

will have an absolutely devastating ripple effect on our local economy that we may never recover from.

Instead of voting to end the shutdown, House Republicans have wasted time with false and misleading attempts to reopen the government bit by bit. After all, they didn't shut down the government piece by piece, so we shouldn't open it that way either.

The one bill that House Republican leadership should be bringing to the House floor today is the Senate-passed, clean funding compromise, which would go directly to the President and immediately open up the entire government for all New Mexicans and Americans.

We know that there are enough votes right now to pass a clean funding compromise. So why won't the Republican leadership allow a vote on it?

I understand that some of my Republican colleagues say part of the reason they got elected was because they pledged to dismantle the Affordable Care Act. We were all sent here to represent our constituents. I know that.

I'm here to represent constituents who are being hammered by the sequester. I've said many times in this Chamber that we need to immediately replace the sequester with a balanced approach to deficit reduction, but I'm not prepared to keep the government shut down because of it, inflicting further harm on people, not only in my district, but around the country.

In spite of the damaging effect the sequestration continues to have on my State, I am prepared to vote right now for a temporary compromise bill that funds the government at sequester levels. I am prepared to vote for it as is virtually every Democrat in the House. The Senate has already passed it. The President says he'll sign it immediately.

We want to get rid of the sequester, but we're willing to vote for a compromised funding bill at sequester levels, and I'll tell you why—because, at this time, it's a reasonable path forward.

So to my Republican friends who don't like the Affordable Care Act, here's a proposal for you: let's reopen the government now with a clean funding bill. Let's put all the furloughed Federal employees back to work. Then we can work together to determine what parts of the Affordable Care Act work well and which parts need to be addressed. After a reasonable amount of time, we can make the necessary adjustments to the law.

That's how you effectively represent your constituents who still have serious concerns about the Affordable Care Act. That's a reasonable path forward.

Mr. Speaker, let's reopen government right now. Then let's work together on a long-term solution that addresses the serious and significant fiscal issues facing our Nation today.

TIME TO SHOW LEADERSHIP

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

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, Irish leader Henry Boyle once said:

The most important trip you can make in life is meeting people halfway.

Unfortunately, in this debate, the President and HARRY REID's latest offers are way short of halfway. They won't even come to the negotiating table.

During this shutdown, the Republicans in the House have passed nine bills to fund and reopen vital functions of government. Let me go through some of them for you:

Twenty-five of my Democratic colleagues voted with House Republicans to fund pediatric cancer research. Twenty-three of my Democrats colleagues voted with Republicans to reopen national parks, memorials, and monuments;

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Thirty-five of my Democratic colleagues voted with Republicans, honoring our promise to give veterans the benefits they have earned;

Thirty-six of my Democratic colleagues voted with Republicans to pay our National Guard and Army Reserve personnel;

Twenty-three of my Democratic colleagues voted with Republicans to make sure funds are available to provide disaster relief; and

One hundred eighty-nine of my Democratic colleagues voted with House Republicans to provide backpay for furloughed Federal employees.

Each of these are reasonable proposals, yet HARRY REID insists that virtually all of them will not be considered in the Senate, and the President has threatened a veto.

Let me repeat. House Republicans have passed bills to fund pediatric cancer research, reopen national parks, provide benefits to veterans, pay salaries for our National Guard, fund disaster relief programs and other vital services. Dozens of my Democratic colleagues have voted for each of these bills, yet the President and HARRY REID won't budge.

The American people are disappointed in this shutdown—after all, this is not the way government is supposed to work—but the American people are also figuring this out. This shutdown can end if HARRY REID and President Obama meet House Republicans at the negotiating table—but their chairs sit empty.

The American people don't want the President's health care law, but they are ready for this shutdown to end. It's time for both parties to listen to the American people, work out our differences, and find a commonsense way forward.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, this past Friday, while referencing how long the government shutdown lasts, a senior Obama administration official told *The Wall Street Journal*:

It really doesn't matter how long the government shutdown lasts because we are winning.

But, Mr. Speaker, as you know and I know, this government shutdown isn't a game. There are no winners when Washington fails the most basic test of governing. That is why this body passed four bipartisan proposals to keep the government open while shielding Americans from the disastrous effects of President Obama's health care law.

Once a shutdown was triggered by Senate Democrats, we worked to minimize its harmful effects with the passage of bills to reopen our national parks and museums, to restore critical funding for children's cancer research, fund the Veterans Administration, and to continue providing nutritional assistance through the Women, Infants, and Children program, among other measures. Now we're waiting on President Obama and the Senate Democrats to do their part.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents can't wait too much longer. Across my district, Tennesseans are feeling the very real impact of President Obama and the Senate Democrats' continued refusal to negotiate.

Larry, in Jamestown, is a park concessionaire at Big South Fork Recreation Area. Fall is his busiest season. He estimates that he lost \$7,500 on an engagement he had planned for 11 months—canceled because of the government shutdown.

Following the Veterans Administration's warning that they could run out of funding as early as late October, Charles in Crossville emailed my office pleading for help: "I am a disabled veteran who depends on my compensation check to have some quality of life," he wrote. "This is unacceptable."

Bobby, in Fentress County, is a craftsman, who was supposed to have his work displayed in the Smithsonian American Art Gallery last Thursday—a proud moment stolen from him because of an unnecessary gridlock here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, our Senate colleagues have the power to end this arbitrary and unnecessary pain today by taking up the House-passed measures to reopen our parks and museums, to restore veterans' benefits and fund other important functions of government. What we need now is for them to act.

