

I just say to my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle: Did you really want to do this? Don't the American people deserve better than that, a vacant site, a fenced site?

It is time for our colleagues to wake up and not think about their party or themselves, but think about the American people.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, one would think after all of the hours and hours of discussions that have taken place on this floor that perhaps enough has been said. That may be true, but so much of what was said seems not to be clarifying and providing a clear understanding of what has actually happened here.

We want to take a few minutes here, probably maybe as much as an hour, possibly less than that, and try to gain some clarity as to how we got to this point with a government shutdown, how we can get out of it, and what the impact is on Americans. There are good days and there are bad days and then there are really, really bad days.

About 12:30 last night, as we were finishing the votes here on the floor, it became very apparent that the government had, indeed, shut down and that there wasn't any hope of resurrecting it in the final hours of last night. So today, all across America, government offices are shut down. You just heard a description of the World War II Memorial. And that is but an example.

Now, how did we get here? How did this happen? We have been over the last 3 years now dealing with one manufactured crisis after another. They came to be known as "cliffs": "fiscal cliff," "debt limit cliff," on and on. Each time we would come up to some deadline, and it was made into a crisis. Our Republican friends were usually the—well, they were always the instigators of this, at least since the 2010 election.

What has happened is they have used these deadlines, which come and go every year, as an opportunity to leverage in one or another policy changes. That has been going on. I think one of the most noteworthy of these deadlines was the fiscal cliff that occurred in the summer of 2011 in which the United States came up against its debt limit and it was just a moment away from that default.

□ 2015

Fortunately, there were negotiations underway, and it did lead to a settlement. The settlement, of course, was the infamous sequester. It wasn't supposed to happen. Nobody liked it. It was in the bill. It did happen, and now we are living with it. As time went on,

we have had even more of these moments of crisis, and yesterday was yet one more. It occurs on a regular basis. Every October 1, we start a new fiscal year, and that's an opportunity for us to look at all of the expenditures of the Federal Government and to make decisions about what should be or should not be funded and at what level it should be funded.

So we had a crisis last night, and the result is the Federal Government is largely unfunded, and monuments across the Nation—national parks, Veterans Administration offices, Social Security offices, and the rest—are in the process of being shut down, and some are shut down. This is not a good thing. It's a very bad thing. It is bad for this Nation. I was there in 1995 as Deputy Secretary at the Department of the Interior when the Department of the Interior was shut down—national parks, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey. Studies underway about the nature of everything from earthquakes to hurricanes and the like were just put aside for 26 days. We are back in that today. It could have been avoided—it should have been avoided—and had we followed through on the normal process of establishing a budget for the United States, it would have been, or most likely would have been, avoided.

Why didn't that happen?

The House of Representatives passed a budget in March. The Senate passed a budget at about the same time, and the Senate requested a conference committee. From April to this moment, no conference committee on the Budget has been established.

Now, the budget gives the framework in which the appropriations for all of the Federal offices—the Department of Defense, parks and so forth—are funded. It is within that framework of the budget. So, without a framework, we were literally wandering in the dark, and some very, very bad things happened. What happened was we came up against a deadline. The continuing resolution, which continues to fund the government—the first issue was for 2 months, until December 15, and then it eventually came down to November 15. That continuing resolution—sometimes called a "CR"—actually provided less money than did the Senate's version of the budget. It was \$986 billion, which is the sequestration amount that would continue forward.

While virtually every person in this entire House—435 of us—said sequestration was bad and that we will never vote for sequestration again, we were, in fact, presented with a sequestration appropriation, a continuing resolution, that would go for 2 months. The sequestration was, in fact, built into that. Now, the Democrats, in looking at this, said, We don't want a shutdown. We will compromise for 2 months and accept the lower funding level.

So, when people go back and forth here and say there was no effort to compromise, that's not true. The fact

of the matter is the Democrats said, to avoid the shutdown of government, we will accept the sequestration level of government, which was, I think, over \$50 billion less than what we would have liked to have spent to keep the programs going.

Along the way, our Republican colleagues decided that they would use this moment to terminate the Affordable Health Care Act. We are going to spend some time on that this evening. The termination of the Affordable Health Care Act would affect every American in many, many ways, and we will spend some time talking about all of those ways.

