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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 1, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE HOLDING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, one of the cornerstones of my lifetime of public service has been to work on bipartisanship. I have a long record of working with Republican Governors and Senators back home in Oregon. Here in Congress, every major initiative I've advanced has been working to engage bipartisan sponsors and finding ways that bring people together rather than divide them.

But here in Congress, under the Republican leadership, I must say, it has been difficult, if not impossible. For example, there's been a claim that Republicans want to repeal and replace ObamaCare. They've never indicated a hint of how they would replace the Affordable Care Act and protect its most important provisions. They cannot say how they would produce a health care plan that would eliminate the stark specter of medical bankruptcy, which, under the Affordable Care Act, Americans no longer have to fear. They have no plan to protect families from being denied health insurance because of pre-existing conditions and eliminate the pernicious lifetime limits which penalize families in the most desperate and tragic of circumstances.

Now we're in the middle of their manufactured crisis of a government shutdown, and they risk a meltdown of the global economy by threatening America will not pay its bills on the national debt.

There are three simple steps my Republican friends could take to prove they're serious and not cynical:

First of all, Republicans campaigned the breadth of this country against the ACA, but they have included in their budget over a half trillion dollars in savings under the act and all of the revenues from the taxes. If they are serious and not cynical, they will remove that money from their budget and show what other services they would cut or taxes they would raise to make up for it.

If they are serious and not cynical, they would bring their own spending bills to the floor for their members' vote. Remember, we still have pending the Transportation-HUD spending bill. On July 30, they just stopped in the middle of deliberations because they figured out that the bill was so bad that their own members wouldn't even vote for it.

If they are serious and not cynical about their spending plan, they ought

to allow their members to vote on their own spending bills, see if there's any more support today than there was 3 months ago. Then bring the Interior spending bill to the floor, which has been in committee limbo. The showstopper will be Labor, Health, and Human Services. If they're serious and not cynical, they will have recorded votes to show the American public what they really believe in.

Last night, I was stunned that the final stunt in their "let's-make-a-deal, made-for-TV semireality show" was to demand a conference committee be appointed. They want a conference committee on a bill that has already been law for 3 years that the American health care industry and local government have spent billions of dollars to be ready to implement, which goes into effect today.

If you're serious about working on a cooperative basis and negotiating differences and want to have a conference committee, why don't you appoint a conference committee on the budget? The Senate and the House have both approved budgets, and the Republicans have refused to appoint conferees so that people can work together to resolve these differences. That is a pending item right now. It's ready to go.

It's interesting. We had a jaw-dropping moment in the Budget Committee last week when my friend, Chairman PAUL RYAN, said the reason they would not appoint conferees is because there might be too many motions to instruct. My goodness, the House might express its will and not be tightly controlled?

We're in the midst of a manufactured government shutdown crisis with a looming disaster if they throw a tantrum that would prevent Americans from paying their bills. Republicans can prove that they are serious and not cynical by not using the health care reform savings to fund their budget, bringing their own spending bills to the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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floor and allowing them to be voted on, and then having a conference committee not on a law that is 3 years old, but on a pending item between the House and the Senate: the budget. Sooner or later, the system ought to be allowed to work.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, this shutdown should not have happened. The Framers of our Constitution designed our system to have tension and differences between the two houses of Congress—that's a given. But after the House and Senate have exercised their best judgment, they are then supposed to sit down and negotiate out their differences. This is the way our bicameral system has worked for 225 years. It is the only way that it can work.

That hasn't happened this time. This time the House proposed a compromise nearly 2 weeks ago to keep the government open and to defund ObamaCare in order to address the epidemic of dropped health care policies, massive rate increases, and job cutbacks that we're now seeing as a result of its implementation. The Senate rejected that compromise by insisting on full funding with no reform. That is their prerogative. It represents the best judgment of that body.

At that point, the differences were supposed to have been negotiated. They weren't. The Senate's leaders refused even to discuss a compromise. So the House offered the second compromise of funding the entire government, including ObamaCare, but at least delaying its implementation for a year to address the rapidly growing complaints that we are all receiving. Instead of taking up the measure, the Senate instead chose to take the weekend off, come in at the leisurely hour of 2:00 in the afternoon on the day of the fiscal deadline, and then summarily reject the House offer, again refusing even to discuss a compromise.

