

now of premiums going through the roof, higher deductibles, higher copays, and we need to delay it.

One of the items we said in the bill was to delay the individual mandate for 1 year. That was rejected by the Senate. Also, we sent a bill over there to say, Okay, if you don't take that, let's just go to conference. Let's sit down and talk. Let's negotiate.

But I think the compromise Bill O'Reilly put out on FOX News the other night makes some sense. Make the individual mandate voluntary, but don't force people to go on this. Delay it for 1 year. Don't force people to go on this and risk their privacy concerns, force them to pay higher insurance premiums for insurance they may not need. Let's see what happens.

As ObamaCare moves through, I think that is a compromise that makes some sense, and the President ought to look at that and talk about that; but in order to do that, he needs to come to the table. He needs to sit down with House Republicans and negotiate and work through the problems. That is how our system of government was set up, and that is how it is supposed to work. The Founders had that right, especially in divided government. So I encourage the President.

Now, this morning there are some reports that the President is inviting the House and Senate Democrats to the White House later today, and supposedly we are going to get an invitation here soon. That is encouraging. I hope he is serious about sitting down and working out the differences, because we have to get back to the work the American people expect us to do.

So I look forward to sitting down with the President and our leadership and working through these problems and getting the government going; but we can't do it without sitting down and talking and making sense and representing the American people, because we were elected to do that.

CREATING JOBS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WILSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it has been more than 1,000 days since I arrived in Congress, and Republican leaders have still not allowed a single vote on serious legislation to address our jobs crisis. Instead, this House has voted 46 times to defund or delay health care for people who desperately need it, wasting precious time.

Wake up, Republicans. ObamaCare is not only the law of the land; it is not only a safeguard to save the millions of people with preexisting conditions; it is an essential tool to give people the economic security and purchasing power they need to revive our economy.

People need ObamaCare. President Obama cares about the American people, and we should, too. Even a Tea Party member of my freshman class of 2010 understood this when he stood and

expressed his hopes of being able to receive federally subsidized health coverage immediately upon taking office. He was incensed. He couldn't wait 30 days, but he acts as if he wants his constituents to wait forever.

People all over the world are amazed that we do not have universal health care like they do. We are a world power, and they are saying, You don't have universal health care in America?

Mr. Speaker, people want health care; people deserve health care; and, Mr. Speaker, people want jobs. No one wants to revive the Great Recession by playing dangerous games with our economy. But do you know what? That is precisely what this House is doing.

This is scary. I am nervous. I am stunned by the insensitivity. The whole world economy rests on America's Treasury bonds. Let me repeat: The whole world economy rests on America's Treasury bonds.

Mr. Speaker, when we play with fire on the debt ceiling, you threaten to burn down the buttress on which Americans' 401(k)s, mutual funds, small businesses, and stock portfolios rest. Just consider what happened the last time Republicans simply threatened to breach the debt ceiling in 2011. Government bonds were downgraded, retirement assets plummeted, and homeowners saw big hikes in their monthly payments. That was just for talking about breaching the debt ceiling.

Independent analysts have concluded that a debt default would be as bad as the global financial crisis of 2008. After that crisis, American savers lost decades' worth of wealth in their homes and 401(k)s. We are still living with massive unemployment from that crisis to this date.

While some Members of Congress may like to behave as though we have moved past our unemployment crisis, it is a different story when you look at African Americans—13 percent unemployment; the Hispanic community, 9.3 percent unemployment; and the youngest workers, 22 percent unemployment.

Across America there are nearly 12 million people officially out of work and tens of millions more who are underemployed or who have simply given up looking. America's public sector workers—our teachers, firefighters, construction workers, public health workers, medical researchers, public defenders, bus drivers, social workers, and police—have already suffered so painfully, first under the sequester, and now under the shutdown.

