

No one wants a shutdown. No one wants to see vital and essential government programs eliminated or withheld from the public. Sometimes in these situations that are most difficult, you actually become concerned about basic common sense or, again, the attempts of certain people to try to embarrass each side.

I think one of the worst things I've seen in my service was the closedown of some of our memorials. This probably won't show up for my colleagues very well, but this is the Martin Luther King Memorial. You just walk up and look at it. But to deploy Interior and park personnel to put out barriers to constrain the public from even walking is an absolutely senseless and mindless bureaucratic move.

Many people saw also the construction. And this, again, is not a very good photo, but this is Park personnel that were deployed putting fences up in front of the Lincoln Memorial and then, most offensively, to put barriers to block, in an open-air park memorial, our World War II veterans' memorial. This is senseless.

I have talked to Mr. ISSA and the Oversight subcommittee that I chair—Mr. ISSA chairs the whole Oversight Committee of Congress. I know Mr. HASTINGS is going to look into this, his Natural Resources Committee. But this is a senseless offense to the American people and particularly our veterans and others, there is no reason for this. So some common sense has to prevail in all of this.

We will get beyond this. People will be made whole. It is unfortunate that sometimes government, whether it was back in Washington's days or throughout our history, does work on a brinksmanship basis and does not get to a resolution, particularly when you come to difficult times.

My colleagues, we are at one of the most difficult times in history. Within the next 2 weeks, the United States of America will be at our debt limit. We'll be \$17 trillion in debt. They're going to come and ask for another trillion dollars for a year to keep us from being a deadbeat Nation.

How did we get here? That's part of the question that has to be resolved here. You had an era of unprecedented spending, 4 years in which the other side—and these are facts—took control. They spent \$1.5 trillion more than they took in the first year in office—1.4 trillion, 1.3 trillion, and so on and so on, until we've gone from \$9 trillion in debt to 17, reaching 18, almost double in 5 or 6 years. That's unsustainable. So that's what this is about.

It's also about a health care program. I come from a family that at times didn't have health care. And many Americans need health care, and we should be able to provide them, but people didn't ask for a bureaucracy. People didn't ask for thousands of bureaucrats here to manage a government program. They didn't ask for IRS enforcers. They didn't ask for many of

the mandates that are in this bill that can and need to be revised.

The President has already revised the law. The President said he didn't need the Congress, as you will recall, some time ago, and obviously he hasn't. He changed some of the terms, given exemptions to employers, put that off for a year, which was part of the law. We've asked—and, again, some of us wanted it repealed. Some of us didn't like it, but we now have it. We need to revise it, and we need to make certain that Americans have good health care and access to affordable care, but not with bureaucracy.

We've offered at least three alternatives and some changes, the last one pretty simple, to delay for a while the individual mandate, like we've done for others. So we can do this and we must do this. We must succeed for the American people.

#### BUDGET CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, we are now on our third day of the Republican shutdown of the Federal Government. My constituents and people all across this country are disgusted with what they're seeing, the absence of an agreement on a simple idea: the American people have a right to a government that is open to serve them, but our government is closed. Eight hundred thousand men and women across the country have been placed on furlough because Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republican leadership will not bring up a clean continuing resolution to fund the government and keep the government open.

Now, I would like to talk a little bit about what that means for my constituents, and first to say that I have extended office hours in my district office from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to make sure that my constituents have whatever help I can provide during this government shutdown to help navigate through the Federal Government, and that is staffed by my employees who have no guaranty they will even be paid.

But I want to talk this morning about how we got here, not to assign blame to one side or the other but to suggest how we move forward, because we've heard from the Speaker these last few days and from many of the Republican leaders they just want to compromise; if the Democrats would just be willing to compromise and go to a conference committee, this would all work out, and that Republicans are interested in delaying health care reform and cutting spending and the Democrats refuse to negotiate on these issues.

Well, this is actually completely false. In fact, look at this chart. We began with spending in the President's budget of \$1.2 trillion. You can see how

far there has already been compromise from the Democrats down from the enacted spending to the Ryan budget to the Senate budget and finally to the continuing resolution, which is very close to the Ryan budget—not a budget amount that we agree with but some people would be willing to compromise on.

