

The time has come for those in the middle to come together and take back the wheel from those intent on crashing this Congress into a ditch.

As I stand here today, the government of the United States is shuttered, shut down by nothing more than brinksmanship.

Small business loans are not being processed. The Centers for Disease Control flu prevention program is being halted, and the National Institutes of Health is no longer accepting kids into a cancer research program. Some food safety operations have ceased, and cleanup at 600 toxic waste sites has been suspended.

It wasn't always this way though. There was a time when we had regular order. There was a time when budgets were proposed, funding levels and priorities were debated, differences were hashed out, and bills were passed to fund the government.

And even when regular order broke down, we were always able to at least pass a continuing resolution to continue funding the government. Not this time.

This time, an effort to repeal a law that was passed by both houses, signed by the President, approved by the Supreme Court, has shanghaied all Federal spending.

Many across the aisle acknowledge how harmful and irresponsible such a plan is. Senator McCAIN said, "In the United States Senate, we will not repeal or defund ObamaCare. And to think we can is not rational."

Budget Chairman PAUL RYAN said, "We have to stay on the right side of public opinion. Shutting down the government puts us on the wrong side."

My colleague, Senator KIRK said, "Let's not shut down the government just because you don't get everything you want."

The list goes on and on. Chris Christie, Mitt Romney, Bruce Josten of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and many more all oppose efforts to shut the Federal Government. Yet, we continue down this dangerous path.

When I first came to this Congress, Congressman KIRK, now Senator KIRK, told me that everything that gets done here gets done in the middle. Now is the time for the reasonable middle to come together and reject the strategy that says, "If I can't win, I'll just kick the ball in the woods."

Sorry, Seth.

Not only is shutting down the government harmful to my constituents, businesses, and the economy, it doesn't solve the problem. It doesn't address the budget deficit.

If we really want to get our fiscal house in order, let's fund the government and bring back a balanced, big, bipartisan deficit deal to the floor. We did it before and we can do it again.

I, along with only 37 colleagues, voted for the Cooper-LaTourette budget, which mirrored the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles plan.

Where were those so concerned with the debt then?

If the fiscal watchdogs on the other side of the aisle really want to solve our budget woes, let's get together on a big budget deal, and let's do it now, because every day we waste in this useless limbo land is one less day we have to address the very real and very harmful problems facing this country.

We have got to pass comprehensive immigration reform, a farm bill, an infrastructure funding bill, a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reasonable gun reforms, tax reform, and numerous other much-needed legislation.

But without doing the basic work of Congress, like passing a budget, we can't address the real issues facing us. As long as we continue to look in the rearview mirror at a law passed 3 years ago, approved by the Supreme Court, we will fail to navigate the real obstacles before us.

We need to keep our eyes on the road, and come together to solve the real challenges that lie ahead.

WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE SEEN IT ALL, STICK AROUND FOR ANOTHER DAY

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, when you think you've seen it all, just stick around here for another day.

Yesterday, one of the most appalling events I've seen in our Nation's Capital was the closing of the World War II Memorial, putting up barriers to stop our veterans from accessing that open space area.

How offensive could you be?

How much more pain do you want to inflict on the American people?

Now, here is the group that closed the White House. This President closed the White House and said he didn't have money to open it to the public.

I would suggest, first of all, maybe we need to get a new parks director and fire those folks, or furlough those folks that can't leave public spaces and memorials open to the public. What an offense.

When I thought that was offensive yesterday morning, I came to the House last night and saw, again, another horrible offense. We passed, Republicans passed a measure to make certain that our military were paid and our servicemen and -women in harm's way were taken care of financially. We saw, also, the need, afterwards to help our veterans.

And last night, in one of the most offensive actions of the House, the other side of the aisle turned down an opportunity to keep our veterans whole.

How offensive could you be?

But they want to inflict pain.

I'm telling you, folks, I've been around here a long time. I've never seen an operation like this. The chief of staff in the U.S. Senate—Ronald Reagan would pick up the phone, he

would even call me, as a chief of staff, to get things going in the Senate, talk about things.

