

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

all have to make some big changes in our family to be able to afford this. I knew the Affordable Care Act would be tough on someone like myself, but I had no idea how hard it would hit me and my family.

Mr. Speaker, Scott is not alone. Families across this country are baffled by ObamaCare sticker shock. Accepting the devastating truth that costs will be much higher for them next year, some families are trying to find a way to make it work, but they can't even get to the Web site.

But what do they hear from Washington? ObamaCare apologists say, Be patient with us. We will get these glitches sorted out. It will take a few years, and you will all be used to it.

Mr. Speaker, if only those voices in Washington would be willing to give the American people the same time and patience they are demanding. A bipartisan House majority has asked for families to have 1 penalty-free year to figure out what ObamaCare will mean for their families and for their budgets, 1 penalty-free year, not unlike the penalty-free year the President gave to Big Business all on his own.

Fairness: that is what we have asked for. Fairness: that is what Senate Democrats are refusing to discuss. Fairness: that is what the President describes as ransom.

ENDING THE SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President of the United States had the House Democratic Caucus in the East Room for a discussion. Today he will have the Republican caucus, and he will also have the Democratic Senators.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all the Republicans go engage the President, because the President gave such a clear and convincing argument about why what is going on is wrong and has to stop. If the President is told by the minority party in one of the Houses to get a funding bill passed to fund the government that he has to repeal some act, where does that stop? If we get a continuing resolution, and this one was until December 15, and they ask the President to abolish the landmark legislation that he signed and that this Congress passed a few sessions ago, the next thing could be, well, we are not going to continue the government again unless you repeal the EPA, or we are not going to do it unless you repeal the Fair Labor Standards Act, or maybe 6 months down the line we are not going to repeal it unless you and Vice President BIDEN both resign.

You can't give in to these types of tactics to have bills repealed because of a minority within a minority of one branch of government and not go through the regular order of the House passing, the Senate passing, the President signing or vetoing, and then let the Court decide if it is constitutional,

which has happened with the Affordable Care Act.

The President made it clear that he wants to work with both sides; but he is not going to give in to these types of tactics because it wouldn't be fair, not only for him but for the next President and the next President and for the United States of America. Presidents and the country should not be held ransom by the demands of one group, and the President is standing for the Presidency and for the country and for the Constitution.

The Affordable Care Act is not going to be repealed, and the other party knows that. Now they have proposed working on entitlements and long-term deficit reduction. The President will talk to them, engage in dialogue; and hopefully after the Republicans attend and listen to the President today, they will see that this has been a mistake for the American people and a mistake for their political party and they will end this shutdown, reopen government, pass a continuing resolution, and pass a debt ceiling, even if for only 4 or 6 weeks, which the pundits think may happen. It will get us out of this crisis.

And hopefully the minority group within the Republican caucus will let the Republican Party continue to be what it had been in the past, a party of business, and not a party that was anti-business and threatening a debt ceiling issue and a default on our debt which would be catastrophic to the national markets and world markets. Hopefully, within those 6 weeks of dialogue with the President and the leaders of Congress, they can come to some agreements, and we won't have this type of brinksmanship again.

The President is a convincing individual. He is very knowledgeable, he has great people working for him, and he is looking out for the future of this country. This shutdown was totally avoidable. The continuing resolution, which was only going to be to November 15 on the Senate side and December 15 on the House side, accepted the House of Representative's budget figures, which was the PAUL RYAN budget.

The PAUL RYAN budget is anathema to Democrats. We don't like it. It has got cuts to so many services that are important to people in this country: cuts to Head Start; cuts to SNAP payments, formerly known as food stamps; cuts to veterans; cuts to programs that help people get through the day; energy programs when it gets cold to help you pay your utility bills. These cuts are anathema to us, but we accepted them to keep the government going. The Democrats in the Senate accepted them, the Democrats in the House, the President.

But the House Republicans who put that figure out and got accepted, that wasn't enough. They had said, all right, now you have got to repeal, abolish, and/or change to the point of trying to get to abolishment of the most important bill that has been passed in this House of Representatives since 1965

when the Civil Rights Act and Medicaid and Medicare were passed.

It is not going to happen. We are the last industrialized country on the face of the Earth to have national health insurance. It is the right thing to do; and it is folly for Governors and the States that haven't allowed the Medicaid expansion to go forward to do that and I hope they would.

I hope the Republicans come to their senses and we end this shutdown.

TIME TO GET AMERICA BACK TO WORK

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

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, it is day No. 10. Mr. Speaker, today is day No. 10 of a government shutdown, a totally unnecessary government shutdown. This is a manufactured crisis, Mr. Speaker. It is time that we open the government back up.

Mr. Speaker, if our leadership is not able to get together, if the House, the Senate, and the President are not able to sit at the table, then maybe it is time to turn to rank-and-file Members.

This morning over 50 of us came together, Democrats and Republicans, from all over America, from Kansas, from New York, from Florida, from California. We came together not to fight, but we came together to fix problems. We came together as no-labels problem-solvers.

Mr. Speaker, we are ready to get America back to work. We are ready to start moving this country forward. We need to start solving problems, Mr. Speaker, and I would suggest that there is an easy three-step solution to get the country back on track.

Mr. Speaker, number one, let's open up the government.

Mr. Speaker, number two, let's pay our bills. We have always done that. So let's raise the debt ceiling.

Number three, let's come together as Democrats and Republicans and let's negotiate. Let's actually put a real budget together, a budget that starts to address our debt and the deficit; a budget that starts to make sure what we hand off to our children and grandchildren is the same as the country we inherited from our parents and grandparents—a country that thrives, a country that leads the world.

We have to get serious about the challenges that we face and we have to stop these manufactured crises. We have to stop the bickering. This is divided government. It means Democrats and Republicans coming together.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you to join with the no-labels problem-solvers and do what our motto is, let's fix problems, not fight. We are ready to go and get America back to work.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair