

for corporations, and I'm going to grant over 2,000 waivers for my special interest groups, but yet you, as an American family, hardworking family, you have to comply. And then I thank the gentleman for bringing up the point that, even as the law went into effect, it's unworkable; people can't even sign up.

Do you know that the President has had over half of his deadlines he hasn't been able to meet in this law, he's had to extend them? So that's why we're fighting. Let's wait just at least a year and not force every person in this country to comply.

I'm from Missouri and I know Harry Truman, and he said, "The buck stops here." The buck should stop here with the Commander in Chief when it comes to him allowing the civilians in the military to be furloughed in this country. That has got to stop.

I appreciate my colleagues who brought up this excellent, excellent point about what has happened and the travesty and the injustice and the danger that this Commander in Chief is putting our country in. It's wrong and it needs to stop.

He also needs to open up the memorials. We all understand we have differences of opinion here. We all understand we have to talk about policy. But no President ever has closed open-air memorials in this town that are open 24/7, 365 days a year. But this President has chosen to barricade not only the World War II Memorial, but also the Martin Luther King Memorial and all the others here in Washington, D.C.

□ 1930

We have learned today that they have even closed Normandy. Around the world they are closing the veterans cemeteries. This has got to stop. We can discuss the policy, but these tactics have got to change.

We want everyone in America to know tonight that Republicans, we are here willing and ready to keep working and to talk. It is time for the President and HARRY REID to negotiate, to meet with us, and to discuss our differences and come to an agreement that will result in less government—it will keep our government open though—spend less money, and protect the American people from this onerous health care law.

We can do it. The American people do it every day. We do it in our families. If we have a disagreement, we sit down and talk. My sister and I did it when we were little girls. My mom made us talk. It works.

So let's sit down, let's talk, let's work this out. Let's get our government back open, let's get all the military reinstated, let's reopen the memorials here around this country, and let's put the American people first. We can do it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PETERS of California. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. PETERS of California. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chance to hold this Special Order with some of my freshman colleagues.

I heard some discussion from yesterday, and even some tonight, and thought that it would be appropriate for some of the freshman who just got here and don't have some of the perspective that has pervaded some of the discussion, haven't been here for a lot of the most bitter battles, maybe have a little bit more of a problem-solving attitude, to give our perspective on some of these things and maybe have a constructive discussion of the government shutdown and also the debt ceiling, which I think is a very, very serious thing to discuss as part of a negotiation.

The news today in San Diego will be about the cancellation of the Miramar Air Show that was to take place this weekend. This is a great tradition for our community, an important fundraiser for military families, and really a sad casualty of the current shutdown.

I would like to start my comments by highlighting a more hidden and much more serious effect of the shutdown, just by sharing a couple of emails I received from constituents in the last 3 days. First:

I am an engineer that has supported the Navy and Marine Corps for 26 years and have always given 100 percent to ensure that our military has the best capabilities in the world. Most of the people I work with have gone above and beyond to give the Navy and USMC our very best, especially during the many years of wartime.

Due to sequestration and previous furloughs, I have already lost \$10,000 of income this year and completely depleted my family's savings account. Now I am being furloughed again and this follows 3 years of frozen pay. I am worried for my wife and two young children because I cannot pay the bills if this shutdown continues.

I do not blame one party or the other. I am sure they both think they are doing the right thing. But I worry that they do not know the pain they are causing for the families of dedicated and hardworking civil servants.

A second one:

I am writing to you today concerning our government shutdown. I am an Active Duty spouse of 15 years with two children.

We recently moved to Coronado from Naples, Italy. I have made several sacrifices over the years to follow my husband's career. I have always felt that my husband's job as an officer in the United States Navy was worthy of my sacrifices. I have stood proud by his side.

We have moved 11 times within our 15 years of service, and as always we have budgeted our housing allowance, cost of living, and pay. Today, as I read all the negative comments on social media threads, I feel as though I have wasted 15 years of my life.

I almost fell off the treadmill on the base gym this morning when it hit me: all of the holidays my husband has missed—the birthdays and the anniversaries spent alone—for what reason? For 535 of you to shut us down? Thank God I did not fall off the treadmill this morning, as now our medical staff is on furlough and the area is severely understaffed.

Finally, I am a proud American and that is why I proudly work at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego as a nurse practitioner with the Department of Surgery. I have already endured one furlough. This resulted in a 20 percent pay reduction this summer. I was grateful it ended earlier than planned, but now I am furloughed with a 100 percent loss in pay. It has to stop.

As a San Diego resident, I know you are aware that your mortgages are higher than most. I am also a single mother of two wonderful girls. This makes the additional furlough that much harder to swallow.

Please work with your fellow Representatives to make this government shutdown end as soon as possible. It is hurting the average American much more than D.C. seems to understand.

If our elected officials were forced to take a 20 percent pay reduction and have that followed by a 100 percent pay loss, I am sure the budget would be fixed. I just want to continue to do my job and would appreciate being allowed to do just that. If this continues further, I will be forced to seek other employment.

My faith in our government is failing quickly. Again, please work together to end this situation.

There are stories like that from all these Federal workers. More than 800,000 Federal workers are out of work during the government shutdown. It is not just the D.C. metro area that is affected, as you've heard. From Hawaii to Georgia, workers in regions all over the country rely heavily on the Federal Government. San Diego is the seventh-ranked city with a high share of Federal employees. We have 151,000 workers—10.9 percent of our workforce is affected by this government shutdown.

Obviously, the same is true in Colorado Springs, which is number one; Virginia Beach; Honolulu; the D.C. region; Ogden-Clearfield, Utah; El Paso; Augusta, Georgia; San Diego; and Charleston. Every one of those places has thousands of stories, just like the ones I have told.

It is important for us in D.C. to remember the effect that we are having in the real world. That has often been the biggest surprise for me, that when I leave my district and I've heard these stories and I come here, and we hear that people are talking in these terms of blame and calling each other names and not really doing credit to this institution, and far from solving the problems that have gotten us here.

I have heard a lot of people say: We don't want to shut the government down. Well, we don't have to. I have heard a lot of finger-pointing about who caused it.

But the fact is that today the power to reopen this government rests solely

within the House of Representatives. We know what we have to do. We don't have to wait for the Senate, and we don't have to wait for the President. We can pass a continuing resolution, which is the resolution that funds the government only for 6 weeks or 10 weeks that the Senate has passed. We don't have to have any amendments or anything. We can do that today—or we can at least do it tomorrow—and all these people will be back to work and we can end these stories of fear and pain that are affecting our families and the businesses that they work for.

There has been a lot of yelling about attaching conditions to the continuing resolution. We have been voting on these really literally for weeks now. I am not going to add my voice to those, but I will just say that it seems that those have run their course. None of them has gotten anywhere.

I myself supported some of these conditions. In fact, earlier this year, I voted to delay the individual mandate to match the business mandate. That wasn't something that was popular in my party. I voted for that. But in the context of this continuing resolution, I supported the repeal of the medical device tax. It happens also to be one of my major legislative priorities. I think that is a bad way to fund any part of the government. That got some Democratic votes, but didn't get any support in the Senate.

Today, we got an email from the majority leader who said that "House Republicans believe it is critical we continue to engage and offer meaningful solutions for the American people," which is why he said, on a bipartisan basis with a total of 57 different Democrats voting with us, we have passed bills to reopen the NIH, ensure that the National Guard and Reservists are paid, fund veterans benefits, reopen our national parks, and allow the District of Columbia to expend their local funds.

I voted for all these too. Most of my party didn't. But I thought we had one chance to open these areas up to make sure that they go back to work. It is not the best budgeting thing. I voted for them. But the point is they went nowhere. The Senate will not approve them. If the Senate approved them, the President wouldn't sign them.

So it is time to recognize that we have reached the end of this road and this is not getting us anywhere. We know that these things won't sell, we know that they won't get support in the Senate, and it is time to move on to a basic continuing resolution without amendment.

Now, I have heard people say—some of my colleagues on the other side—say: Well, we need to get something. I just point out that if you look at the numbers—and we all talk extensively about the need in general to control spending and lower our debt—the Senate approved spending until November at the Republican level.

President Obama's budget proposal was for \$1.2 trillion. The Senate's bud-

get was for \$1.06 trillion, or about \$2 trillion less. And the Senate approved a spending level of the continuing resolution at an annual rate of \$986 billion. That is a cut of \$72 billion from the Senate budget—that is 7 percent less than the Senate had proposed—and \$217 billion less than the President's proposed budget, 18 percent.

So to say that you needed to get something, I think certainly at this point the Republicans have won the war over discretionary spending. Now, that is not a war that people are going to give up on. But in the continuing resolution, which we are asking to vote on, have a chance to vote on in the House, the Republicans number was the number used.

At this time, I would like to yield to my colleague from the State of Washington, DEREK KILMER, who serves with me on the Armed Services Committee and also on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Mr. KILMER. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the good gentleman from California for organizing this time.

Far and away the most common thing said to me over the last year has been: Dear God, why on Earth would you want to be in Congress, particularly when you have two little kids and Congress is such a mess?

I will tell you, at every occasion I have responded the same way: It is because I got two little kids and Congress is a mess. I actually care about what kind of country they grow up in. I think if people who think that this is okay and sit on the sidelines, we are never going to fix it.

I will tell you, it is strange to join an organization that, according to recent polling information, is held in lower regard than head lice. Having only been here for about 9 months, I have a pretty good sense of why.