He called the Senators. He would work with Representatives. He would bring them in and have communication.

Even Bill Clinton, after I voted to impeach him, would work with you to get things done, and we got things done.

We had a shutdown then. This isn't the end of the world. There were 17 shutdowns, and some good came out of that shutdown. It was a horrible thing. We don't need to repeat them. We don't need to have this one.

But we did balance the budget. We balanced the budget with a Republican Congress working with a Democrat President. There's no need for this offensive approach that's being taken, not working, not communicating.

□ 1030

This can and should be resolved. Members of Congress have that important responsibility and can't neglect it.

This is much more difficult than just a temporary shutdown. We're talking about a permanent shutdown of the Federal Government. Do you think having a few of the Federal services eliminated or suspended temporarily is tough?

In a few weeks, the government will run out of money. Why? Because these folks will talk to you about a budget. They haven't passed a budget since 2008. The only way we got the other body—the Senate—to pass a budget was to pass a bill to embarrass them that said, no budget, no pay.

This is the group that had control of the House, the Senate, and the White House. They couldn't even pass an FAA bill. There were 20 extensions. A transportation bill. They couldn't pass a budget, and here they're criticizing us.

We came to work, and we worked until 12:30 into Sunday morning. They were absent without leave. The Senate never even came to work on Sunday. They came to work on Monday at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. And then they rejected every offer. We offered three times to compromise and then we said, Let's sit down. Yesterday we had a conference. No one showed up. You have to show up. The President has to be the President. Let him take a little of this Malaysia money—he's not going to Malaysia—and open the White House, open the memorials to our veterans. Use some of that money that he's gaming the system, trying to inflict pain on our veterans and our citizens.

There is no reason for this. Good people of good intention can come together, make this government work, make it better, pay our bills, and be responsible and bring this out-of-control spending under control and get our government accountable and responsible. That's what the American people want. They're tired of the blame game.

Let's get America going in a positive direction. I know we can do it.

WE NEED LEADERSHIP IN THE HOUSE

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

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, it's day number two of a government shutdown. The American public is watching, and they're not happy with what they're seeing.

Mr. Speaker, you are the leader of this body, the House of Representatives. You're the Speaker of the House. This is a House that's made up of both Democrats and Republicans. We need leadership at this juncture; and, Mr. Speaker, you are the one person who can bring it, but you're not showing that leadership. You need to take Democratic and Republican ideas and help us move forward.

I'm here to work. I'm a freshman, and I came here with the mandate to get Washington working again, to get people working again. That's what I intend to do. But, Mr. Speaker, you've got to reach out to Democrats and invite us in to bring our ideas forward. You are the one person who can do it.

I talk to my colleagues on the Republican side, and I'll talk to the Republicans right now. We want to get the country moving forward, but we can come up with the best ideas possible, and there's only one person who can bring that legislation to the floor. Mr. Speaker, that's you. We need leadership at this juncture, and the country is watching. Enough with the Washington politics.

We hear that you may shut the government down to play more Washington politics for 17 days to tie this to the faith and credit of the United States of America. You are the one person who's going to do that, Mr. Speaker. Don't take us down that path. Too many Americans are suffering.

We need leadership at this juncture, Mr. Speaker. There is a clean funding bill on your desk. Bring it to the floor. Bring it to the floor and let us have a chance to vote up or down. That's regular order. Give us a chance. It will keep government open for 6 or 10 weeks. But give us a chance to vote up or down on that. If the Republicans don't like it, fine. They're going to vote against it. But give us a chance to bring it to the floor. And it's not a bill that Democrats like, but we understand it'll keep the government open and it'll give us a chance to do what we were elected to do—pass a real budget, put a budget together.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough with the Washington politics. Now you're going to continue playing politics and bring little pieces of legislation here and there forward when what we need is a big plan and leadership. Bring the funding bill to the floor. Let's continue to pay our debt and let's keep moving forward, because people are hurting.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a doctor. The oath I took has two critical elements. One is to do good. Well, Mr. Speaker, right now you are not doing any good. You

are not doing the American public any good. And to do no harm—the failure of this body and you to bring this legislation to the floor for us to vote on is doing irreparable harm.