Our constituents expect us to listen to them, to work out our differences, and to find a commonsense way forward. Why can't we at least give them that? HARRY REID and President Obama need to listen to the people of this country and come to the table and negotiate. Let's get our work done.

SHUTDOWN DUE TO LACK OF LEADERSHIP

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, why are we here?

We are here because of a failure of leadership. The fact is the President of the United States has failed to negotiate. The fact is the Majority Leader of the Senate, the head of the Senate, has failed and refuses to negotiate.

It's interesting how time changes one's perspective. Let me quote Barack Obama before he became President. These are the words of Barack Obama. He said:

Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means "the buck stops here." Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better.

Barack Obama said it very well before he became President. Now he needs to serve and act as President and provide the leadership.

The fact is October 1 is the beginning of the financial year, and we should responsibly fund the government. The fact is, in just a few more days, we will reach \$17 trillion in indebtedness—nearly half of that incurred since Barack Obama has become President. Think about that. They're going to come and ask for another \$1.9 trillion to keep us going for 1 more year. That means in 6 years we will double the debt that's racking up the greatest debt in the history of mankind for any government.

Republicans might like to think that we won the House of Representatives back in 2010 and '95, but it was the same issues: spending, taxes, and health care. Remember HillaryCare and the taxes and other things imposed by President Clinton. The difference is President Clinton negotiated with us. We balanced the budget within 2 years. We can do that if good people of good faith will come together and negotiate, but we can't negotiate by ourselves.

The Constitution empowered the House of Representatives to be in charge of and responsible for levying taxes—because we're closest to the people—and spending. We have that responsibility. They sent us here. They elected us, rejecting the spending that went on. They saw what went on—\$1 trillion more than you took in, spending, the first year of this Presidency, and \$1 trillion since. So we must act responsibly, but we must have leadership starting from the White House, starting from the Senate.

Republicans in the House are ready to negotiate. We were here when the Senate didn't show up on Sunday. They didn't show up to work the day before the 1st of October to fund this current year. We must be here to meet, responsibly, our debt. We can't put that debt, as the President has said before he was

President, on the backs of our children and grandchildren; but we can't do that without the system working. We need leadership—leadership from the President to negotiate, leadership from the Senate to negotiate.

Our leadership has said they will negotiate. We've been here—we'll stay here—but we need to responsibly fund all the activities of government even if it's piece by piece, as we have responsibly done, and sent them over to the other body, and they sit there.

But again, I urge all of the leaders to come together, and my colleagues, particularly the Senate and the President of the United States. We can do responsibly what we need to do, as designated by the Constitution of the United States, and provide that leadership.

MILITARY FAMILY BENEFITS DURING SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with this body and the American people a great injustice. A few moments ago, one of my colleagues from Texas, from across the aisle, spoke of this as well. So as you can see, there are many times that we all can come together and agree upon certain items and move the American people forward in a better way; however, this particular situation is unthinkable.

A great injustice is being done to our servicemembers and their families. We learned last night that five brave American servicemembers were killed over the weekend in Afghanistan while selflessly protecting our country. Normally, Mr. Speaker, the loved ones of these fallen warriors receive assistance in the form of benefits to help them make those final arrangements for burial and other necessary preparations. Yet, as a direct result of the political gridlock here in Washington and despite legislation passed in this House last week with great bipartisan support, servicemembers and their families are no longer receiving their benefits.

Mr. Speaker, despite the government shutdown, our servicemembers are still expected to go to war, knowing full well that they may pay the ultimate sacrifice for this great Nation, and we should be expected to keep our promises to their family members. I am working, as we speak, to right this wrong, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress to help people, not to hurt people, and this shutdown is hurting innocent Americans.

This past Sunday, I flew back home because Congress was not in session. We were not voting on Sunday, so I took a flight home to California to meet with my constituents in my congressional district.

I held a town hall. I held it at Dublin City Hall. Dublin City Hall is where I served as a city council member. Dublin is also home to many Federal employers. In my congressional district, we have 4,000 Federal employees, plus a number of government contractors who work at Lawrence Livermore and Sandia National Laboratories. I also held it there because, for 2 years as a city council member, I worked in that chamber day in and day out to make sure that we provided a balanced budget. We provided a 2-year budget.

It is so frustrating for me here in the Congress that we provide budgets that are only 45 or 60 days at a time, and across America our city councils are thinking big and thinking forward and balancing their budgets while taking measured investments in the future.

So we gathered the community of California's 15th Congressional District at Dublin City Hall, and we had over 150 people attend. The room was filled with fear and anxiety. Federal workers were in the room, worried about what this was going to mean for the personal incomes, for their families, for their household bills. Even though Federal workers in my district have been furloughed, their bills have not been furloughed. The home lenders are still calling, asking where the mortgages are. Their auto loans are still going to be due. Their credit card statements will still arrive. If they have kids in college, they're still going to have to pay tuition.

The Federal employees told me about the stress that they're living under either by not being able to work or, even worse, by being told that they have to work, but they're not going to receive their paychecks right now. In fact, we were reminded in this very Chamber just last week how stressful that can be, when the Capitol Hill Police, who stand guard here at democracy's door, who protect the people's House, rushed to aid the Members of Congress and the employees who work in this building as an erratic driver drove into a barricaded area just outside the Capitol grounds. Those Capitol Hill police are working to protect us, but they're doing so without pay.

So I heard stories just like that in my congressional district from the employees in our district, who are very scared about what's going to happen next. We learned that this is affecting people who work not just inside government, but also outside government.

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Inside government, we have employees at Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training Area, the NASA facility in Dublin. We also have a women's Federal prison.

Outside government, we have government contract employees—about 6,500