When I got here, Congress was in the process of enacting this policy of sequestration across-the-board cuts, which have had dramatic impacts in my neck of the woods where you have seen workers furloughed, cuts to critical agencies and critical services. In Kitsap County, where I serve, they have ended mental health outreach to senior citizens because of sequestration.

We have seen impacts to our region's largest employer—the United States Navy. We have seen impact after impact. If that wasn't enough, we have gone beyond—we all remember the fiscal cliff. We are now at, like, the fiscal mountain range, where we go from self-imposed crisis to self-imposed crisis. First, it was sequestration, then it was a government shutdown, and coming up next is the possibility that our Nation defaults on its financial obligations.

Unfortunately, Congress is earning the low regard in which citizens currently hold it.

Let me talk a little bit about the shutdown and how it affects the folks

that I represent. You have heard a lot about furloughs. I have got in my district 3,500 workers at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard who are now on furlough. Just outside of my district we have Joint Base Lewis-McChord—10,000 workers have been furloughed. The largest land base in my district is Olympic National Park, which is an extraordinary tourist destination which is now closed for business—103 workers at Olympic National Park out on furlough.

But it is actually not just the impact to the Federal workforce that should concern us; it is the impact to the private economy. Before I came here I spent my professional career working in economic development. I spent 10 years working in economic development in Tacoma, Washington.

I am concerned, for example, that you are seeing a delay in the issuance of Small Business Administration loans because of a government shutdown. I am concerned that this shutdown is at a cost to taxpayers of \$150 million to \$300 million a day. But primarily I am concerned that, as you have seen Congress govern from crisis to crisis, that we figured the one thing that more than anything businesses want from government.

In the 10 years I worked in economic development, the thing I heard more often from employers than anything else was that they looked to government for an environment of trust and predictability. I think Congress has completely messed that up.

□ 1945

I will tell you that I don't think it has to be like this. In fact, I came out of a reasonably functional State legislature. The last three bills we passed in the Washington State Senate before I left were a balanced budget, a debt reduction proposal and a jobs bill. Out of the 49 members of the Washington State Senate, the balanced budget passed with all but two votes; the debt reduction proposal passed with all but seven votes; and the jobs bill passed with all but one. It was largely because we worked together. We didn't define "success" as making the other side of the aisle look like a failure.

I think, frankly, given the challenges facing our country, that gig ought to be up. We should be leading by example. We ought to be working together. We should be solving problems together. I am certainly, as one of 435, trying to do that. It means, for example, when the government shuts down and when the people whom I represent are no longer drawing paychecks, I am not either. That's why I supported a bill that many of us supported that was known as No Budget, No Pay, which said: if Congress can't pass a budget, Members of Congress shouldn't get paid.

When I served in the legislature, I knocked on 52,000 doors. The biggest change in recent years was that people were home because they were out of

work. I talked to parents who were concerned that our community's largest export was going to be our kids, and the vast majority of people I talked to actually did not give a rip about whether we get more Democratic or more Republican or move more to the left or more to the right. They just want us to stop moving backwards and to start moving forward again. So, in the brief minute I have remaining, let me talk about what I think "forward" ought to look like.

"Forward" ought to look like reopening the government. End this government shutdown now. It should mean taking action to make sure our Nation doesn't default on its financial obligations, which is an act that would ensure that costs go up for our small businesses, that costs go up for our families and that everyone's retirement goes down. It means working together to ensure that we actually pass a budget, and that's going to take Democrats and Republicans in the House and in the Senate to work together to pass a budget.

We're all freshmen up here. When we went through freshman orientation, there was a presentation on how the budget process works. The way it works is that the House passes a budget, and the Senate passes a budget. Then it goes to conference. The House passes appropriations bills, and the Senate passes appropriations bills. Then they go to conference to compromise. After about 40 minutes of presenting that, they then said, Well, that hasn't happened, though, in years.

It ought to happen. We should get that back on track. We should get this country back on track. We also need to focus on the economy.

I spent a decade working in economic development. We had a sign up on the wall in our office that said: "We are competing with everyone, everywhere, every day forever." If we think our competitor nations are participating in the frivolity that our government is currently participating in, we have another think coming. China in the last decade has doubled its number of higher education institutions. They have multiplied five-fold their number of students at colleges and universities on top of the 200,000 students who are studying abroad, primarily in fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

And what are we doing? Here we sit with a government shutdown, impeding our economic recovery, hurting our businesses in this Nation.

We can't afford this. We should stop this. We need to get people back to work, but, Madam Speaker, we need to get this Congress back to work, too. That's why all of us as freshman Members are here. We want to get this country moving forward again.

Mr. PETERS of California. I thank the gentleman.

