

this employer of mine told me today that they're moving me now to 25 hours instead of 35. And why? Because of the Affordable Care Act. She said: It's not affordable to me because now I will have less income, less hours. How do I pay my mortgage, and how do I buy health insurance?

Or it's the autoworker in Monroe, Michigan, on Lake Erie in my district, a hardworking guy who said to me at a town hall meeting just a week and a half ago: Mr. Congressman, I want you to know that times are tough. I have some great concerns. My wife is sick and I have a \$900 a month health care bill that I have to pay. But I want you to stand firm. And I said: Sir, what do you mean by "stand firm"? He said: Shut down ObamaCare. Give us back our choice, our freedom.

The 54-employee business in Adrian, Michigan, who told me last week that—and they're beyond the level of being able to just simply toss off the insurance to the employees. They're not wanting to cut from their 54 employees down to below 50. But they received a notice from their insurance company that they were being canceled, and when approached, they were told it was in preparation for the uncertainties of the Affordable Care Act.

□ 1945

That shouldn't be the experience in the State of Michigan or any other place in this great country. That shouldn't be the experience—that employers are encouraged to downsize as opposed to continue to expand. I could go through testimony after testimony similar of the challenges that have come from the Affordable Care Act that has become unaffordable and unmanageable.

All we are asking for is the opportunity to work together to negotiate toward a compromise on the way forward, Mr. Speaker. That's possible.

We passed a bill the other day unanimously to fund our military. The Senate passed that. That shows that if we want to, it can get done.

This summer, 35 Democrats voted with Republicans to delay the employer mandate and 22 voted to delay the individual mandate. Seventeen voted to repeal the medical device tax last week, as recently as last week.

We can get things to work if we are willing to sit down and negotiate toward a compromise that speaks to the concerns of our constituents. Seven of the more than 40 bills the House has approved to repeal all or part of the ObamaCare have been signed into law.

We could go on and on, Mr. Speaker.

But I get to a final point of concern for me. With the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare, we also have crossed the line into the areas of our personal freedoms and our rights of conscience. Yes, I was a minister by training and background before going into politics. I understand there are religious beliefs, there are denominational beliefs, and there are a

lot of differences. But the beauty of this great country, Mr. Speaker, is that we have always espoused the opportunity for freedom of religion and rights of conscience regardless. We have truly had plurality in our country.

Yet this one act is tromping down on the individual rights of conscience and religious liberties, our First Amendment in the U.S. Constitution. A former Prime Minister of the Netherlands back in the 1900s by the name of Abraham Kuyper really made this point of where I am going, Mr. Speaker, when he said:

When principles that run against your deepest convictions begin to win the day, then battle is your calling and peace has become sin. You must at the price of dearest peace lay your convictions bare before friend and enemy with all the fire of your faith.

When we hear of the little Sisters of Mercy being told that they are not religious enough to carry on their rights of conscience in relationship to the Affordable Care Act, Mr. Speaker, we have a problem. When we have a devout Catholic business owner who employs several hundred employees in the west part of Michigan who, because of his rights of conscience, has chosen to say we will provide insurance for our employees under the Affordable Care Act or any act, but we cannot provide insurance that violates our long-standing, strong-held rights of conscience, and courts say, because of this act, no, you can't do that.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to identify the challenges here, to read what is in the bill, to implement the changes necessary or go back, I believe, to the first and foremost principle of this great country, and that is liberty and justice for all, and develop a program that expands choice, opportunity, responsibility, variety, competition, and ultimately the ability for our citizens, our constituents, the people we serve, to care for their lives, their health in the best way possible with their government standing on their side, not in their way.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this issue. It needs to be spoken to over and over and over again until ultimately we win the day and give back that liberty and opportunity to our American citizens.

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you, Congressman WALBERG.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for allowing my colleagues and I to speak to the American people about the destructive provisions of the President's health care law, the constant stream of delays that have come from the President's administration, the costly effect it will have on folks all over the country, and the rocky implementation it has experienced so far.

I believe we have made it clear that this law is simply not ready to meet the needs of the American people. It is unfair to punish regular folks while giving preferential treatment to big businesses, unions, and Members of

Congress. We hope our Democrat colleagues will work with us to provide fairness for all and say "no" to special treatment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

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

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I am here on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus in our Special Order hour to talk specifically about what is happening this week, or better yet what is not happening this week, in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, it has been almost exactly 48 hours since the GOP government shutdown in this country; 48 hours since 800,000 Federal employees have been furloughed; 48 hours since our national parks have been closed; 48 hours since the Small Business Administration is no longer issuing new loans; 48 hours since the Centers for Disease Control won't be able to monitor the influenza season coming up; 48 hours since the National Institutes of Health has essentially shut down; and 48 hours since we are costing the U.S. economy \$300 million a day.

