

because an American bankruptcy has deprived us of the money needed to pay for them.

Why do I fight? I fight to minimize the risk of America suffering a debilitating bankruptcy that can destroy the America it took our ancestors centuries to build.

Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to use any tools I can to win that fight, because this is one fight America cannot afford to lose. That is why I fight.

LET US VOTE

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, this will be a short 5-minute, indeed a short 1-minute, because it all can be said in a very few words.

Yesterday, the Speaker said "there are not enough votes in the House to pass" a clean bill to fund the government and end the shutdown.

There is one clear way to find out, Mr. Speaker: let us vote on the floor of the House.

On Saturday, 195 of us Democrats sent a letter to the Speaker, saying we are willing to vote "yes." And the reports are also 22 Republicans at least are ready to vote "yes." That's a majority. There are enough votes to end the shutdown.

And Mr. Speaker, if you don't believe it, let us vote.

HEALTH CARE EXCHANGES WORKING

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today marks day 7 since the rollout of the health care exchanges under the Affordable Care Act. Listening to the hysterical rhetoric from the majority party in the House, you would think that America's basic freedoms and economy would be in ruins after day 7. And in fact, there have been some problems in terms of some of the accessing through the database that was set up.

Part of the problem was the fact that millions of Americans, far more than anyone expected, even the most ardent supporters of the law, have swamped the system, which, if you think about it, I think speaks volumes about the fact that there is a tremendous need out there for this affordable care—which, again, the law I think made an historic step in terms of advancing it.

I am proud of the fact that coming from the State of Connecticut, which, again, is one of the States that did not stonewall the legislation, Governor Malloy moved forward as quickly as possible and set up a system that was actually ready last week to deal with the onslaught of emails and calls into the call centers. As of Friday, they tallied over 100,000 contacts that came into the system. Again, they enrolled

actually over a thousand people even though, again, coverage doesn't even begin until January.

So for a lot of people, again, the need to enroll right away doesn't exist right now because you have to actually write a check if you are going to enroll this early. But nonetheless, still, a thousand people have already signed up. And as I said, 100,000 were able to contact the system and interacted with it with little or no problem.

First of all, I would just like to again congratulate Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman, who has been sort of shepherding and quarterbacking this process over the last few months or so, again, to make sure that Connecticut's system was ready.

And I wanted to share, again, a couple of the stories of individuals who contacted the Connecticut Health Exchange over the last week or so to describe their experiences. There was 48-year-old Elly Baros, who said that she was pleased to be one step closer to enrolling in health insurance. The New Britain woman, who spent the entire afternoon at the health center going through her options, has been without coverage for a year and a half due to a layoff.

She said that she has been holding her breath, thanking God every day "I don't get sick or get into a car accident." She was excited to learn that she could get good individual coverage for about \$70 to \$200 a month or possibly even qualify for expanded Medicaid coverage.

I had a conversation and an email with a woman from Norwich, who is a 50-year-old, self-employed individual, who said to me:

I currently pay \$980 a month for coverage for myself. I have a rare preexisting condition known as trigeminal neuralgia, which is treated by medication in four annual visits to my doctor. For this, I am considered a "heavy utilizer." My condition interferes with my ability to earn.

Right now, what she is paying is on par with her mortgage payment.

After speaking with my insurance agent, I found out that my premiums under the Affordable Care Act will be cut to \$440 a month.

When I spoke to her on the phone the other day, she said when her agent called her and gave her this news she did a happy dance in her office, knowing that her health insurance premiums were going to be cut in half. Again, a 50-year-old, working individual who is now paying \$980 a month is seeing her health insurance bill cut in half because of the health care exchange.

She is one of these people who has contacted the system, but she hasn't enrolled yet, but she will. Believe me. She cannot believe that we are at a point right now where there is a concerted, intentional effort to shut the government down in an effort to deny her—somebody who, again, has a preexisting condition—access to a smarter, more rational marketplace than the one that exists today.

The stories go on and on.

I have a letter from an individual who actually wrote to The New York Times, talking about the fact that on day 1 there were reports about how terrible the system is. She said:

I tried to sign up. I had absolutely no difficulty getting all the answers I needed and all the forms to fill out on the very first try. The entire process was simple, direct, and easy to follow. Please don't forget all of us who, while maybe not newsworthy, are a large part of the equation.

Her name is Hu Lindsay from Norwalk, Connecticut.

So, again, the folks at the health care exchange who have been planning and preparing for months have demonstrated that that demand can be met if you have the right planning in place and that, when people actually have a chance to get past all the nonsense that is thrown around out there about the end of American freedom and actually see that they can buy private health insurance plans—again, Connecticut offers three private health insurance plans, Anthem Blue Cross, ConnectiCare, and Healthy Connecticut—the system will work. That's why we must keep this government open and not buckle to the folks who want to repeal or defund the Affordable Care Act.

SHUTDOWN'S IMPACT IN MY DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Good morning. I thought it was important to come as soon as I arrived after 24 hours in my district. After voting to restore the payment compensation to our Federal employees—some 800,000-plus who are now laid off, which means that Americans are not receiving vital services—I wanted to go home for a moment to be able to interact with my constituents.

