

Marilyn from College Station writes:

I urge you to stand firm and do all that you can to repeal/defund this law that is a disaster to employers, employees, and our health care system.

Jack from Woodway writes:

Mr. FLORES, please do all in your power to help fund the government, and please do not fund ObamaCare. As seniors, we cannot afford the increased premiums for our insurance coverage.

Tonya from Waco writes:

I am a small business owner in Waco. I built my business from nothing, and I see the horrible ramifications of ObamaCare on small business. Please stand strong and fight to defund ObamaCare.

Debra from Bryan writes:

The President's health care must be defunded before it destroys our economy, our workforce, our health care system, and our way of life. My insurance will increase 42 percent in 2014, and who knows where it goes from there. As a citizen of the United States, I do not want my tax dollars to fund a train wreck. We simply cannot afford it. Please convince your fellow Representatives they are destroying the working class. There is no way this is good for all of us.

A young man from Brazos County writes:

My current premium for a family plan with a \$5,000 deductible costs \$360 per month. This was canceled due to ObamaCare.

When trying to apply for ObamaCare, he got two new quotes. The first was one with a \$12,700 deductible and cost \$691 per month. When he tried to find a lower deductible, he found an option with a \$4,500 deductible at a cost of \$854 per month. Again, essentially the same coverage for almost 2½ times what he was paying before.

Mr. Speaker, since September 20 the House has approved, on a bipartisan basis, eight bills to fund all or part of the Federal Government, but all but one of these have been blocked by HARRY REID in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, during this process my colleagues and I have been called arsonists, anarchists, extremists, extortionists, and terrorists. In addition, we have been told that we have bombs strapped to our chests. When I was growing up, I was taught that if you were calling people names then that meant you had nothing meaningful to say.

This fight is about fairness, Mr. Speaker. First, the Americans believe that if a delay for business that gave them \$14 billion worth of benefit was good enough for business, it ought to be good for everybody by delaying the individual mandate for a year.

Secondly, if ObamaCare is good enough for the American people, it is good enough for the President, the Vice President, and all Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Americans pray for our country during these difficult times.

CONSTITUTIONAL BUT UNCONSCIONABLE

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, what we are doing here in Congress may not be unconstitutional, but it is unconscionable. It is unconscionable for us to have a wholesale shutdown of the government and a piecemeal start up. It is unconscionable to pit needy Americans against needy Americans. It is unconscionable.

It may be lawful to single out some and say, you are among the fortunate that we will bless today, but it's unconscionable. It's wrong. It may be lawful, but it's not right.

It is wrong to decide that persons who happen to be poor, who need WIC, who need the very sustenance that people acquire to exist, food, clothing and shelter, it's wrong to say you are not blessed today. Your time will come, but not today. It may be constitutional, but it's unconscionable.

It is unconscionable for us, in the richest country in the world, to conclude that a mother who has a child, making \$15,080 a year, working full-time and living below the poverty line, it's unconscionable for us to push a system that will cause her to work full-time and not have insurance. ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, by any name you call it, will allow that mother to get insurance for herself and her child. It may not be unconstitutional to adhere to a principle that would cause a repeal of the Affordable Care Act. It is unconscionable, however, to do so in such a way as to prevent this mother from having insurance for her child.

I came to Congress to represent everybody, and this includes those who make \$7.25 an hour. I came to Congress to represent those who wait tables and make \$2.13 an hour plus tips. It's unconscionable to have people working at \$2.13 an hour in the richest country in the world who cannot get health insurance. That's what the Affordable Care Act does. It allows them to get health insurance.

And I must remind us all today, my dear friends, whom I love—I love every person who sits on that side of the aisle; I love every one of them—but I want to tell you this: mark my words, Dr. King was right. Life is an inescapable network of mutuality. It's tied to a single garment of destiny. What impacts one directly impacts all indirectly. And while you can sit at home in comfort, assuming that it does not impact you, I assure you, the way the arc of the moral universe has been developed, it will impact you sooner or later.

