

about an hour the other day on the phone. He said: Jim, what those guys ought to do is simply amend the bill that's there and make it work. There hasn't been a single amendment brought in the House to make it work better.

This is a wonderful day for everybody.

HARD CHOICES TO MAKE

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, we're here during—I would not call it historic, because historical things simply happen every once in a while—a shutdown of our Federal Government. It's come because our colleagues on the other side of the building have simply taken an attitude of "it's my way or the highway." That's a wonderful way to look at life. It rarely works in the life you and I live in and that most of our colleagues and our constituents live in back home.

If you look at the Constitution by which we govern this country, it was a series of compromises—big States, little States, unicameral, bicameral. Across the board, there were compromises within that document that have allowed us to try to prolong and preserve this wonderful experiment that we call the American Dream and self-governance. This "my way or the highway" attitude that the leadership of the Senate has taken is calling that into question.

The statements made over the last several days by the folks who support the leader in the Senate must make them feel really good. But to those of us on the receiving end of those comments, it is insulting to be treated this way. It is insulting to have every opportunity we've put over there to try to reach a compromise on this issue to have it simply dismissed out of hand, not taken up on its merits but simply looked at and said: Never mind. It's the lower body over there. We'll treat these folks like children. Their ideas are unworthy of consideration and unworthy of debate. Let's just put them on the table with all the other hundreds of bills that this House has passed over the last 2 years and 8 months to try to move this country into a better position to move it along.

JFK said, "Let us never negotiate out of fear." We agree with that. But he also said, "Let us not fear to negotiate."

Why is HARRY REID fearing the negotiations? We've got our conferees ready to go. They've been named this morning—all good men and women. And the simple question is: Mr. REID, where are your conferees? Why are you afraid of getting into a room with House Republicans and House Democrats—if they'll ever appoint their conferees—and work this issue out? Why are you fearing that option? You're fearing it because you know that the American people are

behind House Republicans in this effort to rein this in.

The core of this issue is the Affordable Care Act. It is without question that this country is on an unsustainable fiscal track. We cannot afford the promises we've already made to each other over the next 75 years. Our grandchildren are at risk for not being able to self-govern because of the spending plans that we've got in place right now. The Affordable Care Act adds a new, third entitlement to this mix. It also is unsustainable. So why would we want to continue this process in the face of the threats that we already have with respect to the spending plans that are now in place for Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid? They will bankrupt this country soon.

We've got hard choices to make with health care. There is infinite demand for health care, unquestionably, and there are finite resources. That requires a reconciliation.

At the core of the Affordable Care Act is: Who does that reconciliation? Should it be government? Should it be 15 bureaucrats in a room, nobody knows who they are, that are deciding what that care should look like? Or, should it be patients and caregivers making some of the most difficult decisions we will ever make in life to decide on health care issues? My money is on the folks in the fight. My money is on the families and the caregivers. They can make far better decisions in this difficult reconciliation process than anything that could be done here in Washington, D.C.

At its core, that's the fight—who makes your health care decisions at the end of the day, and how can this country afford the promises we've already made, which this President has said over and over he will not negotiate with respect to Medicare and Social Security. Where are his plans? Where are HARRY REID's plans for those two entitlements? And now they've taken that same mantra with respect to the Affordable Care Act. They're refusing to negotiate anything about that.

It's unseemly. It's un-American. And, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, my constituents are demanding that we fix this and that we stop this shutdown that's unnecessary, but they also demand that the Senate come to the table with their conferees and let's begin the process of working that out. It is unseemly, as I said, for the Senate to continue to dismiss out of hand every attempt.

Quite frankly, those of us on the House Republican side are getting criticized for having to look like we're negotiating with ourselves, finding time and time again we're trying to find some middle ground that the Senate could, in fact, come to work with us; and this "my way or the highway" attitude the leadership has taken is beneath the dignity of this body.

