

Teach us this day not to fear the darkness but to put our hand in Yours and resolutely seek the light.

You reveal Yourself as the Father of us all. We ask You to bring us together in civic harmony and in the common task of making real in our time the ideals and the dreams that make us America.

As we turn now to the work of this day, we ask for more than human wisdom, and pray that Your blessing, moving across our continent, will keep us one nation under God with liberty and justice for all.

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 Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas 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.

WELCOMING ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS JOHN QUINN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to welcome Archbishop John Quinn to the House of Representatives and to thank him for offering the opening prayer today.

Archbishop Quinn is one of the pre-eminent spiritual leaders and theologians of our Nation. His church service spans over four decades, beginning with his ordination in Rome in 1953. He has served as a pastor, as an educator, as Provost of the University of San Diego College for Men, as Auxiliary Bishop of San Diego, as Bishop of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, as the first Archbishop of Oklahoma City; and in 1977, he was named the sixth Archbishop of San Francisco.

His fellow bishops elected him President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1977, where he led with great distinction for a 3-year term. In December 1995, after 18 years of "tending his flock" of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, he resigned and was given a visiting fellowship at Campion Hall, Oxford.

My colleagues, our country has been blessed by the great patriotism, wisdom, scholarship, deep spirituality, and inspirational leadership of this humble and holy man.

Thank you, Archbishop Quinn, for gracing the House of Representatives with your prayer and your presence and for strengthening our country with a faith that calls each of us to be instruments of peace and justice.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOX). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

AMERICA'S FIRST PRIORITY—A BUDGET

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

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, last night, I had hoped to hear from the President that he would challenge both Houses to pass the first priority—a budget. The House has done it. The Senate has not for the last 3 years.

In this House, we talk a lot about the sluggish economy and our continual debt. We talk in trillions, so let's take the zeros away and talk in household income. If we were a household, we would, roughly, bring in \$24,500 a year, but we would spend \$35,500. That means we'd have to add \$11,000 to the credit card each year, but when we'd look to the credit card, it would already have \$160,000 on it.

We have to get the House in order. The Senate has refused to pass a budget in 3 years. The time is now to move America forward.

REBUILDING AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Last night, President Obama argued that rebuilding American infrastructure is crucial to job creation, and with 70,000 structurally deficient bridges, it is long overdue.

Today, the United States Chamber of Commerce is holding a summit on infrastructure investment. According to the U.S. Chamber, our broken infrastructure costs \$78 billion annually in lost time and fuel, and we will experience \$336 billion in lost growth over the next 5 years. Our decaying infrastructure is a significant drag on the economy. Freight rail bottlenecks cost us \$200 billion a year—air traffic delays \$33 billion a year. Our inadequate ports will lose up to \$270 billion in exports by 2020, costing 738,000 jobs.

Lots of people around here spend a lot of time whining about China. China invests 9 percent of its economy in infrastructure. We invest less than 3 percent. Stop whining about China and do something about it. President Obama and the U.S. Chamber agree that it's time to nation-build right here at

home, right here in America, and Congress should listen.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate my hometown—the city of Gainesville, Georgia—for its leadership in creating and sustaining jobs despite the economic challenges facing our Nation. A new Milken Institute study ranked Gainesville as the best-performing small city in Georgia last year.

The study found that 24 new and expanded industries created 1,200 jobs, retained 742 existing jobs, and generated \$164 million in capital investment for Gainesville and Hall County in 2012. This performance puts Gainesville in the top 10 small cities for job growth in the U.S.

I am proud that Gainesville continues to be a leader in economic development. Gainesville was ranked sixth in job growth nationwide from 2010 to 2011 and was ranked second in job growth from 2011 to 2012. From food and auto services to manufacturing and retail, more businesses are calling Gainesville home, which means more job opportunities for Georgians. I commend the leadership of Gainesville and Hall County for creating an environment where businesses can thrive, and I look forward to their continued success.

I hope that other cities across the Nation, as well as Congress, will look to Gainesville as an example of how job creation can be achieved even in a difficult economic climate.

SEQUESTRATION

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. Last night, President Obama challenged all of us to come together to improve our country's fiscal health today and for generations to come.

Automatic budget cuts, or sequestration, was never intended to be good fiscal policy. It was never intended to be policy—period. If these cuts take place, the American people will actually be harmed by the Representatives who were sent here to serve them. This is unacceptable. In just 2 weeks, if we don't act, across-the-board cuts will deeply hurt every aspect of our lives—schools, health programs, law enforcement, research and development. Under sequestration, all of these will be decimated.

In our fragile economy, our Nation cannot afford to wait, so I call on our colleagues from the other side of the aisle to rise to the challenge. We cannot keep on going from one manufactured crisis to the next. Work with us to stop sequestration before it's too late.

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STOP DEVASTATING SEQUESTER

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, President Obama had a chance last night to lay out a plan for smart, strategic savings to replace his devastating sequester. We were all watching; we were all listening. We want to work together on this. But instead of laying out a vision for how government can avoid his sequester—his sequester—by living within its means, the President decided to make the impractical case for passing the buck onto taxpayers through even more taxes.