You are not worried about Wall Street right now. But when Wall Street takes a hit, it's going to eventually trickle down to every one of us. Worry about Home Street. I do. Worry about Main Street. That's okay. But I am not going to put Wall Street above Home Street, where people live.

And it's time for us to quit pushing a piecemeal startup for a wholesale shutdown. This is the richest country in the world. We shouldn't carry on like this. It's time for us to move forward and end the shutdown.

Let's have free and fair and open negotiations. Let's not do it with the threat of the demise of the government at stake. Let's do it with everybody's intent in mind. Let's not pick and choose. Let's not say one is blessed today and another will be blessed tomorrow. Let's share the blessings of this Nation with all of the people that we represent.

And finally, Dr. King reminded us that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. I say to my veteran friends, whom I support, you should not feel good knowing that somebody has decided to bless you at the expense of somebody else.

FRUSTRATION OVER THE STALEMATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to express my frustration and the frustration of my constituents over the stalemate here in Washington.

It didn't have to come to this. The House has put forth four proposals to the Senate, each one offering a compromise to the other side. Time after time Senator REID stonewalled our efforts to forge a compromise and prevent a shutdown. When House Republicans passed legislation that simply asked Senate Democrats to just simply come to the table to negotiate, Senator REID said no.

Everyone knows that Republicans and Democrats don't see eye to eye on every spending issue. However, there is a lot that we do agree on, like funding critical care for cancer research, the national parks, veterans services, National Guardsmen and Reservists. And when we have drafted stand-alone bills funding these efforts, we saw support from some Senate Democrats. But again, Mr. REID said no.

So first we couldn't get Mr. REID to negotiate over what we disagree on, and today we can't get him to even consider what we do agree on.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many more olive branches we have left on the tree, but today we are going to offer more. We have already worked to ensure that young boys and girls who need cancer treatments from the National Institutes of Health receive the lifesaving medicine they deserve.

Today, we will work to protect our Nation's military men and women who have served so honorably in combat, only to have their hard-earned benefits denied to them by partisan bickering.

Finally, and most importantly, we will work to end this shutdown, not just for some Americans, but for all Americans, because, Mr. Speaker, this has always been an issue of fairness.

So our message to President Obama is, you are willing to sit down with Big Business and insurance companies to negotiate delays and exemptions and exceptions from the health care law. Why will you now refuse to negotiate with us and give the same reprieve to regular Americans?

Our message to the Majority Leader REID is, you worked swiftly to pass a stand-alone funding bill for Active Duty soldiers. Why now not work with us to pass similar bills for veterans, our National Guardsmen and Reservists, cancer research, or national parks?

The people deserve better, Mr. Speaker, than President Obama and Majority Leader REID's refusal to work toward bipartisan compromise. Enough is enough. Pass these noncontroversial spending bills. Come to the negotiating table. Let's talk. Let's demonstrate fairness to the American people. Let's work together, and let's end this shut-down.

SQUANDER IS THE WORD OF THE DAY

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, the word of the day is squander, defined broadly as the majority party having the votes to pass solutions that fit what America needs and wants, but instead moves forward with an approach to appease an angry faction of their party, and in doing so advances nothing but its own political shortsightedness while making a mockery out of public policy. Squander.

In the House, we have had political theater of a piecemeal approach, where parks and cures for life-threatening diseases are used as rhetorical props. But this approach has done nothing to address the real danger to our national security and how this shutdown hinders our ability to keep Americans safe from terrorists.

The government shutdown has furloughed 70 percent of the intelligence community, 70 percent of the civilians in the intelligence community. The Director of National Intelligence called the government shutdown a, quote, "dreamland," unquote, for enemies that want to steal our Nation's secrets, and said it "seriously damages our ability to protect the security and safety of this Nation and its citizens." And with each passing day, he thinks the damage becomes more insidious.

Well, here we are talking about parks, talking about our venerable veterans. We haven't said a word, really, about our intelligence community. We have basically, and I say this to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you have put out the welcome mat for every terrorist around this world to know that right now we are vulnerable.

