

That's why I bring to your attention a statement that the Vice President made on September 23 in Greeley, Colorado, after touring the damage and devastation that those floods caused.

I stood 2 feet away from the Vice President of the United States as he addressed the people of Colorado and said this:

None of the Federal assistance that we're providing, none if it is going to be impacted even if there is a government shutdown.

So while people may try to use this as a scare tactic, try to politicize a disaster, the Vice President himself stood before the people of Colorado and said there will be no impact on flood recovery.

And yet we have seen in the newspaper people are trying to scare people to try to take away any kind of certainty that exists, but you can't take those words back.

That's why I also sent a letter this morning to the White House reminding the White House, Mr. Speaker, of the promise that the Vice President made to the people of Colorado. And we, as elected officials in Congress, in the Senate, the Governor of Colorado, we have a responsibility to make sure that the Vice President and the President keep their word, they're true to the people of Colorado; that we make sure that, indeed, this statement:

None of the Federal assistance that we're providing, none of it is going to be impacted, even if there is a government shutdown.

So while we work to resolve this issue before the government right now, while we work to make sure that policies are put in place to return to normal operations, we cannot let this be politicized. We cannot let the people of Colorado be forgotten, and we must hold the Vice President and the President accountable and true to their word.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD the letter that I sent to the White House this morning, and also the statement, in full, of the Vice President's comments.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 1, 2013.

President BARACK OBAMA,
The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: As you know, Colorado is recovering from some of the most devastating floods in state history. Catastrophic water levels caused over \$1 billion in damage to infrastructure and property throughout my district and other areas in the state. More than 20,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, eight individuals lost their lives, and overflowing rivers left a path of devastation. I am grateful for the recovery efforts led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Guard, and others involved in this process. Federal assistance is critical in this time of need and I have fought to ensure that funds are available for disaster relief. On September 30th, my legislation that would raise the cap on disaster-related transportation funds successfully passed the House.

Unfortunately, Congress has not yet come to an agreement to fund the federal government and the nation is now facing the effects

of a government shutdown. While I am working diligently with my colleagues to resolve this funding gap, it is vitally important that the people of Colorado do not suffer as a result of gridlock in Washington. To this end, I was pleased to hear Vice President Biden pledge to the people of Colorado that "none of the federal assistance that we're providing—none of it—is going to be impacted even if there is a government shutdown." This commitment from the White House is reassuring for my constituents and others in the state worried about the impact a shutdown might have on disaster funds. I appreciate your support in this recovery and look forward to working on behalf of the thousands affected by these recent events.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

CORY GARDNER,
Member of Congress.

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN IN COLORADO—9/23/13

Now a lot of you will hear probably on the national news about the potential for a government shutdown. And it's probably going to scare the living devil out of you. Well the truth of the matter is there is reason to be scared but not in terms of disaster relief. None of the federal assistance that we're providing, none of it is going to be impacted even if there is a government shutdown. I don't want folks that are here in shelters watching on TV seeing the dysfunction of Congress thinking that all, all the relief efforts that they are now benefiting from or (inaudible) are likely to continue to benefit from are going to shut down. They will not shutdown even if the Congress doesn't fund the federal government in a continuing resolution.

THIS IS NOT POLITICAL?

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, here we are. The gentleman who just preceded doesn't want this to be political. It's totally political.

The Republicans spent billions on the last election. They lost badly in the Presidential. They didn't take over the Senate. They even got 1.4 million fewer votes for the House but, because of gerrymandering, they're still in charge.

So now they're attempting to usurp the constitutional order in the United States of America. They're saying that one-half of one branch of the government of the United States, that is, the Republican majority in the House, should dictate policy to the rest of the country. They should be the rulers. They can change laws. They can ignore the Senate, ignore the President.

They are making unequivocal demands. They've taken the country, the government hostage. This is disruptive. It's expensive. It's inconvenient for a lot of Americans who need to access these agencies.

