

this wall; and I would say to you Mr. President, take down the chains. Take down the walls to these open-air memorials to freedom. This is not the National Archives where things could be taken or stolen. These are open-air memorials. This is ridiculous political gamesmanship. I was Governor for eight years. I have been an executive. I know that you can do this, and I would ask that you do so.

I am going to go for my evening run, 5:30, 6 o'clock. I would invite every one of you all up there in the gallery to come join me at the Lincoln Memorial. I would ask listeners out there to join me at the Lincoln Memorial. I will talk to Representative PALAZZO from Mississippi and MICHELE BACHMANN and others who gathered there at the World War II Memorial. This has gotten out of control with regard to this degree of political gamesmanship by HARRY REID and by the President.

So I would just ask that you take another look at that picture, think about what it means, think about the sacrifice that has been made that is ultimately about what these memorials are founded on, and why can't we do something about it, Mr. President. I would ask you to do so.

I would invite folks for a 5:30 or 6 o'clock run down at the Lincoln Memorial.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members that they are to direct their remarks to the Chair.

HONORING GEORGE ZENOVICH AND PETE MEHAS

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, we have seen a great deal of political posturing and speeches over the last several days. I think it is time that we get our priorities straight and pass a clean budget that reopens this government. I think the American public is, frankly, sick and tired of the blame game.

I also believe that many of my Republican friends are distracted with issues that are important, but are not central to the question of funding government. We can debate the issue of the Affordable Health Care Act, as we should, but it is not central to reopening government.

Today, I would like to talk to you about two public servants from my neck of the woods, the San Joaquin Valley, who put their community first and delivered results. Sadly, in the last week these two individuals have passed away and we say good-bye to them. But I want to use their examples as role models because I think their commitment to public service, to the people of the San Joaquin Valley in California and our Nation, is a good example. One was a Democrat and one was a Republican. Both were widely respected; and they never, ever let partisanship or ideology get in the way of solutions.

George Zenovich and Pete Mehas were the best our Valley had to offer,

especially on how they conducted their lives. Pete Mehas, from a Greek immigrant family, was a pillar of our education community in the Valley for almost 50 years. From the time he entered the classroom in 1963, he was bound for leadership and changed the lives of countless individuals. He realized the special challenges of students in our Valley and those throughout the State and he made their voices heard.

His passion was recognized by Governor George Deukmejian, who appointed him as his chief adviser relating to all matters involving education. Pete served also under Governor Pete Wilson and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and, ultimately, President George Bush when he was appointed to the advisory commission on educational excellence for all Americans.

Knowing that strong schools require strong communities, Pete wanted to see Fresno prosper and develop into a thriving business hub. From co-founding Leadership Fresno, to sitting on the Valley Business Conference Executive Board, to serving as the president of the Fresno County Athletic Hall of Fame where he was enshrined, Pete invested his time in the community and the city he loved. For 16 years he served as the superintendent of Fresno County Schools where he represented 34 school districts, 325 schools, and almost 200,000 students.

He was a loving husband, a proud father, and a distinguished alum of Fresno State. He was part of the 1961 Mercy Bowl team that was a national champion. So it is with a heavy heart that we say good-bye to this man who dedicated his life to making the future of others brighter.

Another individual whom he worked with and whom I worked with was also a pillar of our community and that was George Zenovich. George was a man who lived his life with purpose and a dedication to public service. Born in 1922 of a Slavic family, he was a product of our Valley. He served in the United States Army Air Force. He was student body president at Fresno State.

Later on he enrolled in law school after he married the love of his life, Kika. Upon completion of his degree, he quickly built a strong professional reputation and served in the California Assembly beginning in 1962. Later on he became the majority leader, before taking a seat in the California State Senate.

His impact as a senator was far-reaching, from creating the California Arts Council, to the California Housing Authority Finance Agency, to authorizing the first law in the United States that gave farm workers a chance at collective bargaining through the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. He was an advocate for those voices who sometimes got lost in the political banter.