You talked about how we define "success." I know you and I have spoken, as have many Members, about

how we can get away with what we call "success" here.

So what happens—and what has happened in this context, too—is that a number of things will be proposed, and they won't go anywhere. Then what will happen is a bunch of finger-pointing will come after: well, I proposed this, and I voted for it and I voted against it. Imagine if you were a CEO of a company that made a product and that you said, I created a great product, and I think you'll really like it.

It sounds great to the CEO, and the CEO says, Oh, that sounds terrific. How many did you sell?

I didn't sell any, but they really should buy it.

That's what Congress is doing. That's kind of how we define "success" around here: well, I stuck them with a good bill even though no one's going to vote for it. Of course, in business or in your family, you'd actually have to listen to what the other side wanted if you wanted to reach a result that was a success. That's what "success" would be, and I thank you for pointing that out.

I would also say, on No Budget, No Pay, which I also supported, it was the concept that, if Congress doesn't do its job, we shouldn't get a paycheck. We were proud that day when we worked together with our Republican colleagues, and we passed No Budget, No Pay. We forced the Senate, controlled by Democrats, to pass the first budget that they passed in 4 years. That's all well and good unless we actually talk together. I saw a picture this week of Mr. CANTOR and some of his colleagues waiting at a table for people to come have a conference. We've been waiting for that all year on this budget, and we came in good faith and tried to pass No Budget, No Pay. Wouldn't it be good if we could use this time or if we could use the next few weeks to sit down and actually hammer out a budget through that process, and this is the time to do it.

Before I turn it over to another colleague, I'll just remind my colleagues of the report from The Washington Post last December regarding President Obama's budget proposal back then, which said that, for the first time, he is formally proposing to trim Social Security benefits—a GOP demand that is anathema to many Democrats; that he is also offering to make meaningful reductions in Medicare benefits, including higher premiums for couples making more than \$170,000 a year; and that he visited each of the caucuses earlier this year and told the House Democrats, by the way, you can't take \$3 out of Medicare for every dollar you put in. He said that our corporate tax rates were too high for our companies to compete internationally.

This has been going on all year, ladies and gentlemen, with no effort to negotiate at all because it's the leadership of the Speaker here who won't appoint conferees because, apparently, they're concerned about getting it. So

we waited until this moment of crisis to talk about something that you and I have been waiting for all year.

With that, I would like to yield some time to my colleague from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER).

Ms. KUSTER. I want to thank my colleague from California (Mr. PETERS) for the opportunity this evening to talk about civility, to talk about coming together and finding common ground and, most importantly, to talk about getting things done.

I first ran for Congress because our Congress here, our government, was mired in dysfunction, and I truly felt that our country needs our help. I want to say that I believe my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who are new Members of Congress, including the gentlelady in the chair, share that concern. We have found common ground on a number of issues. I was very proud to work with another freshman, Mrs. WALORSKI, to pass a bill unanimously in this House to help victims of medical, sexual trauma. We came together, and we got 110 bipartisan sponsors, so I know that what we bring to this august body is the ability to find common ground.

Then, as now, my goal is to bring people together. These are commonsense solutions. My colleague Mr. PETERS has just reiterated discussions that have been going on in various rooms in this building—from the White House to Capitol Hill—throughout this year about entitlement reform, about tax reform, about controlling spending, but, most importantly, about providing the services that people across this country need from our government.

I come from New Hampshire, the Granite State. We are frugal people, and New Hampshire families don't need more bickering in Washington. They need real solutions to grow the economy, to foster job creation and to expand opportunity for the middle class. That's what they sent me here to do. One of my staffers said to me today that, after the week we've just had, you can't fix the roof when it's pouring out by plugging up just a few holes.

We've got to come together and solve the whole problem; and I, for one, know that we can do it. I know that we actually have the votes in this body right now to come together and take that vote, a bipartisan vote, to get the country and our government opening again.

Honestly, Granite State families don't expect Congress to agree on everything. We don't. We have significant differences. Some of them are religious. Some of them are political. Some of them come from our backgrounds and our life experiences. We have real disagreements on issues of significant importance to our country, but they do expect us to work together when we can find areas of agreement. We cannot have cooperation without open dialogue. That's what we're asking for here tonight—civility—which is a common theme, and coming together and creating dialogue, especially now.

This is the moment for which we ran for Congress. Our government is lurching from crisis to crisis, and what the American people expect and need from their leaders is to come together and find that common ground, to work across the aisle, break the gridlock, end the shutdown, take this bipartisan vote, and restore services for the people we represent and get our country and government working again. We won't get this done solely with Democratic ideas or Republican ideas. Frankly, I don't care if an idea is proposed by a Republican or a Democrat. If it's a commonsense solution to the problems we face, let's support it.

