

they take as few left turns as possible. A driver might make three right turns to avoid making a left turn.

While this seems counterintuitive, they found that it actually saves money. The employees spend less time sitting at traffic lights and are able to service more households per day. If the census can employ a mobile technology along these same lines, the bureau has the ability to save taxpayer dollars.

Now, understand something: none of these cost-saving measures are truly revolutionary. None of them will shock people or cause a partisan divide. I doubt that our offices will be flooded with constituent calls asking us to adopt them.

But simply put, they're all common-sense measures that will save taxpayer money. The ideas have worked in other areas of government, and have worked in the private sector.

Sometimes it doesn't take a revolutionary idea to be a good one. It often takes a group of leaders deciding to focus on an issue and keep pushing it until the process improves. We have a chance to improve the census and to rein in the costs.

As previously stated, we have the ability to save \$10 billion in future taxpayer cost. As I said earlier, the big things will always work themselves out. We can even run from crisis to crisis up here, and people will focus on the big things, and we will continue to work on those because they matter.

But it's time we gave some consideration to the small things. When we add the small pieces together, we start to actually reduce the deficit and get this country back on solid financial ground.

This is not a small thing. This is what matters to the people back home. This is what matters when they come up to me in the grocery store and they talk about Washington being broken. They want to know how it affects them at their table, at their homes, and with their families.

When we start focusing on the small things, the big things get in perspective even clearer, and we're up here doing exactly what we are supposed to be. And the Republican majority is focused on limited government, focusing on jobs, and getting America back to work again with a government that does what it's supposed to do and gets out of the way.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to speak on this subject tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 687, SOUTHEAST ARIZONA LAND EXCHANGE AND CONSERVATION ACT OF 2013; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1256, RESTORING HEALTHY FORESTS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3102, NUTRITION REFORM AND WORK OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2013; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-215) on the resolution (H. Res. 351) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 687) to facilitate the efficient extraction of mineral resources in southeast Arizona by authorizing and directing an exchange of Federal and non-Federal land, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1526) to restore employment and educational opportunities in, and improve the economic stability of, counties containing National Forest System land, while also reducing Forest Service management costs, by ensuring that such counties have a dependable source of revenue from National Forest System land, to provide a temporary extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, and for other purposes; providing for consideration for the Bill (H.R. 3102) to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, and for other purposes; and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE JOINT RESOLUTION, H.J. RES. 59 CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS RESOLUTION, 2014

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-216) on the resolution (H. Res. 352) providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 59) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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REVIEWING THE BASICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) for 30 minutes.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I met with a group of Nebraskans, as we do every week. It's called the Nebraska Breakfast. It's about a 70-year tradition that we have here in the Congress where the House Members and the Senators get together. We've been doing that decade after decade. It's a wonderful way to welcome people to Washington and one of the highlights of our week. What we

do as a delegation is talk about the issues of the day and hear from our constituents as well.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I thought it might be important to just review a few basics. Some of the terminology and some of the language that we throw around here with great ease is often, I think, disconnected from people out there in the country—words and phrases like continuing resolutions; the Affordable Care Act, known as ObamaCare; sequestration, and debt limits. The reason that I point all this out is there is a convergence of all of these factors right now that is creating the great debate and this moment of drama in the United States Congress.

So let's take those one at a time.

First of all, the continuing resolution. What does that mean? Well, each year, if it worked in an ideal fashion and a proper fashion, the President submits a budget to Congress. Congress can take that budget up or not. The House passes a budget. The Senate passes its own budget. The two are reconciled. We set a budgetary goal, and then the appropriations committees go to work on various aspects of funding the government, whether that's the Defense Department, military services, labor and health and human services, transportation, financial, agriculture support, and the rest of the so-called appropriations bills. Basically, the budget sets up a fence and then the appropriations bills divide up how that money is to be spent each year. That, again, is in an ideal world, which has become very broken of late.

