and rewrite this law in order to protect this precious right to vote. Though we have made great progress, racial discrimination and racial profiling continue to plague our society. The need for the Voting Rights Act is just as necessary today as it was in 1965.

On Nelson Mandela's 95th birthday, I am reminded that the human race has come a long way, but we must continue to make the impossible possible. I urge my colleagues to come together to update the Voting Rights Act.

DELAY OBAMACARE: IT'S ONLY FAIR

(Mrs. HARTZLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, this White House needs to learn a thing or two about fairness.

Why do they feel the need to delay the implementation of ObamaCare for businesses but not for individuals? If businesses get a break, why should hardworking Americans be left on the hook?

This law is unfair for everyone.

It's unfair to those who are going to have to pay more out of their pockets when their insurance premiums shoot up. It's unfair to workers who are going to see their hours cut because of the insurance costs. It's unfair to everyone who is going to have all of his or her personal medical information placed in the hands of a government bureaucrat.

It's unfair to every American across this country.

House Republicans believe that if you're going to give a break to Big Business you need to do the same for individuals and families. It's only fair.

MANDELA DAY

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, today, I want to wish a happy 95th birthday to President Nelson Mandela and ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the fifth annual Mandela International Day.

It is a day on which we celebrate the incredible dedication of President Mandela and his gifts of leadership to South Africa and to the world. In fact, in the face of extreme adversity, he relentlessly fought for democracy and peace in South Africa, and has become a model of leadership for me and for millions around the globe.

Last night, I had the pleasure of meeting youngsters from all over South Africa at the South Africa-Washington International Program Forum. Because of President Mandela, these youngsters and many others have dedicated themselves to public service and to carrying on his vision of spreading peace, democracy and diversity.

Presidential Mandela has proven that one person can change the tide of oppression, that one person can change the course of an entire country and, in turn, of the entire world. People all around the globe who are suffering from oppression, hatred, and discrimination will forever be grateful for the incredible leadership of Nelson Mandela.

Happy birthday, Madiba.

CONGRESS MUST ENFORCE THE CONSTITUTION

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the Senate to join the House of Representatives in taking immediate action to delay the employer and individual health care mandates.

President Obama has conceded that Americans are not ready for