This isn't a number that the congressional Democrats or the Progressive Caucus has come up with. This is coming right from an article from Bloomberg News.

According to Bloomberg News:

A partial shutdown of the Federal Government will cost the U.S. at least \$300 million a day in lost economic output at the start.

They go on further:

Government spending touches every aspect of the economy and disruption of spending more than the direct loss of income threatens to damage investor and business confidence in ways that can seriously harm economic growth.

It goes on to explain two major reasons why we are going to have this impact of \$300 million a day. The first is the fact that we have the furloughed workers:

Each day the shutdown drags on, the more Federal employees will discount the possibility that they will go back to work soon and they will pull back on their spending.

Specifically, one Federal employee is quoted saying:

The shutdown affects me greatly. I have a mortgage, and I'm the sole provider for my two daughters, one of whom is in college.

That is what we are doing right now to the U.S. economy by strangling our Federal employees who serve this Nation so well. But also, consumer confidence is directly impacted by this GOP shutdown of the government.

Again, from the article:

If a shutdown drags on, it would start to shake consumer and business confidence more broadly, economists said.

Household spending accounts for 70 percent of the economy.

Further it says:

A shutdown will probably add to the budget deficit because it is costly to stop and start programs.

Adding to our deficit, costing us \$300 million a day, shutting down essential services that people expect from our Federal Government.

We are 48 hours since we have entered this manufactured crisis over the GOP having a tantrum over the Affordable Care Act and taking us all hostage. But right now at this very moment we could stop this with one single vote in the House of Representatives. One single vote can stop the damage to our economy and the shutdown of the Federal Government.

There is a clean continuing resolution that has passed the Senate. Does it have everything that I or the Congressional Progressive Caucus wants? Absolutely not. In fact, they are still keeping in the number that is being proposed by the Senate, the indiscriminate sequester cuts between now and November 15.

But we are willing to compromise and accept something that many of us have voted against in the past in order to bring our economy back in this country. In fact, I think one thing hasn't been told very much. When you look at the various budgets, once again, this Congress has not passed a budget. This House has passed a budget, the Senate has passed a budget, the President has introduced a budget, but this House leadership has refused to appoint conferees for over 6 months to have a national budget.

But what was the budget line that the House Republicans passed in this House last spring—\$967 billion? What did the President have in his proposal—\$1.2 billion? What did the Senate Democrats have—about \$1.06 billion?

What does this continuing resolution propose for a figure—\$986 billion? That is over 90 percent of the way from the President's budget to what the House Republicans wanted—only 2 percent from the number they were looking at. Yet the House Republicans refused to budget and pass a resolution that can end the government shutdown and fix this economy.

So why do we have these reckless, irresponsible demands from the tantrum-throwing, breath-holding, hostage-taking, Tea Partying wing of the Republican Party? Well, they think it is a bad idea that millions and millions more Americans should now have access to health care through the Affordable Care Act.

We have voted not just once or twice to try to get rid of the Affordable Care Act, but we have voted 46 times in this body—46 times that they have held their breath and tried to remove the Affordable Care Act. But the bottom line is this Congress voted for the law, the President signed it into law, and the Supreme Court has upheld the law.

It is the law of the land no matter how much some people may not like it, no matter how many times they have

held their breath over this and brought this Congress to a vote. It is the law of the land. But because of that, they are willing and have shut down the U.S. Government—a completely unacceptable answer to their issue.

There is the compromise solution I have talked about. A clean continuing resolution has already passed the Senate. With a simple vote of this body, Mr. Speaker, a simple vote of this body, it would go directly to the President and be signed into law. No other delays. Not the delay tactics we have seen for the last 2 days with a bunch of votes that meant nothing in this body. With one vote we end the government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, take "yes" for an answer. We are willing to compromise and do this. We demand a vote. We demand a vote and an opportunity in this House to end the government shutdown. But for some reason Speaker BOEHNER will not bring this bill to a vote. We tried today, and through parliamentary procedures they blocked us from having the ability to take that vote.

Well, do you know why they won't schedule this for a vote? Because they know if they brought it to the body it would pass, and the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party, as small as sometimes it is, would lose.

Here is the bottom line. I know that people as they watch this whole debate—and you hear from everyone—are confused. Who is saying what and what is the real truth on this? The bottom line is the facts don't change. The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. Despite 46 times to repeal it, it is still the law of the land. With a government shutdown, it is still being continued today as the law of the land.

All we are doing in this hostage-taking is hurting our economy and hurting the people of this country through a government shutdown.