When Congress cannot seem to get a budget agreement between the House and Senate, we come to the end of the fiscal year, which ends this September, and we have to figure out a way to fund the government going forward or else it shuts down. When the government shuts down, there is the potential for planes not to fly, trains not to run, and veterans not to get their services. It's not a proper way to govern. It's not good for the country to have this uncertainty looming out there. We want to do everything we can to try to avoid a government shutdown while moving forward on fiscally responsible policies that return us to what we call "regular order" here and try to get back in place a system of governance that gives some proper planning horizons for the communities at large out there across America and brings it back into an orderly process here.

So if we are not able to pass a budget, the continuing resolution is a vote by both the Senate and the House as to how to move forward either in a temporary fashion or a long-term fashion based upon what current government policies are.

The frustration here is that each year of late we've been going through all of these difficult decisionmaking

processes, particularly through the appropriations process, about which programs are important, which are necessary public policies to help bring essential services to the American people, and which programs are older, antiquated, no longer effective and should either be reduced or eliminated.

We've gone through a number of those processes this year; but because of the disagreements between the two bodies, because of the deep philosophical divide in this Chamber, we have not been able to find a resolution that gets us to what we call regular order—passing appropriations bills under a budgetary framework. So now we are faced with a continuing resolution—the decision as to how to fund the government, moving forward, either for a short term—a month or 2, maybe a few weeks, or even a few days—or long term.

The continuing resolution means we just pick up government where it is and move it forward, basically spending the same amount of money that we did last year and not getting any of the reforms. So it might come to that, but that's an unfortunate way to govern. And I know it's adding cynicism, Mr. Speaker, in the American people's perspective as they watch this deep philosophical divide play itself out on the House floor and seemingly not being able to get anything constructively decided.

Mr. Speaker, I'm from Nebraska. We have a saying, Let's get 'er done. I think that's what most Americans want. Let's find a constructive way, a proper and balanced way, to appropriately reduce spending in areas that are necessary to do so, perhaps even the right type of tax reform to get this fiscal house in order.

Now why is this important? Well, we have a \$600-plus billion deficit this year. Year after year, because we've had these deficits, we've piled up debt. There's now \$17 trillion of debt. By some measures, it's approximating the size of the output of the entire economy. It's a real red flag.

That's why it is so imperative that this body strive to work together, again, in a constructive manner, to figure out the right type of spending and tax policies that deliver essential services, reduce the overspending, increase accountability in effective and smart government and delivery of policy, while also having a fairer and simpler Tax Code. That should be the objective, and I think it is for most Members here. But, unfortunately, the system is working very dysfunctionally at the moment and we're going to be faced with eleventh-hour decisions as to how to fund the government in the short term so that it doesn't shut down. That's called the continuing resolution.

Complicating that this year is the whole debate about the future of health care in America. A couple of years ago, the Affordable Care Act was passed. I did not support it. It's now known as

ObamaCare. We do need the right type of health care reform in our country—a health care reform that is going to improve health care outcomes while reducing costs. I think most Americans are beginning to see and realize this now because it's hitting them and it's hurting them. Instead, what we have in the new health care bill is a shift to more unsustainable costs and an erosion of health care liberties, and a significant amount of Americans are experiencing not affordable care but an escalating cost of their premiums.

Now, there's some components of the health care law that I think are reasonable; and as we move forward, we should retain them, such as keeping kids on health insurance up to the age of 26. I supported that policy before the health care bill. Removing caps on health insurance in case a family would cap out, that doesn't save the system any money. The family simply has to go find another job and an insurance provider, creating great duress. That doesn't make sense. Appropriately dealing with the problem of preexisting conditions. There have been a number of Americans who were priced out of the insurance market, who could not find affordable, quality insurance. And that's a real crack in our market system, so that it's necessary that public policy deal with that.

But what we've gotten instead is a massive turning over of our entire health care system. It's creating havoc. Prices are going up. People aren't sure as to whether or not they can keep their doctor or their health care plan. Some people are experiencing unemployment as companies either don't expand or have to reduce numbers because they want to get under the threshold by which they have to provide health insurance for their employees. And some employees are having reduced hours. This is a very big problem.

Another component of this is that the President and the administration have exempted certain entities. Recently, the implementation of the business demand that they provide health care has been delayed. It's really not fair because individuals are saying, if you can delay the business mandate, the corporate mandate, why not the individual mandate?

