

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.

□ 1130

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

of them—at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and about 1,500 of them at Sandia National Laboratories.

They told us, if the government shutdown continues, they may be furloughed within the next 10 days.

Most strikingly, the Republicans who attended expressed their concern, as we have heard in this Chamber, about the Affordable Care Act. I understand that, but not a single Republican who attended told me or told our other constituents that they believe their concerns over the Affordable Care Act were worth prolonging this government shutdown.

There are also concerns about, well, why don't we just get some of the government up and running like some of the bills that we passed last week but that the Senate won't take up? I told my constituents I will not support any bill that pits any constituency against each other. We saw bills that pitted veterans against seniors, sick children against the poor. It is time to get the government up and running for everybody. Veterans who attended our town hall agreed. They served this country to make sure that the government works for everybody, not just for the veterans who served it.

I am inspired by, and I told my constituents that I have hope in, a freshman group that continues to gather a couple times each week and that was here during the shutdown crisis, called the United Solutions Caucus. It has about 15 Members on the Republican side and 15 on the Democratic side. They are freshman Members of Congress who are meeting and talking about what we can do to work together.

Finally, to my colleagues across the aisle, I ask you this respectfully: Did you come to Congress to help people or did you come to Congress to hurt people? If you came here to help, just like I did, then I think you know what to do next. Turn on the lights of the government that runs the greatest democracy in the world, and let's get America working again.

IT IS TIME TO PUT THE INTERESTS OF AMERICANS FIRST

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

Mr. BERA of California. Day No. 8, Mr. Speaker.

Today is day No. 8 of a government shutdown. Enough of the gamesmanship. Enough with the name-calling. Enough with the blame game. It is time we opened up the government.

Real Americans are getting hurt, like Brian from Carmichael. Brian has been out of work for 2 years. He recently got a job offer that requires him to get a class B driver's license. Well, he went to the DMV. He was told he needed a Social Security card, which he lost a couple years ago. He went to the Social Security office to get a card. Do you know what he was told: the office is closed. They have been furloughed.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to open up the government. Real Americans like Brian are getting hurt. Let's get Brian his job, and let's open up the government.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 33 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Lord, You know there are many Americans who look to the people's House as uncertainty about the future of the economy and their livelihoods hang in the balance.

Bless the Members of the people's House with the understanding that it is their work to develop the strategies and the plans to assuage the fears of their fellow countrymen and -women.

We again ask You to impel those who possess power here in the Capitol to be mindful of those whom they represent who possess little or no power and whose lives are made all the more difficult by a failure to work out serious differences.

May all that is done today be for Your greater honor and glory.

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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(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, it has been 1 week since the government shutdown. For 1 week, the President and Senate Democrats have refused to negotiate to reopen the government's doors.

House Republicans know the hardships American families are facing due to Washington Democrats' failure to negotiate. We have worked over the past week, passing bills to have the government functioning.

House Republicans have voted to fund pediatric cancer research, reopen national parks, memorials and monuments, give veterans the benefits they have earned and deserve. On Saturday, House Republicans voted to pay 800,000 furloughed employees who are at risk of losing a paycheck due to the President's government shutdown.

With the debt ceiling limit looming, the American people are waiting for the President and Senate Democrats to negotiate a solution for fiscal responsibility.

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

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, today we find our Nation in the midst of a government shutdown and in the shadows of a debt default.

A week into the shutdown, the partisan gridlock in Congress is as bad as ever; but across the country, millions of Americans are finding new hope in the affordable health coverage on the online exchanges.

Despite the more than 40 Republican attempts to repeal, defund, or derail this law, the Affordable Care Act is finally fulfilling the promise of dependable, affordable health coverage for millions of our fellow Americans.

On opening day, the exchanges were inundated with millions of users—