In fact, there was a budget that was passed by the House, a budget passed by the Senate, and we passed No Budget, No Pay, which I was a cosponsor of, to make sure this budget process proceeded; but the Speaker has refused, since that happened, to appoint conferees to a Budget Committee. That's the next step. That's how we get a budget, to appoint conferees who then have the responsibility of working out compromises.

We wrote to the Speaker back in April, April 17. Here's a copy of the letter. Ranking Member CHRIS VAN HOLLEN and I wrote to the Speaker urging him to appoint conferees so we could continue the budget process, but he's refused to do that.

Then, just moments before the shutdown happened, Republicans said: Oh, let's go to conference on the funding bill, the continuing resolution, not on the budget. That, of course, was a vote to shut down the government, because that wasn't going to happen in 45 minutes. And so the government shut down, and this is now day three.

You have to wonder: Why is it that the Republicans have refused to pass a clean funding bill that we are calling for? Well, one member of the House Republican caucus said:

Now that we've jumped off the cliff and lit ourselves on fire, we've entered the valley of the shadow of death. We've got to keep running and hold together.

Mr. Speaker, our country is facing very serious challenges today. Men and women in cities and towns all across our country don't know where to find work, don't know if they're going to be able to go to work. Seniors are nervous about whether they can rely on Social Security and Medicare, and young people are worried about whether they can afford to go to college. These issues are far too important for Republicans to refuse to negotiate simply as a matter of pride. Every Member of this House needs to put aside political posturing and act in the best interests of the people who sent us here.

Rather than coming together to support commonsense solutions and policies that would strengthen our country, Speaker BOEHNER and the Republicans have decided to shut down the Federal Government until they're able to undermine the Affordable Care Act. For them, it has become an obsession.

Earlier this week, one House Republican called the Affordable Care Act "the most insidious law known to man." House Republicans compared this debate to the terrorist attacks of September 11. And when he held the floor for 21 hours, Senator TED CRUZ invoked the horrors of World War II and

the Nazi regime when talking about health care reform.

Mr. Speaker, this kind of hyperbole and this kind of plainly inflammatory rhetoric has no place in a serious discussion about the future of our country. For weeks, we've heard that the Republicans would refuse to fund the government until it dismantled or defunded the Affordable Care Act. This became their party's mantra until 2 days ago, because 2 days ago the Republicans stopped trying to defund ObamaCare for the first time and started to try to carve out programs to fund one by one. The very reason they brought this government to a screeching halt and closed it down was all of a sudden gone.

So I ask my colleagues today: What's the problem now? What's the hold up on passing a clean funding bill to reopen government and then go to conference to work out all of the differences on many important policy issues?

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask my Republican colleagues, my friends on the other side of the aisle, to do what's right for our country and demand that the Speaker bring a funding bill to the floor to open government and pass this resolution today.

#### WESTERN PENNSYLVANIANS WANT FAIRNESS FOR ALL AND NO SPECIAL DEALS IN WASH- INGTON

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, it's day three of Senator REID's government shutdown. The American people are frustrated, western Pennsylvanians are frustrated, and I am frustrated.

Make no mistake: there is a choice here. The House's solution embraces fairness for all. The Senate's spending bill protects special deals for Washington, D.C.

The House passed four reasonable compromises to keep the government open. Our latest solution ends the special deal that President Obama cut for Senators and Representatives. It also gives individuals and families the same break from the health care law that President Obama gave to Big Business.

Senator REID could reopen the government today. Unfortunately, he refuses to compromise. In fact, he said yesterday that he is "locked in tight." Senator REID is "locked in tight" on those special breaks for Big Business, Senators, and Representatives. This is an outrage.

Mr. Speaker, as I answer the phones in my office, I hear from constituents who tell me that there should be no special deals; there should be fairness for all. The American people deserve better from their Senators. It is time for the Senate to end special deals, embrace fairness for all, and reopen this government.