So, by combining the CR, which the Democrats accepted—and had it passed the House and the Senate, there would be no government shutdown—and by joining to that the desire, particularly of the Tea Party Republican caucus members, we wound up with a stalemate. We need to understand exactly what was in the CR and exactly what was the impact of the—what shall we say? There were three different versions of this. One version was to repeal, in other words, just wipe out the entire law—the Affordable Health Care Act, or ObamaCare. Another was to delay all of it. Then yet a third was to delay just a piece of it. So there have been different iterations, but each one would dramatically affect the people of America.

I would like to now turn to my colleague from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, who will pick up with this issue.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would clarify that the gentleman was recognized for half the time remaining before 10 p.m., or approximately 54 minutes.

The gentleman may proceed.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Talk fast, SHEILA.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the distinguished gentleman from California for his leadership.

If I might inquire of the Speaker again, you said the time was—how much time? I'm sorry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time is 54 total minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Out of 60 minutes? Is that what you're saying?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Rather than 60 minutes, it is 54 total minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you so very much. I wanted to make sure it wasn't 5 minutes.

Let me thank the gentleman again from California. I want to thank him overall for a litany of causes and legislative efforts that I've joined him on—Make It In America and a number of others. I am so glad that he has come to the floor today to be able to recount for the American people just what we have gone through.

I want to start where he started because I've heard a number of my colleagues who are here on the floor—Congressman HONDA, Congresswoman KAPTUR—speak eloquently about their work on the Appropriations Committee

and of the wall—the mountain—that they had to climb with a compromise that many Democrats voted for and that the President signed, which was the sequestration that was created to avoid a shutdown some years ago. The numbers were so odious that it was thought that we would bring the Republicans to the table in a consensus group. I'd hoped the American people would recognize that they would be surprised to find out that those odious numbers were not even enough, that it didn't bring them to the table. In fact, what it did is cause them to hunker down—to want more cuts, more damage to the American people—which is where we find ourselves today.

Without the shutdown that we are in now, that sequestration, itself, which is what Democrats were trying to work toward to avoid this deepening impact, was going to lose a million jobs, but we could not seemingly bridge that gap of understanding with House Republicans and, particularly, with the right-wing component. Over the weekend, by the way, one Minnesota Member of Congress and former Presidential candidate indicated that she was smiling. They got just what they wanted.

So, if the gentleman would continue to yield, I am glad to be able to say these points just for a moment.

That was a moment of compromise—that was a moment of holding one's nose—because we were doing it for the good of the whole. It was for the greater good, for the good of the whole.

We come now to another moment of crisis. Someone asked me: What is the plan? The answer is right before us, and that is a clean CR. Let me explain.

It is not a clean CR to take us into 2014 and 2015. My friends, it is only until November 15 so we can have cooler heads, and we can reconcile with Senate Majority Leader REID—who was offered this compromise, this peace offering—and with the President and sit down even before Thanksgiving and get a budget for all of the running of the government and an appropriations process to allow that to happen.

Now let me quickly go to the three bills that we had and just say these things.

National parks. I want to say directly to the Bellaire teacher—and her name is Ann Linsley-Kennedy—that we are going to work as hard as we can to get those parks open, and I will tell you the answer. The answer is for the Republican House to vote on a clean CR, and you will be able to go to the park with the Bellaire students.

I am going to be calling you tonight, Ms. Linsley-Kennedy, to let you know how hard Democrats are working to encourage our Republicans to just vote on that clean CR, and your youngsters will be able to be headed to Yellowstone on October 4.

The other point is that I want to tell Patrick Smith, a disabled veteran who called my office: thank you for your service. The reason I voted down and joined my colleagues against this

piecemeal veterans' bill, Patrick, is that the numbers were so insulting to your willingness to pay the ultimate on the battlefield. It was \$6 billion less. It wasn't going to help reduce the claims or get your benefits. Those benefits are going to be running now for a couple of weeks, but I will tell you, Patrick, on the floor of the House: I promise you that we will not have this ridiculous treatment of our veterans, but we are going to do something that is meaningful, not what was done on the floor of the House today.

Finally, let me say to my colleague Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON—again, using the plight of the people of the District of Columbia—that you are deserving of the respect of using your own \$8 billion, and the Republicans know full well that all they have to do is to vote for a clean CR to be able to ensure that this independent area—the Capital of the United States, whose Member does not have a vote—is able to do this.

Congressman, today is October 1. Again, I want to wish my brother, Michael Jackson, a birthday wish.

I hope you had a great day, but you had an historic day. October 1 is "get covered." That means that, with all of the noise about ObamaCare—about the bill—it is the law.