With the clock running out, the House offered a third compromise: fund the entire government, fund ObamaCare, including the malfunctioning exchanges, but at least delay the mandate for individuals to obtain coverage for a year while these problems are addressed and rescind the illegal action of the President that shields Members of Congress from the costs of this law. It's a simple principle: equality under law.

Since the President has already exempted Big Business from the mandate to provide health care for employees, then those employees should also be relieved from the mandate to purchase it. And if Members of Congress can't afford the new costs of ObamaCare, how do we expect the average American to do so? Once again, the Senate summarily rejected the third compromise

by the House and once again refused even to discuss our differences. The clock ran out, and the government is now in a partial shutdown.

Ironically, House Republicans have been accused of a "my way or the highway" approach, yet the record is quite the opposite. House Republicans compromised and compromised and compromised, only to be met by absolute intransigence at the door of the Senate.

The House has now asked for a formal conference committee. This is the mechanism that has evolved over centuries to resolve even the most intractable differences between the two Houses. Yet once again, Senate leaders summarily rejected the offer even before it was formally made.

The only explanation for this conduct is that Senate leaders believe that a government shutdown inures to their political benefit because they can blame Republicans. If Mr. REID and his followers didn't want a shutdown, they would have been feverishly working through this weekend to avoid one as the House was doing. The fact is they didn't, and that speaks volumes.

Our system of governance was not designed to operate in this manner. It cannot operate in this manner. The essence of a bicameral legislature is for each House to act according to its best judgment, isolate the differences, and then work them out. This is the critical link in our deliberative process, and it is not happening. It's not because of any failure of design, but rather because of designing men.

In his 1862 address to the Congress, Abraham Lincoln set the only course that is open to us. He said, "We can succeed only by concert." It is not "Can any of us imagine better?" but "Can we all do better?" The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to this stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. We must disenthral ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

Mr. Speaker, I appeal to the Senate to set aside its dogmas, rise with the occasion, and accept the invitation of the House to sit down in conference. Let us reason together, and then let us save our country.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, last night, just after midnight, you allowed the government to shut down.

Enough with the gimmicks. I'm not up here to play the blame game, to blame Republicans, to blame the President, to blame the Senate, to blame Democrats. That isn't what the American people want to hear. They want us to do our work. They want us to come together.

Mr. Speaker, we need leadership at this juncture. You're the Speaker of

the House, and this is a House that has both Democrats in it and Republicans. We need your leadership at this moment to open the government and serve the American people. That's what they want to see.

Mr. Speaker, you must be willing to work with Democrats in this body. We are ready and waiting to work with you. My office is open. I'm a doctor, and I'm happy to work with you on the Affordable Care Act and make this about taking care of patients, make this about the American people. We stand ready to do the country's work, but we need your leadership and your willingness to work with Democrats.

The Senate has passed a bill that will keep the government open. Bring it to the floor. If the Republicans don't like it, they'll vote against it. But bring it to the floor and give us a chance to vote up or down. That's how government should work. Give us a chance, as a full body, to vote up or down. We're here to work with you, Mr. Speaker, but bring that clean bill to the floor. Don't attach gimmicks to it.

Keeping government open isn't about attaching a gimmick like access to birth control pills. That isn't what this is about. Stop attaching gimmicks. We are ready to work with you to strengthen and fix the Affordable Care Act and make it about the American patient, but this is about keeping government open. Do your job, Mr. Speaker. We need your leadership.

We've got to stop playing the blame game. This is surreal right now. This is not an episode of "The West Wing." This is real life. In fact, I'm going to read a letter from two constituents of mine, Matthew and Michelle. This is the real world.

Representative BERA, I realize you're not the cause of the looming shutdown, but I'm begging you to do everything you can in your power to keep the shutdown from happening. My wedding is literally going to be ruined if the shutdown happens as we are to marry in Glacier National Park on October 13 . . . It is messing up so many people's lives . . . because some elected people in Washington can't compromise.

□ 1015

Here's what Matthew wrote:

The constant bickering and self-interest rather than the interests of the general public seem to be a common focus for many in Congress. Start working together and getting things done.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the time for bickering. We need to step up and do our job for all the Matthews and Michelles in America. They're watching, and they're the ones who are suffering. We need to put their interests ahead of political parties, ahead of individual interests.

We got elected to do a job and put the people's interests first. "We, the people." This is the United States of America. We have to start working together in a united way. Mr. Speaker, let's do our work. We stand ready to work and reopen the government. Bring the bill to the floor.