

And while the Senate refuses to work with us to work through our policy differences to reopen government fully, the House of Representatives will continue building common ground with House Democrats to restore as many services as we possibly can. The Senate should consider these proposals—opening parks, funding the NIH, ending veteran benefits application delays, funding FEMA and the FDA, and restoring WIC. They are things we can agree on. Let's not squander these opportunities for common ground. Let's pass policies we can agree on and work through our differences together. Regardless of the Senate's non-negotiation policies, North Carolinians still deserve to have their voices heard at their Capitol.

My constituent Jeremiah from Rural Hall just received a letter from his insurance provider. He tells me:

It appears that due to the health care reform, my insurance premium will double for the upcoming year. It also appears that there's nothing I can change with my current insurance provider to make it more affordable. I have been attempting to log onto the President's Web site, healthcare.gov, without success. I understand that I may be able to get a tax credit if I'm eligible. To my understanding, this will not help me in making my month-to-month bills. If this change goes through next year, I'll not be able to afford to feed my children, much less purchase health insurance. This needs to stop now.

Angie from Clemmons contacted me to say:

ObamaCare is already adversely affecting my family in several ways. My son and daughter-in-law's family health policies are rising dramatically. They both are already working full-time jobs, and each one has part-time work also.

Robert from Lewisville wrote:

My 27-year-old son, David, buys health care insurance through Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina. His current cost is \$111 per month. He received a letter from Blue Cross saying his current policy is being canceled due to the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare. David's new cost is going to be \$288 per month. He works hard and does not take handouts from government. How is ObamaCare helping people like him?

Jeffrey from Boonville told me his story, too:

I went onto the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Web site this morning. If I buy health insurance today, the cost would be \$256 a month, but come the first of the year, the same plan will be \$556 a month. How is that affordable? This new law was supposed to make it more affordable. I've not checked yet to see if I can get a subsidy. Even if I was eligible for one, it's not the responsibility of other Americans to subsidize my family's health insurance.

Susan from Mocksville wrote to me to say:

I had affordable health care. I paid Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Carolina \$181 per month. Now they sent a letter saying that if I keep this insurance, it will now be \$464 per month. This is insane. ObamaCare is affordable for who? Please, who can I contact to have some kind of influence?

Mr. Speaker, we share Susan's concerns in the House of Representatives. We want Susan to be treated fairly and to have the same 1-year break from

ObamaCare that President Obama chose to give to Big Business. And on Susan's behalf, House Republicans are trying to contact a body with some influence, the United States Senate, to find a way to reopen government and ensure ObamaCare is implemented fairly. But the Senate isn't willing to budge. They won't sit down to talk. They are not interested in making sure the President's unworkable law is at least applied fairly.

GETTING BACK TO WORK

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, just days before the United States Government reaches its statutory borrowing limit, let's be clear: this is not new spending. This is agreeing to pay the bills we've already accrued. Senator Alan Simpson said it best:

If you're a real conservative, an honest conservative without hypocrisy, you'd want to pay your debt.

Eight days ago, a minority faction of the Congress chose to shut down the Federal Government. This was touching the fire. To refuse to lift the debt ceiling is to place our entire hand into the fire. A Reagan economist called this debate "playing with matches around gasoline." Yes, that's the same President Ronald Reagan who raised the debt ceiling 18 times without the accompanying brinksmanship. And let's remember, during the 2011 debt ceiling debate, the mere threat of a default scared the markets and drove up interest rates. Retirees lost \$800 billion in assets as markets tumbled. Home buyers lost \$100 a month as rates spiked. The harm this time could be much worse.

We need to pay our bills so we can start solving the real problems facing this country rather than fixing ones we caused ourselves. And, Mr. Speaker, what is most extraordinary about this fiasco is this: I thought budget negotiations were supposed to be about funding levels, but this Nation's most contentious budget fight in nearly 20 years isn't about funding levels at all; it's about using the budget as leverage to repeal or delay an existing law.