□ 2000

So, when people are confused, I have to admit that I'm confused. I'm one of the new people around here. When I look at this, as I've told people recently, I feel like I serve in the Nation's largest kindergarten, only this kindergarten has control of the checkbook and our nuclear arsenal.

It's scary to think that this body refuses to end the government shutdown through a simple vote on a clean continuing resolution; but what's even more confusing, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that it's not just the Democrats who are willing to compromise, but there are now 18 Republicans who have said they are willing to vote for a clean continuing resolution, that they are willing to end the government shutdown. There is a 17-vote margin on the Republican side, and more than enough people have said they will vote for a continuing resolution should they be able to. Let me just go through each and every one of these.

Representative SCOTT RIGELL tweeted out from the State of Virginia

twice on this subject. First, he tweeted out:

We fought the good fight. Time for a clean continuing resolution.

That was on October 1. On October 2:

Pain to our military and economy is real. A shutdown doesn't advance our goals.

This is from a Republican Member who serves on the Budget Committee, which I serve on, who knows the real impact that we are having on the economy. So that is one Republican saying, Mr. Speaker, we demand a vote.

Then there is Florida Representative BILL YOUNG, who serves on the Appropriations Committee, a very important committee that understands government funding. He told the Tampa Bay Times that he is ready to vote for a clean funding bill:

The politics should be over. It's time to legislate.

Mr. Speaker, that's two Republicans willing to pass a clean continuing resolution.

Then there is Representative CHARLIE DENT from the State of Pennsylvania, who also serves on that all important Appropriations Committee. Back on September 29, in the Huffington Post, he said:

I am prepared to vote for a clean continuing resolution. The hourglass is nearly empty, and it's time to get on with the business of funding the government and come back to fight another day.

Mr. Speaker, that is three Republicans who disagree with being held hostage by the Tea Party wing of your party.

Then, from California, there is Representative NUNES, who serves on the Ways and Means Committee, another committee that deals directly with our country's finances. This is coming from a Twitter from a reporter from the Huffington Post:

Representative Devin Nunes says he'll vote for the latest GOP plan, but will support a clean continuing resolution if it comes down to it.

This is four Republican Members, Mr. Speaker, who disagree with the GOP's hostage-taking by the Tea Party wing of your party.

Then, from the State of Minnesota, there is Representative ERIK PAULSEN, who also serves on the Ways and Means Committee, who had told a local TV reporter in Minnesota, FROM KARE-TV, channel 11, and they tweeted out, saying:

Representative Erik Paulsen tells me he's willing to break with GOP leadership and vote for a clean resolution if given the chance.

That's five Republicans, Mr. Speaker, who are going back home and telling people that they would vote for a clean resolution if you would give them a chance.

Then, from the State of Virginia, there is Representative FRANK WOLF, who serves on the Appropriations Committee. His aide told the Hill newspaper that he would support a clean continuing resolution. In a statement

on the House floor on Tuesday, WOLF said:

This is bad for America. It is bad for America. Enough is enough. It's time to be leaders. It's time to govern. Open up the government.

Six people. Those aren't the words of the members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. These are Members of the Republican Party. If you give them a chance and demand a vote, we will be able to pass that. That's six Members.

What about Representative JIM GERLACH from Pennsylvania? Again, he serves on the Ways and Means Committee. He put out a press release, and this is directly from the press release:

Jim Gerlach said Wednesday that he would vote in favor of a so-called "clean budget bill" that funds the Federal Government at current spending levels.

That's seven, Mr. Speaker.

Then Representative LOU BARLETTA, from the State of Pennsylvania, according to the Bethlehem Morning Call, said he would:

... absolutely vote for a clean bill to avert a government shutdown.

I think that's eight Members, Mr. Speaker, on your side who are willing to join the Democrats and be adults and get our job done.

The ninth adult is Representative LEONARD LANCE from New Jersey. His chief of staff told the Huffington Post:

... that he had told a constituent on Wednesday that Lance has voted for clean government funding bills in the past "and would not oppose doing so again should one be brought to the floor."

Eight. Let me make sure I'm right. Let me count through these, Mr. Speaker. That's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. I'm sorry. That's nine Members.

Here is No. 10. He is Representative JOHN RUNYAN from New Jersey. He joined with other moderate Republicans in calling for the House to vote on a clean, short-term funding bill that would reopen the government, which is according to the Burlington County Times.

Ten of your Members are telling reporters in their districts that they want the opportunity. Don't make them not be able to tell the truth in their districts if they want to vote for a clean resolution. We can end this government shutdown. That's 10.

Here is No. 11, Representative FRANK LOBIONDO from New Jersey. He called the situation "unacceptable"—his word. He told The Press of Atlantic City:

... that he was in favor of "whatever gets a successful conclusion to this" and a "clean" continuing resolution, which does not include the postponement of the Affordable Care Act "as one of those options."