In New Hampshire, here is how we get things done. I've been making calls all week back to my district as we've been here, voting, to find out what is the impact of the Federal Government shutdown and what I can do to help. So I've talked to mayors all across my district. Let me tell you that these are real people's real lives, and it's going to cause serious pain. I called a small town up north, near the Canadian border. It is a paper mill town. They've lost thousands of jobs in this community.

So I asked the mayor, What is it that's happening on the ground there?

He started to tell me about a woman who works for the United States Department of Agriculture, and what she does is help with rural economic development. She helps with small business loans.

He said, She's not at work—she has been furloughed—and there are eight small business applications sitting on her desk.

Now, this is a small town. If there are eight small businesses in this town that won't get those loans and can't create new jobs, that's a problem.

Because this is the kind of person he is and this is the kind of town it is, he said, And she is a single mom without a paycheck.

He wanted me to know that.

Then I talked with mayors of big cities and smaller towns. I talked to businesses. I wanted to understand what's the impact on the business community. Now, I've talked to lots of Federal employees this week, and I've talked to their unions, and I have tremendous compassion for the folks who have been sent home, but I want my colleagues across the aisle to understand the impact on our economy.

So, today, I was talking to large employers. These are government contractors. They're vendors. They build things, and they provide services for our military, for IT—for everything that we use in this country to keep us safe and to keep us strong. They said thousands of jobs will be lost; and if you read the headlines today, we have already lost thousands.

I know that, with civility and trust and mutual respect, we can resolve these tired, partisan battles and that we can renew our focus on what really matters: fostering job creation, making

smart spending cuts, taking the responsibility to reduce the deficit, encouraging innovation, growing the economy, growing opportunity for the middle class. With a little more civility in the Halls of Congress, I am confident that we can resolve this crisis and redouble our focus on our shared priorities.

Finally, I spoke with our Governor. Our Governor, Maggie Hassan, said to me, Annie, tell them how we get this done in New Hampshire.

We have a Democratic Governor and a Democratic House and a Republican Senate. It sounds familiar. It's a little bit twisted from what we have here in Washington, but it's the same effect. It's a divided government. Yet, in New Hampshire, we don't see it as a divided government. We see it as an opportunity to reach across the aisle and to bring people together and find common ground.

She said, Remind them that we have just passed a budget in New Hampshire that was unanimous in the Republican Senate, virtually unanimous in the Democratic House, signed by the Democratic Governor and, most importantly for all here in Washington, it was a balanced budget. The revenues and the expenditures were equal.

□ 2000

That's what I'm talking about here today. Come together and have the discussion about how to get our fiscal house in order, how to create jobs, and how to provide opportunity.

Finally, I'm going to close with a phone call that I got this week, SCOTT, that made a tremendous difference in my perspective on this. It was a crackly line coming into my office. A young intern answered the phone. When she could finally understand the speaker on the other end of the line, he said, This is Joe. I'm calling from Afghanistan.

He is a soldier in Afghanistan, and he's there to serve our country. He said, I am here working hard for my family and my country, and I want you to do the same.

The message that Joe had for me is that he wants affordable, accessible health care for his family and for families all across New Hampshire and all across this country. He said, Do not give up on that, but you have got to open this government.

People need the help that they deserve. Our economy needs the strength and the vitality. We can't leave thousands of people without their jobs, without their pay. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to please bring this vote to the floor. We can pass this with a bipartisan vote, and we can move our country forward.

I thank the gentleman from California for giving us this opportunity.

Mr. PETERS of California. I thank the gentlelady from New Hampshire. Again, you're absolutely right. All we have to do to get this started again is to put the Senate resolution before this

House. We could vote on that tomorrow, and the government would be open immediately thereafter. I think obviously that's what we would all like to do.

I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. First, I want to thank my good friend from California (Mr. PETERS) for organizing this important discussion this evening and reminding all Americans how important it is to end this ridiculous and disgraceful shutdown we're in right now.

The damage this manufactured crisis is causing is unacceptable. I've heard daily from hundreds of my constituents who have already felt the pain from the shutdown over the past 4 days. They all express the same sentiment: Enough already. I share this frustration.

I received a letter today from a local Navy veteran, and it particularly stood out to me. I just want to share a brief part of this story that I read.

I'm a recently discharged veteran of the U.S. Navy.

During the 5 years I served, I was told continually that when I left the service behind, I would be taken care of, and I believed that implicitly. Well, I couldn't have been more wrong.

Since I was discharged over 2 months ago, I've struggled to get unemployment and find work. I am currently receiving VA disability for service-connected injuries, or at least I was before the government shut down yesterday.