Despite the destructive effects of sequestration, in an effort to compromise, we gave in to the demands to the majority and accepted their \$986 billion spending limit. Just put this into context. The \$986 billion level is 17 percent below fiscal year 2010 spending and 10 percent less than the original Ryan budget. It is below Simpson-Bowles. If that's not compromise, I don't know what is. Those on the other side of this aisle don't know how to take "yes" for an answer. We agreed to deeply slash government spending. Please accept a victory and restart the government so we can get back to the real work of this body.

THE SHIELD ACT

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise once again this morning to thank the men and women of the Federal law enforcement community, as well as those brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, for what they do to protect this great Nation both abroad and here at home.

Certainly, we are thankful for them each and every day for protecting us in our Nation, but recent events again remind us of their importance.

After the Capitol was thrown into lock-down last week, Capitol Police and other Federal officers sprang into action to protect the building and those inside. In their rush to service, I'm sure none of them thought about the fact that as we continue in a partial government shutdown that they may not be paid even though, for some, that may have been the case.

While there is uncertainty about the Nation's fiscal path in Washington, that uncertainty should never be passed along to our servicemembers and Federal law enforcement officers. The Strengthening Homeland Security, Intelligence, and Essential Law Enforcement Departments Act, or SHIELD Act, of 2013 would alleviate that doubt. This simple, bipartisan legislation that I have introduced prioritizes and protects pay for soldiers and law enforcement personnel if borrowing limits are reached or if there is an interruption in appropriations like there is right now.

In our most difficult hours, we rely on our law enforcement officers and our military for the protection of our lives, liberty, and freedom. No servicemember or critical officer protecting the United States at home or abroad should have to worry about their paychecks in the event of a government shutdown, nor should they be used as a bargaining chip during partisan budget debates. Thankfully, during this current budget impasse, pay for our troops was secured early through a bipartisan vote, and I applaud the President for agreeing to it. However, the SHIELD Act would codify the measure into law, meaning paychecks would never again be threatened, and action would never have to be taken to protect this very basic principle.

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This bill already has the strong support of organizations like the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, which represents dedicated first responders. Just as important, it is commonsense legislation that everyday Americans understand and expect from a Congress that often stumbles in its responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the brave men and women who protect us—both abroad and in your communities—to make sure their pay doesn't become a

political pawn at the whim of battling ideologies.

No members of our Federal law enforcement community or armed services should have to worry about the financial situation of their family back home while they are on the job; nor should we let our financial problems rest on the backs of those who selflessly serve the American people.

By ensuring funding for critical Federal officers and our troops, we are allowing agencies and departments to sustain a strong law enforcement and military presence at all times, regardless of fiscal conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this commonsense, bipartisan legislation, and I call for leadership in both parties to consider the SHIELD Act for quick passage.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, it is day 7 in a bizarre, new twist on the Republican Tea Party trip down the rabbit hole. On Saturday, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to pay retroactively every Federal employee, those who are working, Capitol Hill Police, those who are being kept from working, like the aviation safety inspector I talked with yesterday. He was quite concerned about what might happen with a long lapse in aviation safety nonpartisans, but he's not allowed to work. That's a bit bizarre. He's thankful that he will someday be paid for not working, but he would rather be working, actually.

How is it in this weird world that the Mad Hatter Tea Party explains to their people back home, Well, we've shut down government sorta. We've shut down the services, but we're going to pay people for the work they're not doing. We're going to let the Social Security applications pile up and not be processed. We're going to lock people out of the national wildlife refuges during hunting season. We're going to keep the crabbing fleet grounded in Alaska because we can't issue their permits, and we're not going to continue to do the surveys for the fishing season off the northwest coast.

We've withdrawn all of that. All of those people are sitting around at home, frustrated by law, can't even access their official email, but they're going to be paid. And the Republicans say, We made it good. We're going to pay them.

What about the American people getting the services?

It reminds me of Wimpy J. Wellington from Popeye, who says, I'll gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today. Somehow, Tuesday never came, and repayment was never made. In this case, perhaps someday, when they stop their games, we will repay people. But what about the people who have automatic withdrawals, and

they're living paycheck to paycheck, and their mortgage is coming due today or next week? What are they going to do? I see the credit unions offering zero percent loans. That's very nice of them. Wouldn't it be better if we actually put those people back to work and we paid them, and you declared victory?