I want to announce on the floor today that we are told that millions of people have gotten on this Web site—hear my words: HealthCare.gov—2 million or so in New York, California and all throughout the Nation. When I went to my office in the early morning hours of last evening or what was yesterday—at 1 or 2 in the morning—we turned on HealthCare.gov, and I want you to know that the system said it was overwhelmed, not because of inadequacy but because people were pressing to be able to have good health care. They needed it. These are people with issues and preexisting conditions—people who are suffering from sickle cell and people with diabetes and others. They were saying, thank God. There is one less spina bifida. One woman was 18 years old, and her family was told, You are off of the insurance. God knows she is going to be able to be covered.

So I want to thank you for doing that.

I am closing on a number of 3,000. These are 3,000 children in Houston who are on the waiting list for Head Start because of sequester and the government shutdown. I end on that note because we have talked about the disabled and disease, and we have talked about the District of Columbia and about going to a park, but who cares about the children—3,000? How many are across the Nation who can't get Head Start or who can't get food stamps because this body decided to vote \$40 billion out?

I look forward to continuing this discussion, but more importantly, I want to thank you for recognizing that the way to the golden arch is through decency and compromise and sensible

reconciliation. Vote on a clean CR, and we will get to the next step, which is to work to make sure this government stays open and that the American people are our first priority.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Ms. SHEILA JACKSON LEE, thank you so very much.

There is no doubt that this House has the ability at any moment to vote on the continuing resolution that the Senate has sent back here. If that were to happen, the President would immediately have that law on his desk. He could sign it, and government would at that moment reopen. Keep in mind that that CR was not one that we thought was the best. It, actually, is significantly below the level of funding that the Democrats wanted, and it does continue, at least for another month and a half, the sequestration, which we do not like.

I would like now to turn to Ms. MARCY KAPTUR of Ohio, who spoke here on the floor a few moments ago.

Ms. KAPTUR, please share with us your thoughts on the current crisis in America.

Ms. KAPTUR. I want to thank Congressman GARAMENDI for bringing us all together this evening, Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, Congressman HONDA—those who are here and are serious about trying to rectify what happened last night with the GOP shutdown of our departments of the Federal Government. How very irresponsible, how reckless, how it puts our economy at risk to put politics ahead of the national interests, and so, so unnecessary.

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I stand here this evening as a member of the Appropriations Committee, the committee and the Constitution that is responsible for operating and providing the funding for the Departments of our government: the Department of Transportation, the Department of Defense, the Department of Education. You can go across the Departments. As of the end of September, we're supposed to have the budgets passed for each of those Departments for fiscal year 2014. That officially began last night at midnight. At the moment, those 12 bills have not been passed. The Republicans are holding them hostage for their efforts to try to contort the legislative process to change the law, to change the Affordable Care Act because they don't like parts of it.

Actually, that is a tangential issue. It has nothing to do with whether or not the Department of Transportation will have the funding to sign contracts to get roads paved across this country, to repair bridges that are in disrepair across the Nation, or to make sure that we have air controllers across this Nation on a regular basis and not just on an emergency basis.

It has nothing to do with whether in Ohio, for example, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the full complement of staff, both military and civilian, can

report for work at the 180th Fighter Wing F-16 unit in Lucas County, Ohio; whether the technicians who repair those planes, who were furloughed, over 200 of them, who are, in my view, essential—because you can't fly the plane if the thing doesn't work, right?—but they were let go for the moment and classified as not having to report for work.

This is such a mishmash across the government of the United States and so utterly irresponsible to try to hold every single Department hostage to the GOP's particular view of a bill that they don't like that has nothing to do with the operation of these other Departments.

I stand here tonight to say that they put at risk the entire economic recovery of the country, furloughing over 800,000 people across the Government of the United States, parks—some folks have talked about parks. It's way beyond parks. We talked about the World War II Memorial here and the first time I've ever seen it without anyone on site because it's all cordoned off. It was as though a neutron bomb had hit the site. There were no citizens that could access the site. The fountains were turned off, the Visitor Center, the facilities that are there for people to use were all shuttered. To what end?

The normal constitutional appropriations process works in a way that we pass our bills in the House and in the Senate; and then we meet, the House and the Senate, the Senators and the Representatives together, we work out our differences; we send the bills to the President by the end of September; and the government operates for another year.