House Republicans have known all along the President's sequester was a terrible plan. We gave the Supercommittee a chance to do the right thing, and when they didn't, we led.

Twice since last summer we have passed legislation that would preserve savings while completely removing the threat sequester poses to American jobs and national security. The President didn't join the conversation until recently.

March 1 is coming. Will he or won't he put forth a credible plan to stop the damage of his sequester? Republicans have responded. He and our friends on the other side of the aisle have not.

OPPOSING SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the huge education cuts that are in the sequester. Massive sequestration is an inefficient way to make spending decisions that affect millions of Americans. However, this is what we agreed to, and the House majority has not had an open and frank debate on how this Chamber can reduce our national deficit while helping our students and hardworking educational professionals succeed.

On education alone, sequestration will reduce funding for the Department of Education and Head Start by an estimated \$4.8 billion. Department of Education funding will return to pre-2003 levels, impacting between 8.9 million and 9.4 million students. Potential job losses in the education field are projected to be between 74,600 and 80,500. These cuts will come as schools and colleges enroll more students and the cost of services increases.

I call on Members on both sides of the aisle to join me in finding a better way to reduce our deficit while protecting our children, students, and educational professionals.

STRENGTHENING THE MIDDLE CLASS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, last night President Obama outlined a bold vision for his second term in office and spoke about the number one issue facing our country: jobs. The President understands that if we want to get our country back on the right track, we have to invest in those areas that are essential to growing our economy and strengthening the middle class.

With families all across America, and particularly in my home State of Rhode Island facing tremendous challenges, it's critical that our friends on the other side of the aisle put aside partisan gamesmanship and start working together on the commonsense goals that President Obama outlined: reinvigorating manufacturing; investing in our infrastructure; making education a priority; and developing new sources of clean energy, as well as a long-term strategy to deal with our debt.

It's true that Republicans and Democrats have a choice. We can either work to find common ground and move our country forward as a whole, or we can continue the partisan fighting that has created gridlock in Washington.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find common ground and real solutions so we can put our country back to work and address the serious challenges facing our Nation.

REPEAL AND REPLACE DANGEROUS SEQUESTER

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Madam Speaker, we have before us this question of allowing indiscriminate and harmful cuts to our armed services and other vital national governmental works.

I agree we must address the debt and the deficit, but it's not a new problem, and we have fixed it before. Right now, our national debt stands at about 105 percent of GDP, gross domestic product. In 1946, it was close to 122 percent, and we fixed it—not by austerity, not by slash and burn; we fixed it by investing in America. We built our national highway system. We made our armed services the envy of the world. We even rebuilt Europe and Japan. We went to the Moon, for heaven's sake.

By the 1960s, our economic growth was so great that it was impossible for anyone to complain about the Roosevelt debt with a straight face. That's what we need to do now. We need to believe in ourselves. We need to invest in the great engines of our economic recovery, our infrastructure, and our middle class.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge the Members, be bullish on America and repeal and replace this dangerous sequester.

AMERICANS NEED REAL SOLUTIONS

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, last night at his State of the Union address, President Obama outlined a real job creation plan to grow our economy and strengthen America's middle class. However, sequestration is just 15 days away, threatening to stall our economic recovery.

Sequestration would be devastating for many programs and services that my constituents and all Americans rely on: Head Start; the Women, Infants and Children—WIC—nutrition plan; medical research funding; Indian Health Service; police officers; and food inspectors. Funding for all these crucial areas would be decimated.

Sequestration would also make our country less safe by implementing reckless, across-the-board defense cuts. We've already reduced the deficit by \$2.5 trillion, mostly through spending cuts. There's no question we can eliminate additional wasteful spending. However, we should be strategic in finding ways to reduce our deficit. With sequestration looming, Madam Speaker, Americans need real solutions, not another eleventh hour cliffhanger.

DEVASTATING SEQUESTRATION CUTS

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about the devastating sequestration cuts that are set to take effect unless we, Congress, act by March 1. If these arbitrary across-the-board cuts are allowed to occur, our military, our national security, and our communities will suffer.

Hawaii is one of the top 10 States that will take the biggest hit. We've already seen these anticipated cuts playing out at the Pearl Harbor shipyard, where 133 apprentices will not be hired and 30 temporary workers will lose their jobs. This is affecting real people, their families, as well as our military's readiness.

Times are tough and we must all share in the sacrifice, but we cannot do so at the expense of our military readiness or on the backs of our middle class families, seniors, and children.

SEQUESTRATION MEANS STUPID

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, sequestration. You know, it's inside-the-Beltway talk. What does it mean? It means stupid, across-the-board budget cuts.

Take a program of tremendous public import—whether it's a defense program, public safety program, student financial aid—and cut it 10 percent. Take a turkey, something we don't need anymore, something stupid, obsolete—registering kids for a draft that doesn't exist and will never exist—cut it 10 percent.