But a default would devastate every worker and every retiree. It would hit every 401(k), every mutual fund, every stock portfolio, every mortgage payment, every student loan, and every business loan. It is impossible to be fiscally conservatively or probusiness and simultaneously try to use this financial weapon of mass destruction against American businesses and American taxpayers. It is time for Congress to pass a clean debt ceiling bill.

Mr. Speaker, open the government. Mr. Speaker, raise the debt ceiling. Mr.

Speaker, let's begin to address our real crisis: jobs, jobs, jobs.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to both sides in this very important debate: the future of America and where we are going and how we are going to pay for the future of this country. What is amazing to me is that President Karzai of Afghanistan, I don't believe he has furloughed one person.

We are furloughing U.S. Government workers all across this Nation, but Mr. Karzai continues to get his millions and millions of dollars. Mr. Speaker, this is unnecessary. I don't know why we in Congress continue to fund a war where we can't even get an accountability from the inspectors. It makes no sense.

I want to read three paragraphs from an article I read this weekend, called, "The Forgotten War." One of the paragraphs:

But even when the war "ends" and Americans have forgotten it altogether, it won't be over in Afghanistan. Obama and Karzai continue negotiating towards a bilateral strategic agreement to allow the United States to keep at least nine of the biggest bases it built and several thousand trainers, and undoubtedly Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan, seemingly forever.

Another of the paragraphs:

It won't be over in the United States either. For American soldiers who took part in it and returned with catastrophic physical and mental injuries and for their families, the battles are just beginning. For American taxpayers, the war will continue at least until mid-century. Think of all the families of the dead soldiers to be compensated for their losses, all the wounded with their health care bills, all the brain-damaged veterans at the VA hospitals. Think of the outgoing costs of their drugs and prosthetics and benefits. Medical and disability costs alone are projected to reach \$754 billion, not to mention the hefty retirement pay of all those generals who issued all those reports of progress as they so ambitiously fought more than one war leading nowhere.

Mr. Speaker, just this past weekend, we had five Americans brought back in flag-draped coffins. I doubt sincerely if many people in this country read that report, that five Americans came back in a flag-draped coffin.

I do not understand why this Congress continues to have these difficulties of trying to fix our own problems in this country, but don't worry about the waste, fraud, and abuse—and, more important, the loss of limb and body and heart that our kids have been giving in Afghanistan.

I will close by reading one more paragraph from the article, called, "The Forgotten War":

Will the United States still be meddling in Afghanistan 30 years from now? If history is any guide, the answer is "yes"; and if history is any guide, three decades from now, most

Americans will have only the haziest idea why.

I can only say to the families of those five patriots who came back in a flag-draped coffin, may we never forget. May we never forget that the war in Afghanistan continues to go on and on and probably will for the next 30 years. Come on, Congress, let's get together. Let's stop spending money in Afghanistan. More important, let's stop sending our young men and women to give their limbs and their life.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, as I always do, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in His loving arms, to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless us in the House and Senate, bless the President, and, please, God, three times, God, please, God, please, God, please, continue to bless America.

PROVIDING RELIEF FOR AMERICANS AFFECTED BY SHUTDOWN

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to once again speak out about the human consequences and the reckless and irresponsible government shutdown. Today it is day 9 into this needless swirl of frustration and madness.

Yesterday I spent time on the telephone talking with a woman whom I am here to represent. She lives in a small town called Roseville, Illinois. It is in the southern part of my congressional district. Her name is Sherri Leath.

Sherri is a decades-long employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and she serves as a food inspector. She spent the first 4 years of her employment in a slaughterhouse, a beef slaughterhouse. The last 6 years, she is in the inspection area of a poultry and a pork processing plant. This is not a glamorous job, she is the first to admit that, but she works very hard every day, and she takes great pride in the fact that she is making sure that our food is safe and wholesome.

She has four children and six grandchildren, and she says she keeps them in mind and she keeps all the children in mind throughout this country as she is inspecting in these plants and makes sure, again, that this meat goes out safe and wholesome.