The GOP in the House has been very unwilling to follow the rules, very irresponsible. They've now placed the whole country in jeopardy because they can't reach agreement with us. How sad for the Nation and how unnecessary; how reckless to do this to the economy. And we know that when contracts aren't let—and contractors are calling all of our offices wanting to know when those contracts will be signed. Whether it's for unmanned aerial vehicles that we have to develop in this country or whether it's fixing combines or overflows that are a serious challenge in the Midwest and other places, the government simply can't conduct its business. Generals and departmental administrators are spending more time thinking about who's going to be furloughed tomorrow than getting the job done. So it throws a wrench into the gears of a great society, of a great country, the oldest Republic on the face of the Earth.

I thank the gentleman for calling this Special Order this evening to say to the American people that we share their frustration. We are their representatives. We want the Government of the United States to work. To try to use the process that they've used to gerrymander in States like Ohio to suppress the will of the majority of the

people by holding the Affordable Care Act out there and every Department hostage, they're contorting the government and its ability to operate in the same way that they contorted the gerrymandering of this country when, in fact, there were 1,500,000 more votes cast for Democratic Members who ran for Congress than Republican. In States like Ohio that vote 50/50, we only have four Democratic Representatives out of 16. There are 12 Republicans, 4 Democrats because of gerrymandering. The very same contortion that they did to the politics of the country in the drawing of those lines, they're now using that same weapon inside this House to try to contort the legislative process that has resulted in shutdown.

I thank Congressman GARAMENDI for bringing us together this evening, for trying to inject some reason, some responsibility and prudent behavior into the way that this government operates. We share your passion for that end.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you very much, Ms. KAPTUR. We should have pointed out in the introduction that you are the ranking member of one of the Appropriation Committees—transportation, the energy programs, all of the research that goes on, and a lot of the projects of, I believe, NASA, also. I know you worked long and hard on that, and I sense a sadness, from your remarks, that all of the good things that are done by those Departments are simply in abeyance now; and given the level of funding that is in the CR with the sequestration, much will not be done.

Let me now turn to my colleague from California (Mr. HONDA), who has been serving for a while here representing the Silicon Valley and much of what we were just talking about, the research and the development of the economy. I know you've had a great deal to do with that over the years, really helping to create one of the engines of economic growth in the United States, Mr. HONDA.

Mr. HONDA. Thank you, my friend. I want to add my thanks to you for convening this group and being joined by my good friends from Texas, the gentleman from San Antonio and the gentlelady from Houston.

The comments I want to make to the Speaker are two things. One, I want to share with the people of this country some information that maybe many people don't know about who you are, my friend. We have something in common. We spent 2 years in Peace Corps—you in Ethiopia and I in El Salvador. From those experiences, we understand the kinds of impact that we could have as individuals from this country. Through the program of Peace Corps that President Kennedy had put together, we've been able to accrue a lifelong journey and experience that allows us to reflect rather deeply and profoundly the impacts that government can have, both positive and negative.

I do know, from my observation of your history in California, that being the first commissioner of insurance in the State of California was significant. That experience has to have some import and some insights into what's going on today in terms of the Affordable Care Act and President Obama's efforts in trying to make sure that this country allows each and every person coverage as individuals in this country and the benefit that it brings about.

The fact that you were the first commissioner of insurance also allowed you the interesting insight of the impact of the health insurance companies and how they manage to impact the cost of health care. I think being the commissioner of insurance in California also has to give you a sense of pride when October 1 is the day that we had kicked off the State exchange to cover California. That has to give you a sense of accomplishment, but also a sense of dismay that there are folks here who would use the political process to deny people the coverage that they need in order to have a good health program.

I just wanted to share those thoughts not only with you, but with the folks who are viewing us in this country so that they know that we're standing here not because we want to take up time and space, but we want to utilize the experience that we have accrued over time for the benefit of this country. That was the third mandate of Peace Corps, to come home and utilize all that we understand and invest it in this country. I just wanted to share that with you and with the rest of this country.

Now, all day the beltway discussion has been centered on who has the leverage and who is paying the political cost of a government shutdown. What about the human costs, and what about our workers and their families? What about our economy? They cannot afford this. Today there are over 800,000 people that should be working that aren't, and there are people all over this country that rely on the work that these people do.

As long as the majority wages this ideological war, the National Institutes of Health will not be able to accept new patients for lifesaving research. Our veterans will have to go without their disability and pension checks. American families will have their home loans stalled. Family businesses won't have access to the capital they need to grow, and pregnant women and young children will be prevented from receiving critical nutrition support.

