

are willing to shut down the government and stop funding it and not raise our debt ceiling; and, by the way, every day we get closer to that debt ceiling and not raising it is a day that is bad for this economy, all because they can't pass their policy agenda through the present Congress. Which raises the interesting question, What is that policy agenda? And that perhaps is the most frustrating thing about this.

We heard originally that they didn't pass the continuing resolution to fund the government because they wanted to end ObamaCare. Now editorials have been written by leaders; by the majority leader, Mr. CANTOR. I have heard PAUL RYAN say, no, no, no, it is not about ObamaCare; we understand we are not going to get that. Okay. So what policy change is it that you want? And this is where you get into the deficit. But, again, the Republicans haven't specified what they want on this.

Now, we know if you go back through 3 years of history, what they say they want, they want tax reform, though it hasn't been specified, and they want cuts in entitlements to get us closer to a balanced budget. They are completely unwilling to consider any revenue increases.

Now, the problem with this is the President doesn't agree. The Senate doesn't agree. The deficit is a problem, no question, but Democrats believe that part of that solution has to be revenue; and to this point we get \$600 billion in revenue as a result of the deal that was reached last January in exchange for over \$2 trillion in cuts, \$2 trillion between the cuts that were made in the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the cuts that have now been forced on us by sequestration, \$2 trillion in cuts and \$600 billion in tax increases.

But be that as it may, the Republicans don't have the votes. They don't have the support of the President, and they don't have the support of the Senate to get those cuts, and yet they insist on shutting down the government.

Now, the big problem is what is it that they would want in tax reform and entitlement reform? And this is the thing that I think the American public is unaware of. The Republicans keep saying that they want entitlement reform, which means cuts in entitlements. They keep saying that they want tax reform. They have been in charge of this House for 3 years. They have not brought to the floor or passed out of committee any tax reform or any entitlement reform.

They put it in their budget, which is just sort of a big-picture list of future objectives of what they want to do. Why haven't they passed legislation? If they are willing to shut down the government and cause all of the pain that we have heard because they fervently believe that we need entitlement cuts and tax reform, the least they can do is bring it to the floor and tell us what it is.

Oddly, the President and Democrats have put more on the table in terms of

reforming our entitlements. As part of the Affordable Care Act, we made reductions in Medicare, which the Republicans beat us up for and which has been responsible for Medicare actually going down in inflation.

The only solution for this, tell us what you want and understand how this situation works. The pain is too great.

VOTE FOR A CLEAN CR AND DEBT CEILING BILL

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

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge you to turn away from this destructive path of threatening the full faith and credit of the United States Government as a means to extort political concessions and to subvert the democratic principle of majority rule. I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to become the Speaker of the House and not spokesperson for a fringe cult within the GOP caucus.

The Affordable Care Act is settled law. In fact, the negotiation for any change to the Affordable Care Act is possible and perhaps even desirable under so-called regular order, and that goes for the other ransom demands that the GOP has made.

Now, of course, the reason for this crisis, this shutdown of the government and the debt crisis, has now shifted from repealing or delaying ObamaCare to vague demands for negotiations. We have seen a laundry list, Mr. Speaker, of other so-called demands: approval of the Keystone pipeline; concessions on payments to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; tort reform; repeal of job-killing regulations, that is, protections for clean air and clean water.

The latest demand is Republicans passed a bill to create a superdupercommittee that includes instructions that the committee can only resolve our budget crisis by considering spending cuts and entitlement cuts, but no new revenue. In other words, Mr. Speaker, you don't really want to negotiate. It is just obvious from your words and deeds, Mr. Speaker, since you, Mr. Speaker, have blocked negotiations 18 times over the past year.

Mr. Speaker, you are putting the country through this "shut-er-down" theater that you called for in the last Republican campaign, in the last cycle. "A nuclear weapon" is how Warren Buffett characterized failure to raise the debt ceiling.

Let me say that again. The world's most respected financial markets expert compared this now familiar Republican tactic as a weapon of mass destruction, a weapon that is "too horrible to use."