I rely on my disability to survive, and now I don't even know when the next payment will arrive. To complicate matters further, I've attempted to start up school and use my GI benefits only to find out that the VA will run out of money by the end of this month if the shutdown continues. So no more disability or education benefits, benefits I've earned, benefits I got for sacrificing 5 of the best years of my life for. So, essentially, I paid into this program, made sacrifices too numerous to count, was deployed around the world twice in support of the global war on terrorism, and now I come to find out all of that amounts to nothing.

This shutdown has negatively impacted my life more than I ever thought possible. The mere fact that veterans benefits were even on the table as part of the shutdown is an outrage in itself. Have we not done enough? What more do I need to sacrifice? We have a hard enough time surviving overseas, and this is the treatment we come home to, our own government shutting down and unable to take care of us.

I plan on applying for food stamps soon. I never dreamed my life would come to this, especially after serving my country. But, hey, I guess that's what our government has come to.

Please do whatever it takes to end this shutdown.

Well, Joshua, I never dreamed it would come to this either, that our Nation would be willing to break its promise to the brave men and women like you over partisan games.

I called Joshua today to let him know that I, too, am appalled and that I am here fighting for him, alongside my colleagues, alongside our Nation's veterans, seniors, and all Americans who have had enough, enough of the shutdown, enough of the games,

enough of these manufactured crises. That is why I'm leading efforts urging leadership to immediately vote on reopening the government. Our fragile economy cannot afford one more day of this disgraceful shutdown, and neither can veterans such as Joshua.

I urge the House to pass a clean spending bill immediately and put an end to this nonsensical shutdown.

Mr. PETERS of California. I thank the gentleman from Florida.

I guess it is cold comfort to Joshua to hear that the House has been voting on these piecemeal approaches. I'm not saying that they were ill-motivated. Many of us supported them, but they're not working. It is time for us to learn the lesson, I believe, and I agree with you. Put the Senate resolution on the floor and open this government back up, and we can do our work in Congress that we were sent to do and we were paid to do without stopping the government. I think those comments were very well put, and I thank the gentleman.

The other thing we heard about, in addition to we need to get something or we need to sit down and talk, is the idea that we have to repeal or do away with the health care law. I would just say this about being a freshman. We weren't here for these votes. None of us cast a vote either way on the Affordable Care Act or ObamaCare, but we heard a lot of questions about it and we took those questions very seriously. Most of us said we should try to fix them, but we're also realistic.

We've seen that the health care law was passed by Congress a few years ago, signed by the President; it was okayed by the Supreme Court, and it survived a number of additional repeal votes here in the House of Representatives. It appears that it's here to be with us to stay. It's been rolling out with mixed reports this week, but I think in many places people are finding hope that they can get affordable health care. Clearly, we have more work to do, and I stand here willing to help fix the Affordable Care Act to the extent we need it.

I've expressed my own concern about the medical device tax. I think that's something that should be repealed. There are others, like the Cadillac tax. I think we should provide new incentives for wellness. I think we should get out of the way of technology and encourage technology as an approach to lower costs. I'm willing to get to work on that.

That law took a long time to pass. It was very contentious. Those problems won't be solved to the satisfaction of the Congress or to the completion of the task within the time we're talking about while shutting the government down, so let's get to work and not hold the government up for that.

My final observation about this shutdown is that I feel I'm reminded of when I practiced law and I tried cases. I liked having a case with a good lawyer on the other side, because a good

lawyer knew where he or she was going, and you could tell kind of what the strategy was and where you were going to end up. I feel, in this case, like I'm trying a case against a lawyer who is inexperienced or doesn't know what he's doing in the sense that I can't figure out where he's going. I'm hoping that if there is some resolution that can happen, we would love to be a part of it. I think it starts with passing the continuing resolution that the Senate passed and getting this government open right now.

I would like to close with a few comments on the other issue that we haven't gotten to, but I think it concerns me greatly. That's the debt ceiling. It's one thing to argue over the continuing resolution—we've been talking about that—and shutting down the government. That's a bad thing. It's something I hope we'll end soon. As I said before, it's something that's entirely within our power to do without the help of the Senate or the President. We just vote for that resolution that the Senate passed, and the government would be open tomorrow.

I hear talk about the debt ceiling as though it's the same thing. It is not. The debt ceiling is a dangerous tactic for negotiation. It's bad business, it's bad economics, and it's bad government.

First, I'd start by talking about what it's like to do business in this way, and it occurs to me that my parents must be asking themselves about the people who would play with the debt ceiling. Who raised these people?

What we're doing here with the debt ceiling, talking about not paying our debts, it's like getting the credit card bill, opening it up and seeing how much you bought, and deciding at that point, Well, no, I've got to control spending. I don't want to pay this. That's too late to have the discussion.