That was No. 11. Let's get you a 12th vote, Mr. Speaker. It's a 12th vote from Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK from Bucks County in the State of Pennsylvania. He issued a statement to the Philadelphia Inquirer, saying:

He supports a spending bill at current funding levels, and aides said that he would

back that approach if it were presented for a vote.

No. 12, Mr. Speaker. I believe that's No. 12.

No. 13. We'll call it "lucky 13" in this case. Representative MIKE SIMPSON from Idaho—again, serving on the Appropriations Committee—told a Roll Call reporter Tuesday night:

I'd vote for a clean continuing resolution because I don't think this is a strategy that works.

Mr. Speaker, 13 Members of the Republican Party disagree with the Republican Party on the strategy to hold our country hostage and ruin our economy.

No. 14, Representative PAT MEEHAN from Pennsylvania, according to a press release he put out, said:

At this point, I believe it's time for the House to vote for a clean, short-term funding bill to bring the Senate to the table and negotiate a responsible compromise.

No. 14, Mr. Speaker. This is No. 14, who wants to cooperate and give us 6 weeks to work out a compromise between the two Houses so that we can have what should be a budget in this country.

No. 15 is Representative MICHAEL GRIMM of New York. In a statement released by his office on Monday, the New York Republican argued that demanding ideological purity is "not looking at the big picture." An aide of his told the Huffington Post that he supports a clean continuing resolution.

I am sorry to do this again, but I'm going to have to make sure I've got the count right, Mr. Speaker. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 Members of your party.

No. 16 is Representative PETER KING. I think he was one of the first Members to do this. He said he thinks that House Republicans would prefer to avoid a shutdown, and he said he will only vote for a clean continuing resolution to fund the government, according to the National Review Online. He is No. 16.

No. 17 is Representative RANDY FORBES out of the State of Virginia, who told the Virginian-Pilot that he supports the 6-week clean funding bill that passed in the Senate:

Unfortunately, for us, this is not a game. This is real lives of people.

That's No. 17.

Finally, No. 18 that is officially out there, Mr. Speaker, is Representative ROB WITTMAN of Virginia:

I voted to avoid a government shutdown at every opportunity, to continue government funding, and although I have not had an opportunity to do so to this point, I would support a clean continuing resolution to get our government back up and running.

He put that in an email that he shared with Post Politics.

That's 18. You have a 17-seat margin on the Republican side, Mr. Speaker, and 18 people on your side of the aisle will join the responsible adults on this side of the aisle. Call us back tonight, and tomorrow we will end this crisis and not cost our economy \$300 million.

Mr. Speaker, I have a bonus for you. I think there is a 19th person who is on the cusp of saying the same thing—from my own State, Representative REID RIBBLE. He is someone I am working with. He and I have a bill together right now to try to get a budget process every 2 years because we think it might be a better way to actually get this country back on track.

According to the Pierce Herald County paper in Wisconsin, here is what he said:

Two wrongs don't make a right.

Then this is a quote from WHBY radio 1150 AM in Wisconsin:

A Republican from northeast Wisconsin says it's harmful and embarrassing that lawmakers couldn't reach a deal to avoid a government shutdown. Congressman Reid Ribble of Sherwood says he is encouraging his colleagues to send short-term spending proposals to a conference committee so Members of the House and Senate can work out a compromise. Ribble says he is meeting with the House Speaker today to discuss their strategy and what they're going to offer. He says he is optimistic that the shutdown won't last long and that they can at least agree to a short-term solution.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming hours, more of your Members are going to stand up and get the keys back from the Tea Party wing of your party. Before you have to call a tow truck to pull this country out of a ditch, get the keys back. Demand a vote. Give us a vote on a clean continuing resolution, and we can end this right now.

I am joined by another member of our Progressive Caucus, another freshman member who brings good common sense and a good educational sense as a former teacher to this body. It is my opportunity to yield some time to my colleague, Representative MARK TAKANO from the great State of California.

Mr. TAKANO. I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin.

I rise today to object to this government shutdown that has been orchestrated and carried out by the House Republicans and the Tea Party.

Before I came to Congress, yes, as the gentleman has said, I worked for over 20 years as a high school teacher; and I have to say, during these last few days, I've begun to wonder if my students in Riverside County had a better understanding of how our government works and how it should function than the House Republicans.

It is 46 times that the House Republicans have voted to repeal or to defund the Affordable Care Act. They are doing this as if they believe the majority in the Senate, which fought to create the Affordable Care Act, would vote for its repeal. They are doing this as if they believe the President would actually sign legislation reversing his crowning achievement. That's not how our government works. There are three branches of government in this country, and any high school senior can tell you that the only way a bill can become a law is if it is passed by the House, passed by the Senate, and signed into law by the President.