And as a doctor, do you know what's happening to the NIH? Do you know that they have to turn patients away—patients who have no place else to go? This is their last-ditch effort to get in there. That isn't what we do in America.

Mr. Speaker, you're the one person who can bring this legislation to the floor—and do it.

As a doctor, do you know what's happening in the CDC? We're about to enter flu season. God forbid we have an epidemic of anything. They're laying off almost 70 percent of their staff. This is putting America in harm's way.

Mr. Speaker, do what my oath says as a doctor: do good and do no harm. Right now, you are doing the exact opposite.

Let's get Washington working again, and let's put the American people first. We the people. This is the United States of America, united. That means we've got to come together as a country and put the people first.

Mr. Speaker, the American public is watching you.

THE SENATE MUST ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MICA). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this morning, one of my colleagues across the aisle said—very accurately—in quoting another elected official, that everything that gets done, gets done in the middle. I happen to believe that the only type of legislation that really passes and lasts is that which is done in a bipartisan way. That's why I commit in every bill that I author and I work on to reach across the aisle and find a friend to be the lead coauthor, and we build support on both sides of the aisle.

But, Mr. Speaker, based on the comments of my colleague and my own personal beliefs, I believe that's why this health care law is so flawed and has so many flaws in it, because it was not done in that spirit. It did not honor that principle. It was done unilaterally, in the most partisan way, and shoved upon the American people.

It is publicly acknowledged that it has flaws. The majority of Americans are demanding fixes of the publicly acknowledged flaws in the health care law—flaws that are acknowledged by Republicans and Democrats alike.

So instead of protecting perhaps the President's legacy, it's time to come together. Republicans are only seeking commonsense fixes to decrease costs and increase access, and fixes that are bipartisan and common sense.

Last night, I was very disappointed on this House floor. I voted to protect our veterans and to protect the citizens

of the District of Columbia. Last night, we had a bill that would just allow them to use their own money—money that they pay in taxes to the municipality that they contribute through the parking meters and the fines and the fees that they pay and just be able to use their own money, and also be able to open our monuments and our parks to the American tourists. And our American heroes, our honor flights, are coming in each and every day, World War II, part of that Greatest Generation.

And yet it was defeated by votes from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for political purposes; and I know politics within the Beltway, but those were bipartisan solutions to help key individuals.

Mr. Speaker, it's troubling that the Senate leader has prevented consideration of even the most commonsense changes to the President's health care law, including one that has bipartisan support and previously passed his own Chamber. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle—in both parties—already have overwhelmingly rejected the medical device tax.

Last year, 37 House Democrats voted with all Republicans to repeal the tax, with a large bipartisan majority of 270–146. In March, the Democratic-led Senate voted 79–20 to repeal the tax.

The Senators from my own home State of Pennsylvania—one Democrat, Senator BOB CASEY, and one Republican, Senator PAT TOOMEY—supported the bill. In fact, Senator CASEY was its chief author and sponsor.

The medical device tax repeal was part of the House continuing resolution. It was blocked was consideration by Leader REID. For the past 2 weeks, the House has worked to fund the government, prevent a shutdown, and protect the American people from the President's health care law. The Senate has decided to drag its feet and reject these reasonable proposals.

There is an appropriate way to conduct budget negotiations, and that is through the normal procedure of appointing a conference committee—that's appointing negotiators, Republicans and Democrats alike, from both the House and the Senate—to get to the table and sit down and work out our differences. That is elementary civics. Unfortunately, the Senate leader has prevented regular order from proceeding.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected to represent my constituents and reform government, and I will continue fighting on their behalf. Congress must act now to end this shutdown and get to work on the many challenges facing this great Nation.

DAY TWO OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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