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LET THE MAJORITY VOTE

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

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, this dog does not hunt. The cow has left the barn. This is absurd.

I rise today to urge Congress to put aside partisan politics. We are playing a dangerous game that the majority of Americans agree is time to end.

While certainly Congress needs to fix the Affordable Care Act—of course, I've signed on to several of these bills; we want to make this work. But what is true is that this is behind us. We can neither go back nor start again. We need to fix what we have.

Instead of finding commonsense solutions, all we are doing is letting people go home and not respond to those needs. In Florida alone, 90,000 folks are going to be sent home.

Not passing the legislation closes critical parks that are essential to tourism and hurts agencies that are essential to driving trade and commerce. This is ridiculous, and it is beneath the dignity of this body.

We've heard a lot of things from the other side here. I understand messaging so that we can make the argument, but what needs to be done is we need to sit. I sat with my colleagues on the other side just yesterday. You can see the angst in their eyes. But unfortunately, they have been taken hostage by extremist elements in their party.

The time has come to put these guys aside and come to a deal. We can fix a lot of these problems. We've cut government spending. We can do more of it. We can make government more efficient. We can fix the sequester and give agencies more flexibility.

We agree with all of that on this side. We just need our colleagues to step up and push aside these extremist elements, this "Taliban" that is in America's core for some reason. It's time to act. It's time to fix this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to please step forward. There are many of us that want to find a solution. We need to let the majority work its will. That is what the Founders intended for the House of Representatives. It is the voice of the country. It is the popular voice. Please let the majority vote.

LET'S NEGOTIATE, MR. REID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask the Senate to work with the House because of this shutdown.

You know, four times now we have met here in the House to send a plan over to HARRY REID to ask him to consider to negotiate, to find some solution to avoid the shutdown. But indeed, he made a decision that we would not have an honest, open debate; we would

not negotiate. Instead, one person in the Senate decides the fate of our government, of the American people, and it all comes down to HARRY REID.

When we look at this, we were here until 1:30 this morning passing the fourth proposal—and I agree with some of my colleagues, they're saying you're negotiating against yourself. But we wanted to go that extra mile to make sure that we put forth that final proposal that says: Can we not find some common ground?

Now Mr. Speaker, some of my colleagues have made comparisons to the Taliban. You know, I don't find that there are any American citizens that deserve that kind of rhetoric and name-calling. It's time that we have an honest and open debate about the merits of this offer, the merits of this debate.

I come from North Carolina. And in North Carolina, we are one of two States that are the worst off of the side effects of ObamaCare. I just got off of a phone call from a government worker who I thought was going to give me a hard time because of the shutdown, and yet she and her husband said that they serve our Federal Government loyally right now. He has served in the military. And he says: You know what, we're standing with you, Mr. MEADOWS, because you're standing with the people.

I think that what we must do is never forget who we've been elected to represent and support. Because you know what, it's not about here in Washington, D.C. It is not about the people that write down the news headlines. It's about the people that we represent back home. And it's time that we start negotiating.

I find it unconscionable that we would send four different proposals to the Senate, and three of them they didn't even vote on. Why is that? Because they want to provide political cover. This quit being about the people and it started to be about politics. Why? Because HARRY thinks that he will have an advantage by shutting down the government, that they will blame those in the House. Well, I want to ask you, Mr. REID, how can you blame someone who has sent you four different proposals, and the best that you can do is just say no response?

I think it is high time that we get together and we work together for the common good. You know, there is not a better example of that than when we passed a Pay the Military Act just the other day in the event of a shutdown to make sure that our military men and women who serve this country faithfully and loyally are paid. And what did we find? Well, that wasn't politically expedient to ignore over in the Senate, so they passed that and it is now law.

It is time that we put the American people in the same focus. It's time that we come together and understand that there are hurting families back home—people that are losing their jobs, people

that are having to be forced to part-time, people that truly are starting to see their insurance go away. They can't keep their doctors anymore. It's high time that we start to address that. People expect a difference, and I'm committed to represent those people of western North Carolina.