Let me quote Yalman Onaran in Bloomberg:

Failure by the world's largest borrower to pay its debt, unprecedented in modern history, will devastate stock markets from

Brazil to Zurich, halt a \$5 trillion lending mechanism for investors who rely on Treasuries, blow up borrowing costs for billions of people and companies, ravage the dollar and throw U.S. and world economies into a recession that would likely become a depression. Money managers, economists, bankers and former government officials interviewed for this story, few view default as anything but a financial apocalypse.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, you continue to take default off the table. Meanwhile, even the discussion of default is driving up borrowing costs for the U.S. as investors demand higher yields to buy short-term U.S. Treasury bonds. Short-term borrowing costs have doubled and now are at the highest levels since late 2008. Heaven help us if you, Mr. Speaker, actually drive the U.S. into default.

Think about this: the \$12 trillion of outstanding government debt is 23 times—23 times—the \$517 billion Lehman owed when its bankruptcy sparked the 2008 financial crisis. The full faith and credit of the U.S. debt is the collateral for banks, financial contracts, and repurchase markets throughout the world, the collateral that stands behind global finance and investment. It is why we are the world's reserve currency. Any default by the U.S. will have very real and extremely serious consequences and trigger a self-inflicted global financial crisis.

In my mind, Mr. Speaker, the full faith and credit of the United States is not open for negotiation. I urge my colleagues to cease using the debt ceiling and economic calamity as a political tool and vote for a clean CR and debt limit bill.

NEED TO REOPEN GOVERNMENT NOW

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, the gentlelady just expressed the dynamics of a pending default, and I could not agree more with the horrors of her description. It baffles me, literally baffles me, that in actuality we are sitting idly by, the Republican leadership, watching Rome burn.

Let me read for you a note that I got from my district, Mr. Speaker. "I have no idea if any of you still are in office, but until further," this is asking whether my staff is still in office, "but until further notice we have been furloughed effective at 9 a.m. today. I will send you an email when back in the office, which I hope is soon, especially since the Senate has not yet passed a bill to pay us even if furloughed. So we just all hope this is a short time off."

Who is this? The Houston VA regional office. Isn't it interesting my friends rise to the floor of the House with such indignation about the VA, the VA centers, and, yes, tragically the devastation of families not receiving their memorial benefits; yet here we are today, another day of the government shutdown, and an email into our district offices indicating that the VA office is closed.

Another emergency call came into my office as a fire ravaged a home of 40 or so veterans. In ordinary circumstances, they would have the VA office to help resettle them; but we are rolling up our sleeves in Houston and my message is to those veterans that we are going to work to find you a place to stay. But, Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the VA services are shut down while the home of those veterans burned. Who are we in this country if we cannot think of those who are lesser than we or who need to be helped with a helping hand?

Mr. Speaker, let me also say to you that while we are in the midst of this shutdown, this Republican obsession with the Affordable Care Act, poor people are suffering. There are millions of dollars impacted with the supplemental nutrition program, the school lunch program. Poor people need us to open the doors of this Congress to raise the minimum wage. Today is the day that I will celebrate and encourage America that the people of this country need to have a minimum wage of \$10.10—\$10.10.

But we can't get any action in this place for the poor people of America. The families, the young families, the young mothers and fathers, the millions of children impacted by Head Start, some 57,000 seats lost and growing across the Nation, poor people who need access to early education, poor people, both rural and urban, who need to have a minimum wage—Mr. Speaker, we can't do that because the government is shut down.

Why is it shut down? Has there been a hurricane or has there been an earthquake? Is there a volcanic eruption? Is there some other natural disaster? Are we under siege by a foreign territory? No. There is an extreme faction in the Republican Party that dominates the dialogue and the action.

What the American people want us to do is to vote now to open the government. They want what the Democrats want: to pay the bills. They want us to talk. We have been willing to talk. They want us to cooperate. We have been cooperating. We have agreed to the Republican number. We agreed to their tax issue, and yet they want to be obsessed with the Affordable Care Act. They want to take away health benefits from Americans.

And then the votes that they put on the floor of the House, Mr. Speaker, these are political votes. We will vote again today, political votes, while people are suffering with cancer. And the Friends of Cancer Research will tell them a thing or two. Their letter says:

The Friends of Cancer Research, a cancer research think-tank and advocacy organization that brings together people and stakeholders who have overcome the barriers standing between patient and treatment, urges Congress to take a comprehensive approach to fiscal policy.