□ 1030

#### GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, this is day three of a completely unnecessary government shutdown. About 800,000 people don't know if they'll have a paycheck at the end of the week. Basic government services are being denied, hundreds of millions of dollars wasted. Moms who count on WIC to feed their kids are being hurt. Head Start providers are closing. Families trying to buy a home are turned away. Small businesses needing loans are told to wait.

This could all end in about 20 minutes if we could just vote on the compromise that already passed the Senate. Is it perfect? No. It funds the government at levels below the budget passed by Democrats in the Senate and proposed by Democrats in the House. It keeps in place the across-the-board cuts triggered by sequestration, which I didn't vote for and do not support. But I am willing to support this bill, this compromise, this so-called clean continuing resolution because we are damaging the country by this shutdown, and we need to reopen the government.

And why is the government shut down? People don't understand this. Well, because some of my colleagues want to defund, delay, and deny the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, we took an oath here. When we were sworn into the office, we took an oath to support the Constitution. And according to the Constitution, when a bill passes both Chambers and is signed into law by the President, it becomes a law. We learned that in basic civics. The Affordable Care Act is a duly-passed, signed by the President, and upheld by the Supreme Court law.

So if you don't like a law, how do you change it? Again, think back to civics. Through the legislative process. Draft legislation, have hearings, mark it up, put it up for a vote. That's how this body ought to function.

How not to change laws? By shutting down the Federal Government. Who on Earth could be proud of what we are doing here? Who could look at this and be proud? I tell you, the American people, in fact people around the world, are watching. They have seen bitterness and rancor, they have heard oversimplification, and a lot of misinformation.

It is time to stop governing by cynicism and crisis. It's time to realize that what is happening here is beneath the dignity of this Chamber and this body. It's time to restore democracy.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, the American people do not deserve this shutdown. There are enough Members of the Republican and Democratic caucuses to open this government right now.

Mr. Speaker, let us vote. Let's pass the Senate amendment to the continuing resolution, let's reopen the government of this United States of America, and let's do it now.

#### REAL WORLD PEOPLE AND OBAMACARE

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

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about what real world people in Texas District 17 are saying about ObamaCare. Leonard from Waco writes:

Government is too big. No one knows how to lead. Government needs to get out of our lives. Repeal ObamaCare. Whatever the cost, it will be less than the negative effect it will have here on this country and on all Americans.

Lance and Tamara of Thorndale write:

We would like to express our disdain for the Affordable Care Act, also known as ObamaCare. Although we have health insurance that meets the standard of care, we also know that this health care program will adversely affect many young people who are just now starting out in life and may not have adequate care that meets the standard.

While we do not believe that taxpayers or health care providers should fund the bill for those who do not have health care, the ACA is clearly not the solution. Any program that federally mandates health care and involves punitive sanctions by way of the IRS on tax returns should be considered a crime. It will neither help the poor nor the wealthy that will suffer the negative impact of this plan, but rather the young, working, and taxpaying family that earns just enough to survive.

We believe that a bad plan is worse than no plan, and Congress should continue to oppose and repeal the ACA, even if it means a continuation of the government shutdown. We received a letter from President Obama in which he clearly blamed the U.S. House for the shutdown, and where he accepted no responsibility. We cannot abide by this President, and do not support him or his self-serving ideologies.

John from College Station writes:

No to ObamaCare.

Mike from Hewitt writes:

Please hold the line against the Affordable Care Act. Do not give in.

Barry from Pflugerville writes:

As you know, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was passed in the middle of the night, and without the support of the American people. I am calling on you, as one of your constituents, to stop this legislation by defunding its implementation until the law can be repealed and replaced with legislation that benefits the citizens of the United States of America.

You were elected into office to represent the values and needs of those of us who live in your State and your district. The passage of this legislation was an abdication of the oath the lawmakers took when sworn into office, and I hope that you will do the right thing now and stop the law from being fully implemented, and will work to enact real reform for our health care system based on free market principles, not government interference. Americans enjoy the best health care system in the world, and this legislation harms the very people it is intended to help.