So now the Republican Party has resorted to hurting everyday Americans by forcing the government to shut down and furloughing hundreds of thousands of workers so they can get what they want. It is 18 times the Senate attempted to send negotiators to the House to get an agreement on a budget; and now, because of the House Republican delay tactics, we have run out of time and have passed the date to keep the government open. They have taken this moment of crisis to exercise political leverage in the most irresponsible manner.

I can appreciate my Republican colleagues' passions and their world views on government, but their passions are misplaced, ill-timed, and inappropriate. They want to display those passions and undo a law at a time when Americans will be harmed by their tactics. What makes Americans so angry is when they see Members of Congress so eager to hurt our country to achieve their political ends.

Let's say that our positions were flipped, that the Republicans had the Senate and the Presidency and the Democrats had the House. What if the Democrats said, Well, we don't want a government shutdown, but unless the Senate passes and the President signs immigration reform into law, that's what we will do? Or how about if we were to say, We are against furloughing hundreds of thousands of workers, but unless the Senate passes and the President signs an assault weapons ban, we will do just that?

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You know, we could say unless the Senate passes and the President signs into law, the option will be to shut down the government.

I know our friends on the other side of the aisle would never allow such tactics to stand. Now the House Republicans are trying a piecemeal approach, attempting to fund the government one agency at a time. This is no way to run a government either. This is just legislative public relations. This is Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans reacting to the bad headlines they've received in the last few days. The press has been criticizing this shutdown for how it's harmed our veterans.

What's the answer for the Republicans? Introduce a bill that funds only veterans programs. The press has exposed the tragedy of this shutdown, ending clinical trials for kids with cancer. What's their solution? Introduce a bill that funds only clinical trials.

The press has shown how insulting it is to our Greatest Generation when they have been locked out of the Washington, D.C., World War II Memorial. What do Republicans do? Introduce a bill that funds only parks and monuments. This is not governing. This is damage control.

The actions by the House Republicans are absurd and reprehensible. The House Republicans are pitting American against American for polit-

ical gain. Do they think that a veteran would want his benefits at the expense of his grandchild's education? Do they think that poor children should go to sleep hungry so the national park in their district can open?

One-half of one House of Congress of one branch of government should not get to make such outrageous demands. To make things worse, there are reasonable Republicans, as the gentleman from Wisconsin has just demonstrated, Republicans who know this is wrong, Republicans that have stopped me in the hall and told me how TED CRUZ has put them into a political conundrum. Even Grover Norquist has said TED CRUZ has "pushed House Republicans into traffic and wandered away."

Eighteen House Republicans have publicly stated they would support a clean CR. Let's end the GOP shutdown. Let's bring sanity back to Congress and pass a clean CR that will put Americans back to work and restore funding to the countless programs that they rely on.

Mr. POCAN. If I could ask a question of the gentleman. You mentioned that the Senate 18 times has tried to find a resolution to having a budget in this country. There are a number of us who serve on the Budget Committee, including Representative JEFFRIES from New York State, who is going to speak in a little bit, who for 6 months have been asking for the Republican leadership to appoint conferees so that we could actually do exactly that. Do you remember when the Republicans finally proposed a conference committee?

Mr. TAKANO. The gentleman is going to have to help me. I'm not aware of when this happened.

Mr. POCAN. I believe it was between 11:40 and 15 minutes to midnight on the deadline before we had to shut down government.

Mr. TAKANO. Was that literally the 11th hour, 59th minute before they—that's right. I do remember this now because I was here that time of night. I do remember that because we were wondering what the Republican Caucus was going to do next, and the last thing of the evening on Saturday was to propose a conference.

Look, the Senate Democrats passed a budget after much complaining by the House Republicans that the Senate had not passed a budget, and I believe this was way back in the spring.

Mr. POCAN. March 23.

Mr. TAKANO. We had plenty of time to try and hash all of this out, but let's remember the original pretext for this shutdown. What I kept hearing from our Republican colleagues was they wanted to delay the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. That seemed to be the crux of their objectives.

Mr. POCAN. In the last 48 hours, how many votes have we had on the Affordable Care Act?

Mr. TAKANO. The last 48 hours, we've voted on a lot of things since then. As I pointed out in my remarks,

every headline that looks bad for them, they come up with a bill, and they try to fund that headline away.