You have victory within your grasp, and you're refusing it. Is it about ObamaCare? You know that was an impossible goal. That victory is not within your grasp. If it's about the deficit, which is what Gingrich put the government out of work for, then you have victory within your grasp, because Speaker BOEHNER and Majority Leader REID agreed weeks ago to a 6-week continuing resolution, which is what has customarily been done around here for the 27 years I've been here when the two bodies can't agree on a budget. We don't shut down the government every year. Out of 27 years, twice have we got it done in time. So in 23 of those cases, we've continued. In this case, Senator REID agreed to continue running the government at lower levels of spending, a major reduction back below the 2010 levels. All Speaker BOEHNER has to do is bring that bill to the floor of the House, and it will pass.

There are enough Republicans who told the press that they would vote for that. They can declare victory. They cut the budget yet again. They're not off on this fruitless errand of trying to stop ObamaCare from going into effect, which went into effect last week. By the way, 234,000 Oregonians have accessed our Oregon Web site, which is working quite well, thank you very much. In the States that are cooperating, it's working well. In those bonehead States that said they wouldn't cooperate and wouldn't help their people and are actually prohibiting people from being helped like, Florida, no, it's not working so well. I wonder why. Go figure.

Let's not continue this, and let's begin to deal very quickly with the issues before us because we have looming a deadline that you can't make good later. You can't make it good later. You can't tell the people of the world, all those to whom we owe hundreds of billions of dollars and the Social Security trust fund and others, Oh, we'll make it good later after we default on the debt someday. Interest rates will jump up; houses become more expensive; the housing market probably crashes again; auto sales grind to a halt; credit card interest rates go to even more extortion levels. The damage you will do by credibly threatening to default on the debt of the United States of America for some clearly undefined goal will not be undone for generations. You can't go there.

Declare victory temporarily. You got your lower levels. Bring a bill to the floor today. Let us vote on it. The Speaker said on the weekend he doesn't have the votes. Let's check that out,

because we really think he does have the votes; and it's making him not look too good that he actually accepted the deal before he rejected it and now says he doesn't have the votes. That's an interesting kind of conundrum, and we can prove it very easily.

Bring the bill up today. Fund the government. Pay people to actually work.

WORDS HAVE MEANING

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, words have meaning, and we are coming to the floor regularly to talk about the fiscal issues of our great Nation and to talk about how we should approach these.

I'd appreciate that we have everyone in the body involved in this debate, Mr. Speaker, but I want to drill down just a little bit and take a look at what we have going on out in the media and what we continue to hear from so many who are beginning to participate in this debate.

The President and some of our friends across the aisle love saying they want a clean CR. That sounds really nice. For them, they feel as if it implies that what we want is a dirty or an unclean or an evil CR, and I find their choice of words so very interesting, Mr. Speaker.

What we want is an accountable CR because, when they're saying they want a clean CR, I would encourage my colleagues to realize what they're wanting is the no-obligation loan. They want no strings attached. A "clean CR" means give us the money, but don't you dare expect us to be accountable for that money.

Words have meaning. When our colleagues hear that, I would encourage them to just realize that what they're really telling you is that they don't want the accountability, that they don't want the transparency. They do not want the responsibility. As we would say when I was in the State Senate in Tennessee, they don't want outcome-based budgeting; they just want to be able to spin what they can spin.

What we continue to push for is accountability, transparency, being responsible to the taxpayer and being responsible to future generations. We have to do that because the spending is out of control.

We talk a lot about the CR and the lower spending levels that are in that. Those came about because of the Budget Control Act. The fact is that we worked and got a 2 percent across-the-board spending reduction; and for the last 2 years we've been able to get the deficit, the annual spending overage, down a little bit. We were in 2010 and 2011 borrowing \$3 billion a day to keep the doors open around here. Today, we're borrowing \$2 billion per day to keep the doors open. We need to get to