I remember my parents—my father is a minister. My mom stayed home, worked part time to help us with college. I have vivid memories of them laying out the bills on the dining room table to make sure they could figure out their cash flow, how they were going to pay each bill, what day of the month each bill was due. They made every payment because they always taught me about making sure you kept good credit. We know now about credit scores and how important it is to be on time, and families all over the country understand that kind of approach. For us to take this approach that we're not going to pay the debts that we've incurred is just the wrong way to do business, and it's terrible economics.

The Treasury reported this week:

With the government likely to exhaust its cash reserves around October 17, the Treasury said being forced into nonpayment of any of its obligations—and in particular, its debt—would spark turmoil in the financial markets and possibly send the country back to recession as deep as that of 2008 and 2009.

We know we've been coming out of that, but very slowly. We don't want to go back there.

In the event that a debt limit impasse were to lead to a default, it could have a catastrophic effect not just on financial markets but also on job creation, consumer spending, and economic growth.

Credit markets could freeze, the value of the dollar could plummet, U.S. interest rates could skyrocket, the negative spillovers could reverberate around the world, and there might be a financial crisis and recession that could echo the events of 2008 or worse.

This is not some political statement. This is what we're hearing from The Wall Street Journal, from the banking community, from the financial sector. They're saying stay away from this. CNNMoney said:

Forget the current government shutdown. Economists say it's the upcoming debt ceiling impasse that could plunge the Nation into a recession.

About half of the 22 economists surveyed by CNNMoney say a recession will be unavoidable if Congress fails to raise the Nation's debt ceiling before the Treasury runs out of cash later this month.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's not get to that point.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot mess with the debt ceiling. The government shutdown is bad enough. We're kind of playing around the edges. I urge that we put the Senate resolution before the House so we can vote on it and open this government tomorrow. Let us not touch, let us not play with the notion, let us not suggest to anyone that America won't pay the debts it's incurred.

Finally, from an article called "After the Shutdown" posted by James Surowiecki, I just offer this—he is speaking in partisan terms, but anyone who thinks this I think it applies to:

This is why the Republican approach to the debt ceiling is not, as people like Zeke J. Miller of Time have argued, the kind of hostage-taking that's a "standard way of doing business in Washington." This is really an attempt to remake the legislative process itself and to do so by threatening to do something—default—that no one, including the people making the threat, believes to be in the best interest of the United States. We can't be sure of exactly what would happen if the U.S. stopped paying its bills, but at the very least it would lead to havoc in the bond market and the financial system (which depends on U.S. treasuries as risk-free collateral), higher interest rates, and an immediate hit to economic growth. It's not a road that anyone should want to go down.

Mr. Speaker, in my view, it is not a road we should even be considering going down. As bad as the continuing resolution is and the fight over the shutdown, I know that just behind us is a much more dangerous prospect, and I want to warn of that.

Finally, I suggest to folks that I have offered two bills that would provide an alternative and would help us deal with the national debt. They would work very simply. When debt was declining as a percentage of the economy, which means we have it under control, the debt ceiling would adjust without a vote, payments would go out; and when debt started to increase as a percentage of the economy, which means we're

not having it under control—we all understand that long-term debt can't continue to rise as a percentage of the economy without hurting our economic future. In that case, we need a mechanism to do something more than just yell at each other and call each other names, which I know the freshmen that were with me tonight are still amazed that that's what happens here, but that's what happens way too often.

□ 2015

We need a mechanism to force a discussion of really how to manage the debt. And our bill would provide that, if we are in the condition where debt's rising as a percentage of GDP and the President and the leaders of Congress didn't do anything about it, which is a condition we find ourselves in today, then individual Members, Mr. Speaker, would be able to propose their own measures without the blessing of leadership but with the sponsorship of only 50 of their colleagues to force a discussion on how to manage that debt and get it under control. Now that's just one idea. But at this point, I think it's the only idea on the table to actually avoid this in a constructive way.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chance to offer some thoughts on these issues with my colleagues. And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MULLIN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk about ObamaCare, as most people call it. It's just difficult after the hundreds of stories we're getting from back home—not just me, but so many Members of Congress. It's just hard to call it the "Affordable Care Act" when we're hearing from so many that are saying, it's so very unaffordable.

It was interesting, so many members of the media were chomping at the bit to find somebody who was able to get online and sign up for ObamaCare successfully. They grabbed a young man, Chad Henderson. He talked Thursday about his Internet experience, applying for insurance through the Affordable Care Act, through the Web site. So he was kind of a media icon.

Gee, this young 21-year-old kid, this young man from Georgia got right on, and signed up for ObamaCare. Then we find the rest of the story. So many were using his story. Oh, Chad Henderson. He got signed up very easily.

But here's a story by Kate Harrison today, on Friday, that says:

A day after a 21-year-old Flintstone, Georgia, man became the subject of national media attention—including a front page Times Free Press story—for being one of the first Americans to actually get through ObamaCare's glitchy Web site and enroll for coverage, he acknowledged that he hadn't completed that process.