Again, they're embarrassing votes for many people on our side, having to answer, Why are you voting against the National Institutes of Health? Why are you voting against veterans? Of course we're not voting against them. We're saying that you can't pit one group of Americans against another group of Americans, and that there are literally many Americans who depend on many of the programs. When people really understand what our government does for them and when it's taken away, then it comes home.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you so much, Representative TAKANO. You did a great job pointing out every time a press release came out and they realized one of the impacts of shutting down the government, they tried to put a little chewing gum in the crack in the dam rather than actually addressing the problem. They've done that multiple times. They have done it through what we call around here "gotcha votes" to try to make a point, but they have not provide the solution we need, which is what we're demanding and 18 Members on the other side are demanding, which is a vote on a clean continuing resolution so that government can continue.

Mr. TAKANO. I don't know if you spoke about this earlier, but in just this past series of votes, there was what is called in technical language here in the House, a motion to recommit, otherwise known as an MTR. The Democrats used that opportunity to propose a motion to recommit, which was essentially that motion. We were trying to bring to the floor a clean CR, the exact Senate language for the continuing resolution.

The number that we would have funded the government at would have been at the Republican's own number. It's a number that many of us feel is too low. I bet you most of our caucuses would've supported it. But what happened? There was a motion on the Republican side to table our motion. Why table it? Why were they scared? They were scared to bring it to the floor. Instead of a procedural motion that the Republicans could have voted "no" on, they would have been faced with voting up or down and those 18 Members would have had to make a decision to go against what they publicly stated. They could have done that today. They had an opportunity today, and let it be said right now that we missed an opportunity to fund this government and to move on. It passed away today. All I can say is this motion to table was nothing less than, I think, a motion out of fear. Fear of what? That there would be a reasonable majority that would come together.

I asked earlier today a question that was rhetorical. I asked as a point of information, Who is the Speaker of this House? Is it JOHN BOEHNER or is it TED CRUZ? In order to get to this vote, we

have to take this Congress back from a phantom Speaker because I can't believe that—you read out the names of 18 people who are willing to go on record publicly. How many do you and I suspect of Republicans that privately feel these things, but are too afraid to move forward because of this phantom Speaker?

Mr. POCAN. Absolutely. Thank you again for your leadership, Representative TAKANO. I appreciate it.

Completely from the other coast, we have another freshman Member who is a strong member of our Progressive Caucus and a former legislator from the State of New York and now a Representative in Congress in the State of New York. It's my pleasure to yield some time to Representative HAKEEM JEFFRIES.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin, the badger State, for yielding me some time, for your tremendous leadership in anchoring this Progressive Caucus Special Order week after week after week, carrying forward in such a powerful and compelling way the Progressive message to the Americans out there who we represent. It's such a powerful vehicle to use the House floor, to speak in such eloquent, genuine ways about the challenges that we confront here in the United States Congress.

Over the last few weeks, what we've witnessed, I think, can be characterized as both the theater of the absurd and a Shakespearean tragedy. Let me deal with the Shakespearean tragedy aspect of this.

We are in the midst of a government shutdown right now that is unnecessarily forcing pain on the American people. It's a shutdown that was manufactured by the House GOP that has resulted in a situation where Americans all across this country have now been put in jeopardy. That's a tragedy of epic proportions. Children have been put in jeopardy. Tens of thousands of them have been shut out from the Head Start program. Families have been put in jeopardy. More than 800,000 individuals were kicked out of work unnecessarily. As time marches on, faced with the uncertainty as it relates to how they pay their bills, put food on their table, clothing on their backs, pay off the mortgage, more than 800,000 hard-working Americans are collateral damage as a result of a reckless, irresponsible, mean-spirited behavior.

Veterans have been unnecessarily put into harm's way. Children looking for hope and dealing with the cancer that has afflicted them are unable to participate in clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health. Seniors, who otherwise would benefit from the Meals on Wheels program—it's insult to injury. It's bad enough you're trying to cut \$39 billion from the SNAP program, but then you've got to inflict additional pain, as a result of the government shutdown, on seniors who rely on the Meals on Wheels program to eat and deal with their nutritional needs.

The other problem that's amazing to me is that you've put in jeopardy expectant mothers who are now unable to receive the nutritional assistance that would be available to them in the absence of a government shutdown. This is a Shakespearean tragedy inflicted upon us by an out-of-control House majority.

Let me deal for a moment or so with the theater-of-the-absurd aspect of this. I asked on the floor of the House of Representatives today, Who's in charge? My distinguished freshman colleague from California just referenced this point. Who is in charge of the House of Representatives? Is it the Speaker who's in charge at this moment? Is it the Heritage Foundation? Is it Tea Party extremists? Is it the junior Senator from Texas, who for the last week, before he disappeared, was barking out orders over on the other side of the Capitol and then Members in the House of Representatives were following those orders in lockstep, executing this extreme agenda that has led us to a shutdown of the United States Government?