In that period of time, I met doctors; I met carpenters and millwrights; I spoke to those in the arts community. I commemorated the 70th anniversary of Catholic Charities at a mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral. I listened to our cardinal talk with great faith, the cardinal of our community in the Houston-Galveston Diocese, and the cardinal that is named by the previous Pope, who now resides in our community, who gave us the words the just live by faith.

I indicated that I would come back to let this body know that the people who are being affected are not Republicans or Democrats or Green Party or Independents, or any other definition other than Americans. And I was overwhelmed by those who came up to me and indicated—from airline pilots—that negotiation and interaction is important, but don't break on the issue of the Affordable Care Act and getting this government open.

They understand it. These are people who are being impacted, like the workers today of an aircraft company in

Connecticut that is laying off 2,000 people, the Pentagon contractor that will soon be laying off thousands of people, the tax deadline for those who haven't filed coming up on October 15, needing IRS workers to help them with issues that they have in terms of filing their tax forms, or even the Federal courts, which will be assessing on October 15 whether or not they can keep their doors open for the moving of justice in this Nation.

So I think it is extremely important that whatever is tying you up, whatever is keeping you from looking at the common good—and I would offer to say to the American people everyone knows that we are not Greece. We wish the best for the people of Greece. But America is the richest country in the world, \$4 trillion in economy, and a country that is looked to from all around the world.

Our economy is bigger than the European Union. That means countries like Spain, Germany, France, England, all those members who as well are our allies, but look to America—how shameful it is for someone to be held, and if you will, tied up by their own individual personal interests.

One would ask if the Founding Fathers, as imperfect as America was as she began, had come from the 13 Colonies and various districts, and probably interests, and had held to those specialized interests, would we have created a Nation that started out by saying we organize to create a more perfect Union? Albeit that there were groups of populations that did not have dignity and justice and citizenship at that time, something that I could look back at in bitterness, but I do not, because this is the greatest Nation in the world. But we are not showing ourselves that way.

It is not the truth to suggest that there are not enough voters, Members of Congress, that would vote right now today to open this government. It is something called a continuing resolution, but it's a bill that you put on the floor that has been passed already by Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate.

This is not an idea of anyone over another person. Republican and Democratic Senators have already voted for this clean bill that we could vote on today. We have martial law. What that means—and my colleagues know what it means—is that you can put a bill on in just minutes.

So, rather than deciding amongst your children which ones to feed, which is the approach that my Republican friends in leadership are doing—squeezing out one little skinny bill versus another, squeezing out bills that leave out the FAA inspectors, leaving out ICE that deals with immigration, leaving out those who are dealing with young people who are undocumented, leaving out those who are helping young couples who want to get a home with mortgage processing. Who knows whose homes are going to be impacted

by the heavy rains that are up and down the east coast who may need Federal assistance? All of that is being dumbed down—lost—because we have not opened the government.

I come today, Mr. Speaker, to ask all of us to turn to our American card, and hold up the American card—I am an American—and vote to open this government right now.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Andrew Walton, Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

God of light and life, our prayer today is simple.

May the eternal Spirit that embraces all good deliver us from fear.

May the hearts, minds, and souls of the women and men of this House of Representatives elected to serve the people be released from fear into freedom.

In freedom, may they discover and rediscover what is already deep within themselves as humans created in divine image.

May every conversation and deliberation of this day and days to follow be filled with compassion for the millions of people whose lives and livelihoods are affected by these decisions, courage to compromise when necessary to sustain and provide for the well-being of all people, humility to let go of the ideological convictions when those convictions hinder the common good, and clear vision to see beyond narrow agendas toward a Nation filled with promise to be a beacon of light for all people.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BURGESS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

TWO WEEKS, NO NEGOTIATIONS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago Friday, the President called Speaker BOEHNER out of the blue to announce he would not negotiate to avoid a shutdown. Since then, the President has made no plans to negotiate and has hosted one White House meeting to restate his position to not negotiate.

Clearly, this confirms the American people should look at the actions of all officials, not just words. Sadly, the President says he "has bent over backwards to work with the Republicans," but this is not accurate. This continues his actions different from his words. In February 2009, the President announced the deficit was unsustainable, but then he tripled it.

House Republicans voted four times to avoid a shutdown. House Republicans were sincere in their actions and now vote repeatedly to save jobs and help families.

It is my hope there will be good-faith negotiations and we can come together to avoid the upcoming unsustainable fiscal crisis by ending the shutdown and addressing the debt limit.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

IT IS NOT TIME TO FIGHT

(Ms. BONAMICI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, today is day 7 of an unnecessary and harmful government shutdown that is hurting millions of Americans. Speaker BOEHNER called it an "epic battle."

Hundreds of thousands are out of work, Federal contractors aren't getting paid, small businesses aren't getting loans, home purchases are on hold, nutrition programs are at risk, and Speaker BOEHNER has said, "It is time for us to stand and fight."

With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, this is the U.S. House of Representatives; it is not a battlefield. It is not time for us to fight; it is time for us to vote. Our constituents sent us here to get things done, to work together.

It is not time to fight; it is time to reopen the Federal Government. It is not time to fight; it is time to raise the debt ceiling and pay our bills. It is not time to fight; it is time to get the budget conference committee to work, something we have been asking for for months.

We can do it today, Mr. Speaker. It is not time to fight; it is time to vote. It