I urge my Republican colleagues to think about the families in their districts that don't have a vote on this floor. They expect much more from us and deserve a better outcome. Let's remember that at this very moment, the common denominator is that there is enough agreement in this body on a funding level to end this shutdown right now. Let's do that. Let's bring up the Senate continuing resolution, a

clean one. Let's put people back to work and do what we were sent here to do: keep government working for the American people and fulfill our constitutional obligation.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. HONDA, thank you so very much, and thank you for your lifetime of service, your early years in the Peace Corps in El Salvador, the work that you did there, and, as you said, bringing it home and continuing to serve right up through this day and beyond as you continue to represent the great Silicon Valley of California. So thank you very much for all that you have done over these many years.

You mentioned something that I'm going to turn to very quickly. I was the insurance commissioner, and one of the things that we wanted to do in California, but we couldn't get the legislature to pass, was the Patients' Bill of Rights. Some of this we tried to do with regulations, but the Patients' Bill of Rights is now the law of the land.

When our Republican colleagues came forward with a continuing resolution that was actually a sequestration and a low level of funding and added to it the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, I'm going: Wait a minute. You want to repeal the Patients' Bill of Rights?

I'm going to run through this very quickly.

Children with preexisting conditions, young children at birth or in the early years that have developed some serious medical condition before the Patients' Bill of Rights which now is in effect this day, children cannot be denied coverage, period. There are thousands upon thousands of children across this Nation that find themselves in this situation.

Young adults at the age of 18, prior to the Patients' Bill of Rights—and this has been in effect for more than a year now—at the age of 18, they were off of their parents' coverage and they were out there on their own, often unable, particularly if they were a woman, to be able to get insurance. But the Patients' Bill of Rights allows them to stay on their parents' insurance until they are 26; and there are more than 6.6 million young Americans 18 to 26 that are now on their parents' health coverage as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

Women have the right to health care coverage without discrimination for all kinds of things—breast cancer, pregnancy, and other kinds of illnesses that women might get. Prior to the Patients' Bills of Rights and the Affordable Care Act, there was heavy-duty discrimination against women. They couldn't get insurance. If they could, they would pay substantially more. We're talking that half of the population of America, at one time or another, women—actually, more than half—were facing this discrimination, but no longer with the Patients' Bill of Rights.

□ 2045

Seniors have a right to affordable medication and also to an annual wellness visit, which actually has dramatically reduced the ongoing inflation rate in Medicare, bending the curve.

And then finally, this one down here, every American has the right to health care coverage without a limitation on the annual amount that you could spend. A family with a cancer case would blow right through the limitation. They'd be on their own. And this is what led to the enormous number of personal bankruptcies, more than 50 percent of which were caused by health care problems.

So the Patients' Bill of Rights was, according to our Republican colleagues, to be repealed along with all of the Affordable Health Care Act. Needless to say, those of us on the Democratic side said, This is wrong. This is not good for America. It's not good for Americans, individuals, children, or adults. And we fought the fight.

We're not finished with this yet. Although as of today, it appears as though our Republican colleagues have dropped the issue of defunding, delaying, or repealing the Affordable Health Care Act as far as the continuing resolution is concerned.

I will come back. I will cover some of these things again. I would like now to turn to our new colleague from San Antonio, Texas, JOAQUIN CASTRO. Please join us. You have a great background in that city. And you come with an extraordinary reputation, well earned, as a scholar and as a great citizen of San Antonio.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congressman GARAMENDI. And thank you for all of your work and for pointing out the many benefits of the Affordable Care Act, which, as many Americans know, took effect today.

There were so many people that were anxious and excited about getting health care coverage, about comparing prices to see if they might get a lower price for insurance that the Web site actually had glitches, it had problems. But that is a good thing. And in Texas, we know that problem very well. We're the State that has the highest percentage of people that don't have health care coverage at all.

Would you believe that one out of four Texans—25 percent of kids and 25 percent of adults—have no health care coverage at all. Thirty percent of women don't have health care coverage. Thirty-eight percent of Hispanics in Texas don't have health care coverage. And so the fact that the Affordable Care Act and the exchanges kicked off today is a great day for Texas and a great day for Americans.

But as we think about what's going on today—and today has been a very sad day in our country not only because this is the first time in 17 years that our U.S. Government has shut down but because of the way it happened. And I think that, you know,

when people woke up today and they turned on the news or the radio or picked up the newspaper and they saw a government shutdown, the people who usually live their lives, work hard every day, sometimes don't have a lot of time to pay attention to politics, saw those headlines and thought, What are these guys up in Washington doing? What are they up to? And that played into all of the stereotypes about how bad Congress is, about how bad politicians are.