The other side of the aisle, my good friends, they're going to say, Well, what are you talking about an extreme agenda? We just have a disagreement as it relates to the Affordable Care Act, and you guys on the other side of the aisle, the President at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, he doesn't want to compromise. Compromise on what? The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. It was passed by a duly elected Congress in 2010. The Supreme Court of the United States of America declared it constitutional in 2012 in an opinion written by Chief Justice John Roberts, someone who was nominated to the bench by George W. Bush.

□ 2030

And then a few months later, in November, the President of the United States was reelected in an electoral college landslide with a difference of more than 5 million votes, reaffirming the Affordable Care Act, which was his signature legislative achievement.

What exactly do you want us to compromise on when October 1 was the day that enrollment first began? You claim it to be a train wreck. The train hasn't even left the station yet. But in advance of this government shutdown, you sent a series of ransom notes over to this side of the aisle. I mean, this really is shocking behavior. It was a series of ransom notes. If you don't do what we want to you do, we're going to shut down the government.

Let's go through the ransom notes that were sent over. First you said, Defund the Affordable Care Act; and then that didn't work. And then you said, We want to delay the Affordable Care Act for a year; and that didn't work. And then you said, We are going to deny the ability for contraception coverage; and that didn't work. And then you said, We're going to repeal the medical device tax; and that didn't

work. And then you said, Well, let's delay the individual mandate for a year; and that didn't work. And then finally, out of desperation, you said, Well, we're going to jam up our own congressional employees in what effectively amounts to a misrepresentation, because you weren't trying to take away a subsidy. You were trying to take away an employer contribution that is available to the overwhelming majority of Americans whose employers provide health care. A series of ransom notes that were summarily rejected by a courageous Senate majority.

And when you finally realized the futility of those demands included in each of those legislative ransom notes that you sent over to the other side, at the 11th hour, in the height of hypocrisy, you said, Let's go to conference.

Go to conference? As my good friend, the distinguished Congressman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) pointed out, we've been asking for regular order since the spring of this year.

Now, regular order involves the following process:

The House passes a budget, the Senate passes a budget, both of which occurred earlier this year. And then at that point, the two sides appoint conferees to sit down at the negotiating table and try to work out the differences. That's the regular order that you've been screaming about for the last 4 years. And earlier this spring, you finally had an opportunity to bring it about. Senator HARRY REID was prepared to move forward. Even MITCH MCCONNELL seemed like he was ready to move forward. And individual Republican Senators said that it was absurdity for the House Republicans to have been demanding conference committees over the last several years, and finally they get an opportunity to do it, and nothing's forthcoming from the other side of the aisle here in the United States House.

Why is that the case? Well, I think we've now figured it out. Because you knew that the demands that you would make—because you are following the script from the junior Senator from Texas and others—would have been so extreme at a conference committee that it would have just been a futile legislative exercise, and you did not want that to be exposed to the American people. I think that's one of the only conclusions that we can draw at this moment, with the benefit of hindsight, as to why in the world a conference committee was never appointed, even though that's something that you had been demanding, my good friends on the other side of the aisle, for the previous few years. So the American people aren't going to be fooled by these 11th-hour gimmicks—conference committee.

What we need to do at this point is just pass a clean continuing resolution that, if it were to come to the floor of the United States House of Representatives, would have bipartisan support

from Democrats and from Republicans, many of whom were mentioned earlier today by the distinguished Congressman from the Badger State (Mr. POCAN), and we could get beyond this shutdown, this Shakespearean tragedy, which is very painful for hardworking Americans, and go off and do the business of the American people. That's what needs to happen.

I hope reasonable minds can come together. You can stop following the marching orders of outside agitators—who've got no interest in governing and are only concerned about 2016 and other ambitions that these individuals may harbor—and do the responsible thing so we can move this country forward.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you so much, Representative JEFFRIES, for very clearly explaining to the country the situation and what's unfolded in these final days and final hours before the government shut down.

You know, there is no question that people on this side of the aisle are willing to compromise. We're compromising to a number that is nearly identical to what the Republicans have proposed so that we can, for the next 6 weeks, figure out our finances.

You and I both serve on the Budget Committee. You know we've been trying for—how long was it, Representative, again? How long were we fighting for this?

Mr. JEFFRIES. Since March or April of this year.

And, Congressman, you raise an interesting point. I think this is important to clarify for the American people. Our friends on the other side of the aisle have said, Well, we want a changed set of law. We want to defund, destroy, or delay the Affordable Care Act. Inherently outrageous. Well, let's just put that aside for the moment.

The Senate majority and those on our side of the aisle in the House of Representatives as well as the President, have already compromised, as you pointed out. The number that we feel is appropriate to fund the government and do what's right for the American people is \$1.058 trillion. That's the number that we feel is appropriate. The number that our friends on the other side of the aisle would like to see the government funded at is \$986 billion. That's a significant difference.