In 1979, George was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to be on the court of appeals. In 2008, Fresno's new Fifth

District Court of Appeals building was named after him, the George Zenovich Court of Appeals Building, for his lifetime practice of fair and sound jurisprudence. George was a shining example of what a public servant should be and never lost sight of those in the community he served.

Both of these people put their community first. I worked with both George and Pete for years, and they were not only my friends, but they were friends of the Valley they loved and the State they called home, California.

My colleagues, Mr. Speaker, I think it is time for all of us in this body to live up to the memory of these two shining examples, people who we have all worked with throughout our lives, and I think in the true tradition of public service these are the kind of individuals we ought to have as role models when fixing our Nation's budget and putting government back to work.

OPEN AMERICA'S PARKS AND MEMORIALS

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed and sent to the Senate a bipartisan bill to keep our national parks open. Twenty-three Democrats joined the House Republicans to end the closure of these national treasures. They joined us to unlock the gates and to open the doors of these treasures, from Acadia to Zion. They joined with us to tear down the barriers that were erected to block access to our open D.C. memorials that my colleague from South Carolina just alluded to a moment ago. These memorials are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. So the Senate should act today to pass this bill and to send it to the President for his signature.

But it is disappointing to see statements from Senate Democrat leaders dismissing and even ridiculing these commonsense steps as "piecemeal." It is even more disappointing that the President has threatened a veto of this bill to keep the parks open.

Mr. Speaker, let's not forget that one week ago today the Senate Democrats, led by HARRY REID, and the entire Senate, unanimously approved a bill to keep the Federal Helium Reserve open and operating, and last night the President finally signed this bill to prevent a helium shutdown into law. Now, make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Senate unanimously passed it, and I am glad the President signed the law. It is important for our economy.

But the reason I bring this up is that the helium program is part of the Department of the Interior, the Department of the Interior that is responsible for our national parks. So one has to ask, why will the Senate pass and the President sign into law a bill to specifically prevent the closure of our Federal

helium program, but then refuse to act on a bill that would end the closure of over 400 national parks that are visited by millions of Americans every year? The contradictions in their words and actions are glaring. Such political posturing is not only illogical and hypocritical, but the result of that posturing punishes the American people.

Mr. Speaker, this does not need to happen, and it should not happen. So I urge the Senate Democrats and the President to stop going out of their way to make the government shutdown as painful as possible, and I urge the Senate Democrats and the President to come to the table and negotiate an end to this shutdown and to act today to take the reasonable and responsible step of passing a bill to open our parks and memorials to America's veterans, families, and all U.S. citizens.

TRIBUTE TO RAPHAEL BELL

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to express condolences to the family, friends, and parishioners of Bishop Raphael Bell, who passed away this past Sunday while preaching a sermon in his pulpit. As a matter of fact, his wife had suggested that he not go to church, but he indicated that he would go because he thought it might make him feel better.

He was 90 years old. He grew up the son of a sharecropper in Mississippi, moved to Illinois, founded several schools and colleges, became the senior bishop of a diocese, well-loved, well-respected, a tremendous personality. I came to know his family when I taught his nephew 40 years ago and have observed him ever since.

I just wanted to say to his family, friends, and parishioners that they have been graced by the presence of a tremendously great individual who died doing what he liked to do, and that is preach the Gospel.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT IS KILLING THE ECONOMIC ENGINE OF AMERICA

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

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, every day now for the past 3 years, I have heard from the good people of Georgia's Third Congressional District about how expensive their health insurance costs have become and will become as a result of ObamaCare. On Tuesday, their fears of just how unaffordable this Affordable Care Act is became a truly bleak reality to them.

If this train wreck of a law is truly affordable, then why have Georgians seen their premiums increase as much as 300 percent on the exchanges? If it is

affordable, then why do 57 percent of Americans oppose ObamaCare? If this law is affordable, then why is Ruth from LaGrange opting to pay the penalty and forgo insurance because she and her husband can no longer afford to pay their family's premiums under this Affordable Health Care Act? I guess even if Ruth likes her plan, she really can't keep it. She was lied to.

One thing supporters of ObamaCare always tout is that it will help those who are very sick or have preexisting conditions get access to affordable care. Well, let me tell you about Cindy from Newnan who is fighting a brave battle with cancer. Much to her surprise, she has been told by her doctor that under the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, some of the treatments in medicine that make a difference in her being sick just a few days instead of a few weeks will no longer be covered. What about someone who does not have a few weeks? What are they supposed to do? And how do we explain that to Cindy's children?

You know it is a sad day when employers like IBM are left with no choice but to kick retirees off their health care plans. What a reward to those like David of Griffin who have given so many years contributing to their company's success.

And it is not just hurting American families. It is killing small businesses, the economic engine of our country. I just got a letter from Dale in LaGrange, who is one of four owners of a heating and air conditioning company which self-insures their employees.

In an effort to comply with ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, in 2011, the heating and air conditioning company saw their health care costs go up \$38,000 compared to 2010. The same thing happened in 2012. Their costs went up almost \$40,000 from 2011. This means they went from spending \$115,000 on health care for their employees in 2010 to almost \$195,000 just 2 years later.

What is just as concerning is employers who have been forced by ObamaCare to increase their employees' premiums and no longer offer health insurance for spouses or children.

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This change has been a financial disaster for Melanie of Hamilton whose husband will no longer be covered by her employer, TSYS, a great company in my district and a stable source of jobs.

For 3 years, we have seen the disastrous consequences of this supposedly Affordable Care Act, and in just 3 days since the exchanges have gone live, we have heard hundreds of stories similar to the ones I just told. Imagine how much worse things can become in 3 months.

But listen, it's not just the lies we have been told, but it's the lies we're still being told—such as California reporting they had 5 million hits. Finally

today, they confessed, they only had 655,000.

As I have said time and time again, the easy solution is for the President and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join House Republicans and agree to a 1-year delay and defund, just like he has done delay for Big Business and his buddies. Why don't we do it for the American people? Why don't we put all of us in the same class rather than trying to divide this country? Why don't we do the delay? Give them time, if they can, to straighten out this mess and put everybody, small businesses, Americans, everybody, employed and unemployed, in the same class.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I was sitting and listening to some of the previous speakers, and I heard more than one, but one in particular, make the point really forcefully that nobody wants this government shutdown, that universally we oppose, as Members of Congress, keeping our government closed. I just wish that were true.

I have been doing a lot of reading on this and looked back at some of the reports from months ago. There was a really interesting story in a magazine recently that described a strategy to not adopt the budget and to force an argument over the continuing resolution and to force the debate over the Affordable Care Act into the debate about the continuing resolution with the idea that if we don't, here in Congress, capitulate on a previously enacted law that the House and the Senate agreed to, that the President signed and the Supreme Court upheld, if we don't capitulate, that there will be a shutdown of the government. So I only wish it were true that not everybody in this body wanted to avoid this shutdown that is crippling our economy and hurting the American people.

There is something that we can do, however, to get out of this, and it would be simply to allow for a dose of democracy in the House of Representatives; because we know, and I have talked to many Members on both sides of the aisle, particularly Members on the other side, and it is not just the 17 that have already declared their willingness to buck the Tea Party leadership—and essentially the leader of the group in the House is the Senator from Texas. More than 17 are willing to vote for a clean bill to reopen government so that we can get back to the business of legislating. I think it is a big number. I suspect it might even be a majority of the other side. The Senate would approve it. It already has. The President said he would sign it, and a majority of this House, probably a majority of both parties, would approve a clean resolution to reopen government so that we can get on with the fights on things that we don't agree on. That's the way this democracy was designed.