They don't need a piecemeal bill on the floor of the House.

We need to stop the extreme attitude. We need to recognize that the

poor people of America, the people of America, need this shutdown to stop; and the extreme element of the Republican Party needs to stand down while Republicans, 20 of them, and Democrats, 200-plus, vote to open the government now.

THE CONTINUED SHUTDOWN OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BY HOUSE REPUBLICANS

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, day 10 of a Republican shutdown of the Federal Government. Where are we? Well, the consequences are cascading. They build up: \$373 million a day in new Small Business Administration loans frozen, preventing small businesses from getting started, preventing small businesses from expanding and hiring new workers; 10,000 applications a day for Social Security benefits and Medicare frozen. Veterans benefits, we have reduced the backlog by 30 percent. The people who are reducing that backlog, furloughed.

I had a constituent in my district who lost a loved one at Walter Reed Army Hospital. When the funeral home came to collect their loved one for preparation for his final burial, there were no doctors for the death certificate because they had been furloughed.

This affects every American. Sometimes we are not aware of how interwoven Federal services are in our lives. We count on and take for granted that the Federal Government is protecting us from diseases. There is research being done on a crash basis to make sure that antibiotic-resistant infections don't kill us and our children. It is a real threat. Those researchers, furloughed. Protecting illnesses and invasive species, including deadly species, from coming into the United States, at risk because the men and women who are charged with that mission are furloughed.

We are now a subject of conversation all around the world. What happened to America? How can we be a beacon for others? How can we be a model for how to run a country? How can we lecture an emerging country about democratization and how it works for its people when we allow this kind of brinksmanship, this kind of spectacle, and the danger to our own country and its people?

It is reckless. It causes real harm. The solution is at hand, and that is a clean funding bill for the government and a clean debt ceiling to make sure we are good for our debts. We have been good for our debts since the founding of the Republic, since Alexander Hamilton established the creditworthiness of the United States in George Washington's first Cabinet.

Never has there been a risk that we wouldn't be good for our bills, and yet we have one faction in the Republican caucus seemingly dominating that con-

versation on that side of the aisle, more than willing to embrace the threat of default. Almost every major business group has pleaded with this Congress not to do that, not to even play with that. The last time they did, in 2011, our debt was downgraded for the first time in American history; \$2.4 trillion worth of household wealth was lost, including \$800 billion on the equity markets that fell 625 points the next day. It hurt America. It is hurting America now.

We can bring up a clean funding bill before the floor of this House tomorrow—today. We have got the votes to pass it. It is a matter of Republican leadership. Will they allow the democratic process to work in this body? On behalf of the country, can we not put aside partisanship just once for the sake of our country and do the right thing and reassure the world we are standing together to do that right thing, protecting the creditworthiness of this country, protecting the American people by providing government and turning our backs on anarchy? That is really what some are preaching: you don't need government; government is always bad; government never works; government doesn't protect you.

That philosophy is dangerous and that philosophy, unfortunately, is at work here in the House of Representatives.

It is time to turn our backs on that philosophy and embrace the needs of this country and the wonderful people we serve.

THE HIGH COST OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I received an email from Scott, a constituent of the 5th District who lives in Boone, North Carolina. Here is what he had to say:

With all of the talk to this point about the effects of the Affordable Care Act, it has just turned into brutal reality for me and my family. I received a letter from Blue Cross Blue Shield this week regarding my coverage. All of the promises of if you like your current health coverage, you will be able to keep it is absolutely untrue. Blue Cross has dropped my current plan that I was relatively happy with and was expecting to continue using. Blue Cross will be moving me into a new plan where the cost is devastating for my family. My monthly premium is increasing 55 percent, \$3,816 more per year, and my out-of-pocket expenses will cost my family an additional \$3,650 per year. So, all in all, I will be paying an additional \$7,466 next year for health insurance and copayments on top of my already high premiums. I do not qualify for any of the subsidies either, so this one is all on the back of this middle class family of four. I have a 4-year-old daughter and a 2-year-old daughter. I have no choice but to keep them covered any way I can as any father would. But the new outlays of \$7,466 will be a huge burden. We will