But let's think about how this happened. During the summer, there's a junior Senator from Texas, from my home State that barnstormed the Nation and our State, insisting that we defund what was derisively called ObamaCare, that we get rid of all of the patient protections and all of the great things that you have just described. And he, in fact, said that he would do everything in his power, everything in his power to make sure that that law was defunded.

Now you and I both know that you pass laws, you do budgets, and you also raise the debt ceiling limit, but that those are different things, that you don't hold one hostage to the other. But he insisted and got many of the Tea Party members in the House of Representatives—in fact, he had conference calls with them, had personal meetings with them. His folks were calling out the Speaker of the House on Twitter and on Facebook, when the Speaker thought about being reasonable, passing a clean CR so that we could go about the Nation's business.

And it became clear that this was playing into a pattern that has developed with Republicans since 2010, since the increase in Tea Party Republican members. This is the pattern. Think about the sequester. That came about in 2011 through the Budget Control Act. It mostly came about because there was a lot of pressure by Tea Party Republicans to cut in every single corner of government. And so we got a bad law, the sequester, which I think most people acknowledge now is bad.

But if you will remember, Congressman, when that happened, these Republicans who for years, for years have been staking their careers on cutting government, all of a sudden magically were running away from the fact that they did it, were acting like, Wow, that was never our idea. It was the President who wanted sequester. It was the Democrats who insisted on sequester. When, in fact, for years and years and even more intensely since 2010, they have been demanding that we cut government no matter what. But when it happened, many of them wouldn't claim it. They say, That wasn't us.

Well, let's fast forward now 2 years. The same thing happens with a government shutdown. So the government shuts down as they wanted. And what happens the next morning? Folks come to the floor. They do interviews on television. They give quotes in the newspaper saying, It wasn't us. We've been

saying this the whole time, but it wasn't us. It was the Democrats that did it.

Look, if you're going to advocate for something, if you're going to push for something, then you need to own it, and you need to accept it.

Now I will say, if you look at a lot of the social media sites for Republicans, a lot of those Tea Party supporters are very honest about what they want. I had a chance to read through many of them yesterday. And they said, Shut it down. Shut the government down.

Now, look, there may be a small percentage of Americans who feel that way, who are so frustrated with government, who are so frustrated with American society that they do, in fact, want to shut America down. But the vast majority of both Republicans and Democrats know that that's a horrendous thing.

So what we have today are some errant comments by folks who slipped up politically and said, Yes, we're happy about shutting this thing down. But then you have another group of folks who, even though they voted in lockstep with Senator CRUZ and the Tea Party Republicans, now try to cast aspersions on the folks who tried to stop it, the Democrats. You can't have it both ways. If you advocated for it for years, if this was your strategy, then when it happens, you take responsibility for the results.

Now there's also been a little bit of debate about, well, how do you handle this situation? We know, as I said, that you don't hold the budget hostage to policy. In other words, you don't try to change policy through the budget. We understand that.

So just to crystallize that, I would ask my colleagues, if you think it's okay to not raise the debt ceiling limit or approve a budget because you disagree with public policy, a law that was passed 3 years ago, then I would ask you, should we not approve a budget, as Democrats? Or should we not raise the debt ceiling limit because we believe that there should be a comprehensive immigration reform plan with a path to citizenship?

Now bear in mind, these guys are saying that the Affordable Care Act is upside down in its numbers. In other words, there are probably about 53 percent of Americans saying, quite frankly, that they don't like it right now. More and more are liking it. But they're right on those numbers.

Well, 60 percent of Americans say they want comprehensive immigration reform. Ninety percent of Americans said they wanted background checks. Should we hold out and say, We're not going to raise the debt ceiling limit unless we get universal background checks or we get comprehensive immigration reform? Of course not. And Democrats have acted responsibly. There's a reason that we've not done that. Because we respect this democracy. We respect the Nation. And we're honest with the Nation.

So I hope that as cooler heads prevail that we'll be able to resolve this, that we'll be able to pass a clean CR, and that we will be able to do the people's business in a respectful and honest way.

Thank you, Congressman, very much for the time.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. CASTRO, thank you so very, very much. You spoke of your Senator, Senator CRUZ. I suspect in 5 years, you're going to replace him, and I would like that.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. I'm happy to hear that.

Mr. GARAMENDI. It's time for us to go back to our East-West Show, which we have done here many, many nights. My colleague from the State of New York, PAUL TONKO, who has represented for 5 years now the area where the Industrial Revolution began, along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers.