So today she will drive. She has a very long commute. She will spend most of that time in a cooler that is at most 45 degrees. And I would call someone like Sherri Leath an unsung hero, because without people like Sherri, who, again, are not receiving their pay right now, our food supply would be in jeopardy.

So she is going into work every day, not taking home a paycheck, and she is

worried at a deep level about her family's future. She has a husband named Thomas, who is a school bus driver and brings home \$800 a month. This is not enough for Sherri and Thomas Leath to pay their bills.

So they have already discussed what this government shutdown means to their family. Step one for them, if the paycheck doesn't come, is they will tap into their reserves, into their savings. Step two, if it leads to that, they will have to go into further credit card debt. This is not what we should be doing to people like Sherri and Thomas Leath. This is not what we should be doing to the hardworking Federal employees who want nothing more than to do a good job, go to work, and receive fair pay. But this is the way it has been for 9 days now.

We heard Congressman STENY HOYER speak half an hour ago now, talking about that we have an answer to this right now. We have enough Republican votes and we have enough Democratic votes today, within the hour, as he explained it, to get the government up and running again. We could immediately—immediately, today—provide relief for people like Sherri and Thomas Leath by reopening the government right here and right now. We have a bipartisan path to do that.

I would say let's do it. Let's get at it today and put these good, hardworking people back to work and receiving fair pay.

THE INCONVENIENT INCONSISTENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATION—DEBT LIMIT

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker:

The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. It is a sign that the United States Government cannot pay its debts. It is a sign that we now depend on ongoing financial assistance from foreign countries to finance our government's reckless fiscal policies.

That was a statement by Senator Barack Obama in 2006.

Driving up our national debt from \$5 trillion to \$9 trillion is irresponsible. It is unpatriotic.

Once again, Senator Barack Obama in 2008:

Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that the buck stops here. Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices on to the backs of our children and our grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better. I, therefore intend to oppose the effort to increase America's debt limit.

Senator Barack Obama, 2006.

But that was then; this is now. The President, last week, said, without an increase in the borrowing limit, "the

whole world will have problems." In other words, we are all going to die. The sky is going to fall unless the United States raises the debt limit.

He seems to be a little bit inconsistent on positions regarding the debt limit. Of course, now the debt limit is up to \$17 trillion, double what he talked about several years ago of not raising.

So we find ourselves in a situation where the President's attitude seems to be: I will not negotiate, except with the Russians, the Syrians, the Iranians about what is going on overseas. But I will not negotiate, I will not talk to the House of Representatives about American issues.

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that things that are happening in the United States are really just as important as what is happening in Russia, Syria, and Iran—but maybe not to the administration.

The administration would rather be in shutdown and lockdown for political reasons than to talk, to negotiate, to compromise, to even listen.

You know, Mr. Speaker, they say that Nero fiddled while Rome burned. It seems that the administration is in bunker mentality while the United States is in economic turmoil. And where are we? We are in a situation where there is no talking. And it seems to me, the administration says it is our fault. The President won't talk to us. The President has the habit, it seems, to blame others on bad things that happen and takes credit for things that are always good.

But, in any event, I reemphasize the President's own words about why we should not raise the debt limit: it is reckless; it is irresponsible; it is unpatriotic; it hurts us domestically and internationally; it is a failure of leadership, and Americans deserve better.

I agree with that.

So since the President seems to be somewhat inconsistent about his positions, why doesn't he just talk to us? Talk to us about the debt limit, the continuing resolution, about America's issues, America's policies, America's problems, and at least acknowledge that the House of Representatives exists.

So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, when you get to talk to the President—because I don't get to talk to him—and suggest that he come out of the White House and meet with the people's House and quit fiddling around and start talking to us so we can solve this problem together.

And that's just the way it is.

ECONOMIC HARM OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the majority party's latest idea is to create a supercommittee to figure out how to reverse their Republican shutdown of