However, in order to move the country forward, the Senate majority, the Democrats in the House of Representatives, and the President of the United States have all agreed to move forward with a continuing resolution, not at our number, \$1.058 trillion, but at the House majority number, which is substantially less, \$986 billion. Our good friends on the other side of the aisle don't know when to take "yes" for an answer.

As the Democratic whip pointed out earlier this week, we've already compromised and accepted the sequestration cuts for the purpose of keeping the government open and negotiating over

the next 6 weeks as to what the appropriate number is. So that is political spin that you hear, those who sent over the ransom notes, accusing others of an unwillingness to compromise when we've already compromised on the number in the continuing resolution.

Mr. POCAN. Well, again, thank you, Representative JEFFRIES, so much for explaining to the American people exactly what has happened and transpired in the last few days and why it's so important that we demand a vote and get a vote on a clean continuing resolution.

I would like to close with a letter that I received from a constituent in my district, and I just want to read the parts of the letter I think that are especially relevant. This is from a woman who has a business in the Baraboo, Wisconsin, area. This is a quote from what she wrote:

I'm the owner of a small business environmental laboratory which provides jobs to 29 people in the Baraboo area. Approximately 60 percent of our work is under direct contract or is a subcontract on EPA—Environmental Protection Agency—Department of Defense, and USGS, Forest Service, and NOAA projects.

This shutdown means that, one, many of our upcoming projects may be canceled or delayed in a month that was going to finally make a financial success of my business, and two, we don't know when we will receive payment on approximately \$300,000 of outstanding invoices, meaning, I don't know how we'll make our payroll or pay our vendors.

We may be small, but my company brings in close to \$2 million a year into Wisconsin from across the country and have just added three new employees. If an agreement on the budget isn't reached right away, my little contribution to the economic recovery will be reversed, or even worse. Please help find a way out of this mess.

Mr. Speaker, please, for the sake of this small business owner in Baraboo, Wisconsin, for the sake of the pregnant low-income woman in Madison, Wisconsin, for the sake of the Federal employees and the civilian employees on our military bases, for the sake of all the people who are affected by this government shutdown that the Republicans have forced upon this country, listen to your own Members. You don't have to listen to the Democrats. Listen to the 18 Members and growing on your side who have said this strategy is a failure. It's time to pass a clean continuing resolution.

If you listen to your Members, a majority of this House—you are not the speaker of the Tea Party. You are not the speaker from the Office of Senator TED CRUZ. You are the Speaker of the entire House of Representatives. And now a majority of this House is demanding a vote, that we pass a clean continuing resolution at your numbers. You won. Let's get this country opened, and let's help the economy bounce back to where it needs to be.

Mr. Speaker, with that, from the Progressive Caucus of Congress, I yield back the balance of my time.

REGULAR ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for 30 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege and honor to be recognized to address you here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

I have been listening to the debate first on television in my office and then here from the floor. I would like to first, Mr. Speaker, address this idea of "regular order." I heard a description of regular order that doesn't fit the regular order that I understand from my time here in this Congress. Parts of it, yes, I agree with, but it's not an objective description of what regular order is.

The argument we heard from the gentleman continually was: Go to conference on the budget. Go to conference on the budget. Does the gentleman forget that his party in the other Chamber had refused to even pass a budget for over 1,000 days and that, finally, we had to pass legislation here in the House of Representatives to force it on the Senate to require them to pass a budget in order for them to get their pay, and the political pressure got high enough that they went ahead and passed that? Then in order to comply, so the Senators could get paid, they passed a sham budget, and now we've got a sham argument that says: Go to conference on the budget.

This isn't about the budget, Mr. Speaker. This debate is not about the budget. This is about appropriations. Regular order first for a budget, if you have one. And this is a new experience for the Members that are here on the floor. They have never served in this Congress actually when there was a budget in the Senate before.

But if you have a budget, you do concur with the House and the Senate, and you live by that as a guideline for the authorizations and the appropriations so that we all come together and we live within the means that we've agreed to here.

□ 2045

But that doesn't happen very often in history. It generally happens when Republicans are in control of the House, the Senate and the White House. I can think of no other time that's happened.

But take this budget discussion off the table, Mr. Speaker, because it's not relevant to what's going on here. We're in a government slowdown, and we're in a partial shutdown. And resolving and conferring a budget isn't going to do a thing to solve this situation that we're in now.

It's irrelevant to any functionality of this Congress that can address this government partial shutdown. It's only a straw man, a red herring to drag out here to divert the attention that needs to be focused on this situation we have