The fullness of ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, is coming into full force very shortly. So this is colliding as well with our budgetary discussion, and it's creating dramatic dynamics as we end the month here at the end of the fiscal year.

The other aspect of this is called sequestration. A couple of years ago, we were in a very similar situation in which we were faced with raising the debt ceiling—and I'll return to that Washington phrase in a moment—or not. A special committee was set up to review the Tax Code and to review spending, and they were going to come up with a process by which there was a

fair and balanced approach to spending and taxes going forward.

But that supercommittee failed. The incentive for them to act in a constructive manner was something called "sequestration," which is the implementation of automatic budget cuts, primarily affecting the defense of our country, and what we call nondefense discretionary spending.

Nondefense discretionary spending is basically everything else the government does, other than the defense and veterans and retirement and health security programs—basically, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. So a third of the entire budget is what is being affected by sequestration, and many Members of Congress have seen the furloughs in their districts and cutbacks on vital programs.

I think there's widespread support, particularly where I come from, on, again, ensuring that we have the right type of spending reductions while there is also a proper delivery of important essentials. We have to do this in a smart manner. The sequestration does it across the board. It's a very clumsy, awkward way to do this. It's not judicious. It's not using discretion. It's not taking the best judgment through our normal processes of considering a budget and appropriations bills and saying, that program may have been good at one time, but it no longer fits modern needs. Let's get rid of it and save that money and bring down spending or apply it to something new that's innovative that can really help people.

That's what sequestration is doing. That's what it did this year. Because that supercommittee failed to meet its goal, there were automatic budgetary reductions put in place. They will continue unless, again, we can come to an agreement as to how we replace sequestration with a more prudent form of spending reduction that would hopefully be coupled, again, with the right type of tax reform.

Let me talk about that fourth Washington phrase, those two words, the "debt ceiling." We used to never hear much about this. The debt ceiling was something that kind of came and went. Congress has to give the authority to the President to go out and borrow money. Usually, that was automatic; but because our debt has gotten so large, so severe, at \$17 trillion, most Members of Congress are saying this is so severe that it demands creative thinking and bold resolve, or else we will undermine not only our economic well-being but also national security.

Now, how so? What does \$17 trillion of debt mean?

Mr. Speaker, we are a people that self-governs. This debt is not sitting out there as somebody else's problem. It's America's problem. So if you divided it all up between every man, woman, and child in this country, every one of us would have to write a check for \$53,000 in order to pay off the current debt.

Now, that doesn't even consider the projection of debt in the future based

upon the way in which current spending programs are constructed. If we take the present value of the future obligations of programs as they are now written, the debt would so accelerate that each person in America right now, if nothing changes, would owe \$300,000.

Mr. Speaker, I have five children. There are seven of us in the family. Obviously, I can't afford a check to the government for \$2.1 million to take care of my share of this obligation; nor can most Americans. Something has to change. It will take bold resolve and constructive commitment to fair and balanced outcomes both on the spending side as well as the Tax Code ledger side.

If we don't do this, Mr. Speaker, what are the consequences if we don't deal with this debt successfully? By the way, it can't be done overnight. It's too big. That would be too disruptive to do it overnight. But we have to set a pathway in which we are committed to seriously reducing this debt and getting the fiscal house in order, turning this battleship around.

The consequences are really threefold if we don't. First of all, it's a form of future taxation. We're forcing the children of the future to pay for the way in which we're living now. It's fundamentally unjust, unfair.

Secondly, a lot of this high level of debt is held by foreign countries such as China. What does that mean? That is a shift of the assets of this country—what we own—into the hands of other people. We get all worried that China is undertaking a military expansion. We've sent a heck of a lot of manufacturing over there, sent a lot of our economy over there. They make the stuff; we buy the stuff. They have the cash. We run up debt; they buy our debt.

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It's a very dysfunctional marriage. But the consequences are, over time, that is a shift of what we own in this country into the hands of a place like China.

And where does that money go? Well, there is a ruling elite that's doing pretty well there. There's a hybrid communist-capitalistic system that doesn't seem to be very interested in the notion of private property rights and human rights, doesn't seem to be advancing very fast in this regard.