I was just meeting with the chief of the Forest Service. It's going to delay their capability of planning salvage and restoration activities on the hundreds of thousands, millions, of acres across the West that burned. They're going to have to stop all that. And then

winter sets in, and then you're going to have big problems that you can't undo.

But they don't care about any of that because this is totally political.

Now, we're in the shutdown phase now, but their objective is to drag this out and hitch all of their demands—and if you've seen the list of demands, it's every bill that the Republicans have passed since they took over in 2011 that has not seen action in the Senate or been rejected by the Senate—would be appended to the debt limit of the United States.

Now, shutting down the government, pretty radical. But we are really dealing here with, for short, "Cruzites," I guess I would call them. They're sort of anarchist radical Libertarians who don't believe in government.

They don't believe in evolution. They believe in devolution; devolve all the duties to the States, dissolve the Union, essentially, go to some loose federalism, and we'll reach some ideal point somehow.

It's crazy stuff. But they're in charge. It's not even a majority of their caucus. It's a minority of their caucus who are dictating to the majority, because, with 211 fully-red Republican districts, this is all about politics.

Those people know that if they act reasonably here that they will get an ultra right-wing nut case Tea Party primary challenge, funded by the likes of the Koch brothers and others, very, very generously funded.

So they've even managed not only to take the government hostage, but to intimidate their own truly conservative members, those who aren't "Cruzite" anarchist radical Libertarians.

Now, default is unbelievably irresponsible. Even a tiny threat of default, as they did a couple of years ago, downgraded our credit and drove up interest rates just a little bit. But we were much better off then.

Today, if they do this, interest rates for everything in America will go up dramatically. That means tens of billions of dollars more per year just to retire the Federal debt. They supposedly care about the debt. Well, they're going to raise the debt immediately by adding interest costs.

It means home mortgages bump again, stalls out the housing recovery. Cars go up again for loans.

But, you know, they don't really care because they don't borrow money for things. Most of these people are rich, so they don't care. So what if it impacts hundreds of millions of Americans in their daily lives with their credit cards, with their car purchases, with their attempts to get at housing?

They don't care. No, let's not make it political, guys. No, this isn't political. Come on. You want to be responsible? What's it about?

If it's about the problems with ObamaCare, there are a lot of us over here who would like to fix it. You came in with repeal and replace, repeal and

replace, 42 times repealing. Where's the replace?

What are you going to do about people who have preexisting conditions?

What are you going to do about kids between 18 and 26 who are on their parents' policies?

What are you going to do about childhood disabilities who can get insurance now?

What are you going to do about the 50 million uninsured people in this country?

Where's the replace?

Repeal, repeal, repeal. And now you're going to append a whole other list of demands onto this. Not political. Of course not. Not political at all.

You lost the Presidential election. You lost the Senate elections. You lost the popular vote for the House; but because of your gerrymandering, you're still in charge.

You do not represent a majority opinion in the United States of America on these issues. Don't do irrevocable harm to our government, our country, our future to get your political demands met unilaterally.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, thank you to all my colleagues who've been trying to work hard to do what we came here to do, which is to govern. It's a disappointment to me that we're in a situation like this where government will begin to shut down.

□ 1045

That's not good for America, that's not good for our districts, and that's not good for the hardworking taxpayers of this country.

But I got to see politics at its worst over the last few days. We put forth a solution to stop a government shutdown. We asked for some simple corrections, simple changes to a law that many in this country—an overwhelming majority—say is going to be a train wreck. Even Democrats in the Senate say this law, as it is implemented, is going to be a train wreck.

Why did we do it now? Because today is the day that the ObamaCare exchanges open. Our opportunity to fix the problems that even many on the other side of the aisle see may have ended today. That's why we sent a bill that said defund ObamaCare, like many Americans want, but avoid a government shutdown.