Maybe it was a clever concept behind closed doors several weeks ago. Delay

the individual mandate of the Affordable Health Care Act for 1 year in trade for the House GOP approval of a government funding bill. Ignore the fact that the Affordable Care Act is law, and that attempts to repeal it over 50 times have failed. Ignore the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has already ruled it is constitutional. Ignore the fact that 72 percent of the American people do not want to have the government shut down over the Affordable Care Act.

Ignore JOHN MCCAIN, who said ObamaCare will not be repealed, and it is irrational to think so. Ignore the fact that on the same day that my friends on the other side of the aisle were patting themselves on the back for shutting down the government, the health care marketplaces around this country were overloaded. More than 10 million people were on that Web site and calling that telephone number because they want health insurance.

My friends, to ignore is to be ignorant in this case. But take note: the real pain has started with the shuttering of many government services, the furloughing of 800,000 workers, and the real threat that people who depend on partial government assistance will get nothing.

My colleagues, we are squandering this moment to lead. Those on the other side of the aisle that are the majority are squandering their majority and replacing their principled views of government with fruitless extremist objectives.

Mr. Speaker, the last time I looked, Senator CRUZ was not a Member of the House of Representatives. But somehow it appears that he is running the show over here.

The shutdown is keeping people from seeing their families. In San Francisco, Dave Donohue planned to take his wife and his 11-day-old child to meet the grandmother in Mexico. Baby Milo doesn't have a passport. And the passport office is closed. So they are going to have to forego that trip.

Danny Aiello, a retired beat cop from Philadelphia, brought to Washington, D.C., by his daughter and son-in-law because he had just lost his wife to cancer, was here to see the Washington monuments, except now he is seeing them all from the outside. Never going to go in to see the Air and Space Museum.

What do we tell Victoria Thomas, 26, who has a 4-year-old daughter, who cannot find child care now because there have been nine Head Start programs that have been closed? "I can't afford child care with my limited resources," she said, as a single mom who is studying for a master's degree in business, and she worries that her daughter will fall behind. "She is learning so much," she says. "The program is preparing her for kindergarten next year."

Mr. Speaker, the word is squander, and it's time for us to reopen the government.

HISTORY AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, we have heard much debate over the last week, arguments and accusations being made from both sides. I have heard references to being terrorists, to jihad, and to having bombs strapped to our chests.

Mr. Speaker, I spent 1 year, 2005–2006, perhaps the bloodiest time of the war, as an Army combat surgeon in Iraq. In this Chamber I have seen no terrorists, no jihad, nor any bombs strapped to chests. And if you have been to war, you would not use such rhetoric here.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, we have engaged in so much debate concerning the Affordable Care Act. We have addressed it from every angle, the affordability, the methods of implementation, those that may benefit and those that will not. I have contended that as a Nation we should have focused on who is uncared for in our Nation and how we provide care. Addressing the uninsured would certainly fall under this framework. And I have contended that a form, a mere piece of paper that says you have insurance or a plan, does not mean that you have access to care, nor does it mean that you have coverage for treatment.

Many from one side of the aisle have said, "You lost the election, get over it." Indeed, the Republicans lost the Presidential election. And I am over it. However, all of us in this body won elections. Each of us was elected to serve the American people as well. And while the President has a seat at the head of the table, he does not have the only seat at the table. And we all need to take our seats at the table.

I look forward, not backward, except to learn from history. I am over the Presidential election. What I am not over is what we are becoming. What we are becoming is of great concern to me, as much concern to me as the Affordable Care Act itself. I have a concern about who we are, and what we consider to be right, and what we think is wrong. And I hope that everyone has taken the opportunity to look at our past. Our glorious history is all around us.

As you look around and you review our great history, you see the legacies left from previous generations. What is our legacy? What will this generation, this Congress leave behind? Will it be that we have a disregard for the law, a disregard for laws that we voted on and signed? Waivers, exemptions, special subsidies, all of which show a disregard for applying laws equally, as well as a disregard for the rule of law.

Applying laws equally, the rule of law, the very ideals that Americans have proudly touted for over two centuries. Are we deciding to abandon these core values? Is this the way we want to carve out our chapter in American history? The history of a great