Right now we're in a fix here in Washington. The government is shut down. All of the things you've talked about over these many years, about building the American economy, manufacturing, the research that you were responsible for for the State of New York—and it's all shut down.

Mr. TONKO. Right.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Share with us your thoughts if you would, please.

Mr. TONKO. Sure. Well, the gentleman from Texas gave a great run-down of the dynamics that have brought us to this moment.

It's a sad day in this House with a government shutdown. The Republican shutdown of government is something that I think bears great consequences. And we've seen it and heard about it already. I wasn't here for the last such episode, which is about 17 years old in duration, but I do know that hearing from constituents already about concerns for vital services, about furloughing, about the impact on family budgets for our many, many Federal workers is real.

So we need to move forward, I think, in a way that allows us to address a clean CR. People say, Well, what is a clean CR? What is a CR? A continuing resolution allows for a short-term continuation of a Federal budget, absent a negotiated budget.

And I think that we find ourselves in this situation where we require a CR. Hopefully it will be a clean one. No bells and whistles, no attachments. And the desire to attach the Affordable Care Act and to call it on this floor in those discussions, in those debates "a bill" is disingenuous. It's an act. It is a law that was signed into place by the President and that was given constitutional approval when reviewed by the highest Court in the land, the Supreme Court. So let's call it what it is. It's a law.

This is unprecedented in trying to take a law and repeal it as part of a negotiating process to move a budget forward. A budget should be about the math of that budget, about upward/downward adjustments of programs

and putting together a blueprint for whatever—a 3-month, 4-month scenario that will enable the government to be funded and continue to operate. And quickly coming upon the heels of that is a debt ceiling bill that needs, again, approval from Congress to have America pay her bills.

So these are basic fundamental processes that ought not be tainted by political whim and disagreement and discontent with an outcome that is 3 years old now and that found a great threshold date today, October 1, as many people are now allowed to enroll across the country for the purposes of health care coverage—affordable, accessible, quality health care for individuals and families. That was the thematic. That was the mission statement. That was the goal. So we need to go forward. We need to now get out of this shutdown and not enable it to continue for any longer in duration. And we need to make certain that we understand that the need for a CR, a continuing resolution, is because we don't have a budget.

Now when the United States Senate approved its version of a budget, when the House of Representatives—this body—approved its version of a budget, and when the President and his administration offered their fiscal blueprint for the fiscal year, we should have moved forward.

Many of us—yourself, myself—aggressively encouraged the leadership to name the panelists at the conference table. Name the "conferees," as they're dubbed, to the process so that we can put together a budget—balanced, bold—that allows us to do the sort of creative qualities that would reduce the deficit, grow the economy, create a climate for growing jobs, and produce revenues where they're essential so that we cut where we can in order to invest where we must, especially in this innovation economy.

That should have been the order of business for the day. This whole debate, this whole shutdown, the Republican shutdown that happened to become reality this morning at midnight could have been avoided if we had gone forward, named the conferees, named the panelists to the conference table to negotiate out a settlement, recommend to the two houses, get the work done. This economy, this Nation requires that. The individuals, families members across this Nation deserve that sort of certainty, as does the small business community.

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That's the business that should have been accomplished; but, instead, we find ourselves requiring a CR. And now, in this painful moment of allowing for the budget to be funded, or a CR to be done, we attach bells and whistles like the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Unnecessary, immoral, in a sense, to hold back a process like this.

Mr. GARAMENDI. If I might just add to the exposition that you laid out: the

two budget proposals, the Senate and the House budget proposals both passed. The Senate appointed conferees. To this moment, the House has not appointed conferees to the budget conference committee.

Mr. TONKO. And the leader of the minority has named the conferees for the Democrats in the House. So you're right, just about everyone named those individuals that will be part of the team at the conference table, getting work done.

Mr. GARAMENDI. So the Republican leadership refused to establish the conference committee by refusing to name the conferees.

Mr. TONKO. Right. And, again, every effort has been made to advance letters, to speak from the floor, to notice the leadership of our request, our urging, our challenge to name these people. That's the way the business gets done.

It was avoided, for whatever reason, perhaps not believing in your own budget that you put together as a House. Otherwise, why would you not bring it forward?

Why would you not vote on your own budget in a way that would have us at the conference table?

Mr. GARAMENDI. Well, there you have it. And we have a shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time we have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, let us split that time. Would you like to close, or would you like to continue on?