So this economic liberalization, you would hope, over time would help bring about the focus on fundamental human rights and human dignity. But it has certainly empowered a wealthy elite, and it's being plowed back into military infrastructure buildup.

So our debt is a national security problem. Because we hear that the Chinese, for instance, are expanding their navy, expanding their nuclear arsenal. So what is our response? We'll send more ships into the Pacific.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is also a response that needs to be had and that we need to work diligently and quickly

and boldly with clear resolve, ideally in a bipartisan manner because this is an American problem. This really isn't about politics, Mr. Speaker. This is about principle. This is about participation in the future welfare of our country, regaining our balance, regaining our strength. This should transcend the partisan political divide. We'll have a big debate about, again, what are the appropriate areas to reduce and what's the right type of tax balance. Fine. But we should all be committed to getting to this goal to quickly reverse this trend, which has severe economic and national security consequences.

The third problem with all this debt is it's potentially inflationary. Now, we have a very expansive liquidity policy going on right now, basically buying up our debt. The consequences over time could be a further unleashing of inflationary impacts, which is a form of taxation, a regressive form of taxation. It hits the poor the hardest, those who are on fixed incomes, seniors the hardest. It is grossly unfair. People who are not in a position in life to adjust prices, if you will, and so that creates a further form of taxation on those who are least able to handle it.

So this is why, Mr. Speaker, this debt problem is so severe. We're bumping up in the near term against this debt ceiling limit. Now, again, what does that mean?

Congress has to give the administration authority to borrow more money. Now, the last time we did this, we actually reduced spending by more than an amount that we borrowed. That was the plan, again, trying to get to this in a manner that is not disruptive but actually begins to reduce the spending in a necessary fashion by more than the amount that we continue to borrow. It's a slow walk toward a better situation.

We may end up there now, I don't know, but this is one of these dynamics that's sitting out there, along with the continuing resolution, the future of health care in this country, called ObamaCare, the sequestration, dealing with these automatic cuts if we don't figure out a constructive way to budget and to appropriate. And then the debt ceiling, in which we have to have a plan to basically continue to pull down this very, very large burdensome debt and all of its economic as well as national security consequences. Mr. Speaker, we must do this, and we must do it now.

So I would urge all of my colleagues, let's transcend the partisan divide here. We're going to have differences. We all come from districts with particular perspectives. We have different philosophical ideas as to how to approach government. Some people want more investment at the Federal level. Those of us who believe in the sole principle called subsidiarity, where those closest to a problem or opportunity should be empowered to solve the problem or seize the opportunity—Federalism, as it used to be known.

That has been the robust way in which America gained such economic prowess in the world and was a leader and continues to be a leader for so many people who desire the nature of a system like ours that is rooted in this cultural ideal that each person has inherent dignity and rights and also has responsibility—even responsibility—for government.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have quite a bit of drama, I'm afraid, in the coming days and weeks. Let's hope it doesn't add cynicism to the deepening cynicism toward our institution. People in America have entrusted us to represent them, to make judgments on their behalf. I think most people in America want something constructive done, something that's fair, that's not done in an emergency, 11th-hour scenario, that doesn't disrupt economic well-being because it's either too dramatic or too harsh or done at the last minute, that takes a little bit longer view, gets past the politics of the moment and takes a longer view as to what's right and good for America.

Mr. Speaker, the people who came behind us, who sacrificed so much to build what we have, don't they deserve our best? Don't they deserve a commitment to these higher ideals? Because our economic well-being is tied to our ability to work constructively and creatively together to get this fiscal house together, to get it on the right track, to appropriately reduce spending while also delivering smart public policies that are effective in helping people across this country, that revitalizes our economic strength, that takes the duress off of communities where people can't find jobs and can't find work, that creates a fairer Tax Code that's less convoluted, that's a little bit simpler, where you don't have to have an army of lawyers and accountants to figure out ways around it. That's what we ought to be focused on. That's what we need to get done. That's what I think our people are demanding from us.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts with you and my colleagues.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. RUSH (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for September 12 until September 20 on account of attending to family acute medical care and hospitalization.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, September 19, 2013, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.