The Senate said: We're not going to talk. We don't want to listen. So we said: Let's just delay it for a year, just like the President has delayed it for Big Business and many of his political allies. The Senate again said: No, we don't want to hear from you. We don't want to talk. And we said: Let's just delay the individual mandate, because

the President and his political allies don't have to follow the law that was passed long before I got here. Again, the Senate said no.

And what pains me the most as a brand-new Member of Congress is when we asked the Senate last night to keep the government open but get rid of their own special congressional perk—an exemption in their own health care plan—they again said no.

That no was a thumb right at the American people. That no cut right through the fabric of our communities in this country when the Senate said they deserve a special perk more than anyone else in America. That's shameful.

That's why we're here today. We've put forth the plans to keep government running. And I believe we are going to continue to do that on our side of the aisle. It's time for the American people to demand governing, not just out of our side of the aisle, but out of both sides of the aisle. We need to demand leadership out of this administration. We need to demand leadership from the Democrat-controlled Senate.

What this has become is politics. It's become a blame game. Who's going to be blamed for this government shutdown? I guarantee both sides are going to be polling on this issue to determine who's going to get an advantage.

Politics should not determine policy in this institution. Politics should not come before governing in this institution. And I think the American people should demand action from everyone, and they should demand it now.

A WONDERFUL DAY

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, my father used to get up in the morning and say:

Today is the day which the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

It's a verse from the Book of Psalms. This is a day I think we can be positive about. All we're hearing is negative stuff and bad stuff, but let's talk about the good things.

Today is the first day in our country that you have the ability to apply for health insurance. No matter what your status is, you can go down to the exchange and ask for a quote and buy an insurance policy, no matter what your condition is. No matter your employer, no matter what illnesses you have in your family, no matter what, you can have insurance. That brings the United States up to the level of every other country in the industrialized world. For the first time, we have joined the countries that take care of the health security of their people. But it's very clear it's going to be uneven across this country.

I come from the West Coast. We call it the "Left Coast." Washington, Oregon, and California are up and run-

ning. They have been planning for 3 months how they're going to get out and get everybody enrolled. The State of Washington's goal is something like 70 percent in the first 6 months for those people who don't have insurance. We're serious about making this thing work. The Governor of Kentucky has just said almost the same thing.

There are spots across this country where you are going to see this law take effect, and people, for the first time in their life, can relax and know that they won't be bankrupted by an illness or injury or be able to say: I'm sorry, we can't do for you whatever is necessary for you or some member of your family.

This is a great day.

In other States, people are going to stand around watching what is going on on the West Coast and say: Why can't we have what they have in California? Why can't we have what they have in Washington? And the answer is: Look to your political leadership. Look to your Members of Congress who said: No, we don't want to put a plan in. We don't want a plan. They'll say: Yes, we want to repeal and replace, but they never once put a "replace" on the table.

I sit on the Ways and Means Committee, where Medicare and the Affordable Care Act came from. The Republicans have been in control ever since it passed in 2009. They have never put a plan on the table to repeal and replace.

They do not care about people who do not have health insurance. It is very clear. The Governors across this country who refuse to take the Congress's generous offer of full funding for Medicaid are simply saying: We don't care about the poor people in our State. We are not going to provide health care for them. Even if the Federal Government will pay the whole thing, they say: No, they can't have it.

The people of those States are going to have to look, Mr. Speaker, at their leadership and say: What are you doing? Do you not understand what it is to be a human being in this society without health insurance and wait and wait and wait until whatever it is that's bothering you is so bad that you have to go to the emergency room?

The reason some people have good health care in this country is because they have health insurance and they can have preventive care. They can have mammograms, colonoscopies, blood pressure checks, sugar checks, and all kinds of things that people who do not have health insurance don't have access to because they can't afford it.

Beginning today, anybody in this country can have their blood pressure checked and their blood sugar checked to see if they have high blood pressure or diabetes. They will be able to begin the process of having much better health care and not have to worry about what happens to their family.

I talked to Bill Frist, who was the Republican leader of the Senate, for