I think the other part of it is key, and I'll close with this, Mr. Speaker: I'm willing to work around the clock so that we can find the best way to make sure that we put people back to work here in the government because they are families, too. I've got friends that I've met here that I can see, and I can honestly say that it is hurting me that HARRY REID is not thinking about them.

This is not about politics, it's about people. And it's about time that we come together and start to negotiate. I challenge the leader of the Senate to quit giving the cover votes. Because when we put forth something that says that Congress should not get a better deal than the American people, he should have taken it up.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, quite a day—first day of the government shutdown.

Americans come to Washington to see the Lincoln Memorial, visit the Smithsonian, go to the National Zoo. They go to New York to see the Statue of Liberty—"give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning for freedom." Go to national parks—the treasures of our country—closed. Services tapered down. No new patients at the National Institutes of Health. This should not be in America. Government shutdowns are wrong, and they're bad for our country.

Now, let's think a little bit about how we got here. We got here because the job of the Congress, according to the Constitution, is to come up with a budget and appropriate monies. The Republicans have had a budget, and the Democrats in the House have asked month after month after month after month to have a conference committee appointed so that we could work with the Senate and come up with a budget. And the Republicans—even though we had bills, letters, requests—no conference, no, no, no, no, no.

Now, beyond the last minute, beyond midnight last night, when all of their failed attempts to get the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act—and that's what it is, it's an affordable care act and a patient protection act—abolished; passed 3 years ago; 43rd attempt. Reality: it's not going to happen. It's the law of the land. And one day it will be seen, like Social Security and Medicare, as one of the three greatest laws ever passed by this Congress.

But they've tried everything they can to stop it: defund it, put it off a

year, come up with different prevarications. At the last minute after midnight they say: We want a conference committee. They can get a conference committee if they come with a clean continuing resolution.

And what's in their continuing resolution? A budget of \$986 billion. The Ryan figures were less. That's what they wanted. It's not what the Democrats wanted. The Democrats want a higher budget. This cuts 17 percent from Health and Human Services, programs the government offers to people in need, the safety net, people who more than ever need SNAP payments, need Meals on Wheels, need assistance. We accepted their lower figure for a continuing resolution. Even then it wasn't enough. They put it in all these proposals and abolished the health care bill.

You know, when the Republicans came to power about 3½ years ago, one of the things they told the American people: We're going to be different. We're not going to have bills that combine different subjects. You know all you people don't like that, these bills with different subjects that come back from the Senate or pass the House with amendments. We're not going to do that. Then they come with bills that are the budget, a continuing resolution, along with abolishing ObamaCare. That's against what they said they would do.

They said they were concerned about the debt, and they have offsets—no bill could pass without an offset; nothing could contribute to the deficit. Yet they brought a bill, a continuing resolution, but abolishing the medical device tax, costing the government \$30 billion. No offset.

In the history on ObamaCare, they have been cited by PolitiFact twice for having the governmental "Lie of the Year." One is they said there were death panels, panels that simply said that end-of-life discussions could be covered by government payments, a proposal that Republicans put forward—I believe with Senator GRASSLEY and a gentleman from Louisiana.

They also said it was a government takeover of health care. It's not a government takeover; it's insurance. It's the plan Mitt Romney put into effect, Bob Dole championed, Richard Nixon championed. It's a Republican plan. Most Democrats would have preferred a single payer, certainly a public option. They're not satisfied with that.

Now they're talking about a special deal that Congress people get. Shame on them. I, for one, don't take Federal insurance. I have a different program. But for the people in Congress and their staffers, because of an amendment Senator GRASSLEY put in the bill, they go into the exchanges and they leave their Federal health care plan they've been in. It was subsidized, like employers subsidize health care. Now it is no longer. It's unfortunate.

My time has run out. The government has run out.