Mr. TONKO. I will just make mention of this, that I think the muddying up, if you will, of a CR, a continuing resolution, first, calling it a bill on the floor several times over is disingenuous. People place trust in us. You should honor that trust, and not, nomenclature-wise, change the outcome here.

We have an act of Congress that was signed into law. This is a law of the land, in this case, to provide for affordable, accessible, quality health care. If you didn't like that result, there were opportunities to change it.

Candidate Romney, Governor Romney, Representative RYAN, as the Vice President, they ran to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The people of this great Nation decided in that Presidential election for the re-election effort of President Obama, that they were going to stay with the President. So that statement was made.

The highest court in the land reviewed it for constitutionality. They approved that, gave it a thumbs-up.

Why are we still dwelling on this situation?

Why are we bogging down the process, where you either defund, deny, repeal, whatever the course may be. We have seen it over and over again, so that 45, 46, 47 votes in a row to repeal were all denied.

When you do the same thing over and over and over again, expecting different results, people have defined that as insanity.

So we have not provided the sort of integrity this process needs. We have not shown the respect to the individuals and families that are automatically showing today, with the very aggressive, very involved activism today to sign up with the Affordable Care Act. We are disregarding that. We're disrespecting that.

And I think the polling that was done, I saw a poll today that said 71 percent of the American public does not believe we should hold up and fold the government, shut down the government because of an effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act. So the public is speaking. They're telling us, do it better.

And thank you, Representative GARAMENDI, for the opportunity to join you.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much for joining me once again.

I'm going to wrap this up with a note of sadness. The American Government is shut down. It is shut down because of the conflict that has developed between the Democrats and the Republicans here in the House and on the Senate side.

It's a conflict that didn't have to happen. We could have worked this out in a conference committee, had Speaker BOEHNER chosen to appoint conferees. It didn't take place.

A continuing resolution—the Democrats compromised seriously and accepted a continuing resolution at the sequestration level, far less money than we think is necessary, but we wanted to keep the government running.

We refuse to abandon the Affordable Care Act and the millions upon millions of Americans that have benefited from that and are benefiting today as the exchanges are going into place.

California's had an enormous success, and it will work. And as it works, I think we'll find that those Americans, some 40 million that do not have health insurance, will, in the next months ahead, get their health insurance at an affordable cost. And this is already bending the cost curve for American health care. It's a good thing.

But it's also a very sad day. There is absolutely no reason that this government was shut down, except for the intransigence of our Republican colleagues demanding the repeal of things like the Patients' Bill of Rights, demanding that we go back on a promise that America has tried to have for some 60 years now, providing health insurance to all Americans. We're moving towards that with the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare.

It's a sad day, but it's also a hopeful day. It's a hopeful day because the exchanges are working. There will be computer glitches, and there will be

some error in the mathematics; but across this Nation, the exchanges are working.

And the American public that is uninsured, not the insured, but the uninsured, they're going to the exchanges and they're saying, let me shop; let me shop in a rational market where I can compare prices and quality and providers. They're doing that in California, in New York, and in Texas, all across this Nation.

So it's hopeful. It's a hopeful moment, even though we have spent the last week battling out the fundamental question, Is America going to move forward and stay in business, or is the government going to shut down?

Republicans chose to shut down the government.

Are Americans going to get health care?

The Republicans said no, the Affordable Care Act must be repealed.

The Democrats said no way, no how.

It's in place, folks. The Affordable Care Act is in place, and the exchanges are working, and millions of Americans will find an opportunity to buy insurance in a competitive market, free market, not a government market, but a market structured by government so that the private sector can display its insurance policies, what their price is, what their quality is, which doctors they can go to.

It's a sad day, but it's also a hopeful day.

Mr. Speaker, with our 54 minutes, we thank you for the opportunity to explain this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

HOUSE GOP DOCTORS CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 54 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker of the House, JOHN BOEHNER, for allowing the House GOP Doctors Caucus to have the leadership hour tonight on this historic day, October 1, the ObamaCare exchange launch date. It's entirely fitting that the Speaker allowed our House GOP Doctors Caucus.

This group, Mr. Speaker, is made up of medical doctors, made up of registered nurses, dentists, hospital administrators, psychologists, optometrists, with over—now, get this, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues—with over 600 years of clinical experience.

Who knows better, in this Chamber of 435, than these 21 men and women who have spent almost their entire professional lives before being elected to the House of Representatives in the health care sector.

So here we are, October 1, ObamaCare exchange launch date, and hearing about malfunctions nationwide. We have received warning signs for months now that ObamaCare