Amidst the initial publicity, Chad Henderson was hailed by supporters of the Affordable Care Act as an example of the new system working and was attacked by those against the law for buying into the plan and for being a volunteer for Organized for Action, a nonprofit promoting President Barack Obama's agenda.

Today, a libertarian magazine, Reason, called Henderson's account into question after a conversation with Henderson's father, who said that he and his son had not actually bought a plan off of the ObamaCare site yet.

In an interview today with the Times Free Press, Chad Henderson confirmed that he hadn't actually purchased a plan, but he insisted he hadn't lied. He said the confusion was in the wording.

"I never actually said I purchased a plan," he said. "I said that I submitted an application, and so I enrolled. I haven't actually paid for a plan, though I found one that I liked. I never meant to mislead anyone."

When he first talked with the Times Free Press on Thursday, Chad Henderson said he had "picked" a bronze plan from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia that had a premium between \$175 and \$200. He said that the specific plan fit into his budget, though he wished it covered more.

In his initial tweet, Henderson said "Enrolled in #ObamaCare just now! Looking forward to having affordable health care for the first time!"

Today, Henderson said he stood by those comments, but repeated that he never specifically said he had purchased a plan.

Then Ace of Spades apparently does a lot of online looking and comes up with some interesting things. He posts this today:

Chad Henderson actually disclosed that he was a partisan paid to post "advocacy things" on social media.

So who's the bad guy here? Chad Henderson was not coy about his passionate support of Barack Obama or his volunteer (?) position with OFA. And here he says, "Something you should know about me," and then discloses he's paid to post advocacy stuff.

And then it has an inset where the following is quoted from his posting:

I'm often labeled "the guy who always talks about politics." And it normally has negative affects LOL. So I'm here to clear things up. If you were to hang out with me one night, you'll see I'm not that obsessed with politics at all. Yes, I do post political stuff on here and other social networking sites, but it's for good reason. For one, I think it's good if people get some insight into the world they live in. Secondly, I work for an organization that pays me quarterly to post the political stuff as advocacy. So it's kind of my job.

It's kind of the way it seems things go around here. You have people with the Tea Party who seem to have one thing in common—they all pay income tax. Different races, age, national origin. I've met people at Tea Parties from countries all over the world, as I've been around the country. They pay income tax. They want the government to be responsible.

And as we've been out each day to the World War II Memorial, where somebody in the administration thought it would be cute to make veterans suffer, would create a good visual image of how much suffering, since

they knew 21 out of 21 stories by the mainstream media would blame the Republicans, which they did. I thought, Wow, if they will all blame the Republicans even though they appointed negotiators, ask us to just negotiate, we wouldn't negotiate. We told them we wouldn't negotiate because we knew the mainstream media would blame everybody on the Republican side so we could do whatever we wanted. So let's create as much pain in this country as we possibly can because the mainstream media will help us ensure that the American people are duped into believing Republicans are to blame.

So this was the game from the beginning. There were no paid veterans out there from World War II to see the memorial that was constructed to them. They were out there hoping to roll in their wheelchairs down the granite open sidewalks, around the outdoor open air memorial that was constructed in such a way it would never have to be closed, that it could be open 24/7.

And I can tell you, I've been down there all hours of the day and night—10 p.m., 10 a.m., 2 a.m., 4 a.m. And no, I don't drink. I just go down there sometimes with folks to see the memorials that were constructed for America. And most of the time, I don't see any park rangers, no Park Service people.

But someone in this administration, some people in this administration thought it would be really cute to put barricades up at the World War II Memorial, the open air granite sidewalk, open 24/7 without guards most of the time, that would be cute. Because that would really play well in the media.

Then we find out, as protesters came down there as we were getting some more veterans in this week, Patrick Poole, a reporter, had his camera going when he saw these protesters, these union protesters coming, protesting supposedly because they're Federal workers who were put out of a job and are out there protesting, demanding Republicans get them back to work.

When one with a McDonald's employee shirt on was asked about—they saw the McDonald's shirt, Patrick said, How much are you getting paid to come protest? And he says into the camera, \$15. Well, it took an SEIU supervisor, who must have put the whole thing together, to come running over eventually to explain, Oh, but he works as a franchisee in a museum. He was not a Federal worker. He worked for McDonald's, and he got paid \$15 to go protest down where these World War II veterans in wheelchairs were just trying to enjoy a moment which for so many of them was very poignant, very emotional as they thought about their time in the Atlantic, in the Pacific, fighting for freedom in lands so far from home.

To some, it's a game. We heard the leak from the administration that, Why would we bring this shutdown to an end in this Obama administration when we're winning, as if it were a game.