

Mr. Speaker, isn't it time we stopped hurting the people we came here to help?

OBAMACARE

(Mrs. ELLMERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, today is day 10 of ObamaCare exchanges being up, or supposedly being up. We now know the problems with the exchanges are not just due to high traffic; rather, technology experts have reported the real problems are with the actual structure and shoddy software used for the exchanges.

The Hill reported on October 8, from one expert, James Turner, software engineer, "It's probably the most broken release that I have ever seen."

I am hearing firsthand the frustrations from my constituents. One constituent said:

The program freezes up when you try to enter your tax filing status. You can't get past it. Same thing happens when I try to apply over the phone. I've called every day since October 1, all different times of the day, and have gotten nothing but the run-around, one excuse after the other, that their system is down.

I've called during peak time. I've called during off-peak time, but apparently there are no on-peak hours. If I can't get qualified for a subsidy before January 1, we will have to let our insurance lapse.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I say, this is a defective exchange, and it is only part of the problem.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN THREATENS THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF SOUTHERN ARIZO- NANS

(Mr. BARBER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, the safety and security of Southern Arizona is my first priority. I represent 83 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, and the people who live near it are very seriously affected by criminal activities along that border.

Since the shutdown, our Border Patrol agents have faced uncertainty about their pay and the future of their mission. These brave men and women are our first line of defense in securing the homeland. They deserve our respect and support.

Last week, an agent's wife called my office about a decision her husband was forced to make, the decision between missing a loved one's funeral or attending it on furlough, putting his paycheck and his family at risk.

This reckless shutdown hurts the families of our agents who put their lives on the line every single day. This is wrong, Mr. Speaker, and we must end this irresponsible shutdown now and restore certainty to the Border Patrol for the safety and security of Southern Arizona and our entire country.

PRAY FOR OUR LEADERS

(Mr. WALBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, as we all are well aware, a lot of emotion is in this Chamber and in this body at this time, and maybe that is the way it should be.

We remember back to the first Constitutional Convention that it almost shut down as well, until Benjamin Franklin stood up and said, We need to go to prayer, asking for the wisdom of the Almighty. Maybe that is what we need as well.

Mr. Speaker, above your rostrum there are words etched into stone from DANIEL WEBSTER, who said:

Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we need to be doing. And so, as today, thankfully, the President and leadership in the House are meeting in negotiations, I call for our citizens, as well as us, to be in prayer, asking for wisdom for the President, for our leaders to come to a conclusion that will move this country forward.

TELL THE SPEAKER TO PUT AMERICA BACK TO WORK

(Mr. ENYART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, my wife had a call last night from one of her best friends. She was angry, disappointed, and frightened. Her husband is a civilian worker at Scott Air Force Base. His paycheck was one-half what it usually is. Their son is a community college student who just got laid off. Their daughter is disabled. They are my voters. They are my friends.

What do I tell them?

What do I tell the veterans whose disability claims aren't being processed?

What do I tell the laid-off prison guards in southern Illinois who will lose their food stamps?

What do I tell the retired mine workers who have lost their pensions in bankruptcy and now have to worry about their Social Security checks?

I can't tell them to call their Congressman. They already have.

I tell them, Call 202-225-6205, and tell the Speaker to put America and its government back to work.

□ 1230

CAN WE TALK

(Mr. RICE of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. President, can we talk?

I am pleased to hear that President Obama, 10 days into a government shutdown, is finally willing to talk with a contingent of House Republicans at the White House this afternoon. After all, there is plenty to discuss.

Everybody in this room, Democrat or Republican, knows that too many of our youth are underemployed or unemployed. Mr. President, our youth want to work.

Everybody in this room knows that we need tax reform to make our businesses competitive in the world and bring American jobs back to America.

Everybody in this room knows that Social Security and Medicare are on a pathway to insolvency and have to be shored up so that we can make our promises good to our seniors.

Thank you, Mr. President, at long last for sitting down to talk. Maybe if we could spend more time talking and less time posturing, we might be able to deal with some of these very significant problems.

Let's all pray that these talks are fruitful and improve the lives of all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

LET'S VOTE AND KEEP THE GOVERNMENT OPEN

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, across the country, Americans are asking a simple question: When will their government open?

Every day, more Americans are denied services they need. Children who rely on Head Start are being turned away. New mothers and their infants are being denied nutritional assistance from WIC. Small businesses are losing demand for their services or are having trouble accessing loans guaranteed by the Small Business Administration, costing jobs we cannot afford to lose and at a time when our economy continues to struggle.

While this is happening, what have our colleagues on the other side of the aisle done? They waste precious time with incremental bills that have no chance of enactment. That is not responsible governing. It is an excuse to put out a press release. The American people do not want more press releases. They want action.

Every day that the government stays closed is a lost opportunity for our economy and our communities. Let's vote and keep this government open.

THROWBACK THURSDAY

(Mr. PITTENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Throwback Thursday, I would like to read to my colleagues the words of then-Senator Barack Obama during the debate on March 16, 2006, about raising the debt limit:

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 U.S. Government can't pay its own bills. It is a sign that we now depend on ongoing financial assistance from foreign countries to finance our government's reckless fiscal policies.

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 today onto the backs of our children and 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.

That was spoken by Senator Barack Obama on March 16, 2006.

Mr. Speaker, we have a \$17 trillion debt today under the leadership of President Obama. I would say today is the day to come together as reasonable people to resolve this crisis.

SHUTDOWN EFFECTS IN EL PASO

(Mr. O'ROURKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, the government shutdown continues to harm the communities I represent and the more than 43,000 Federal employees in El Paso who dedicated their careers to public service.

The Federal district court in El Paso is one of the busiest in the country. It handles a large volume of immigration and drug cases, among many others. I recently heard from Maureen Franco, a Federal public defender, regarding the shutdown's impact in El Paso.

In the U.S. Attorneys Office there, the prosecutors and public defenders are working, but not getting paid. In addition, their staffs have been furloughed. The result: prosecutors brought only 35 cases on Monday. On Tuesday and Wednesday, only nine people were brought into court. When our government works, the average is 55 a day.

The same number of people are being arrested, but the shutdown means we are not prosecuting them in a timely manner. It is likely that these individuals are remaining in detention at taxpayer expense, costing us more than if the government were open. Justice is not being served, nor are the American people.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end the shutdown. Please allow an up-or-down vote. It will pass this House on a bipartisan basis. It will be signed into law by the President. We can reopen the government today.

PASS A FARM BILL

(Mrs. NOEM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, for 2½ years, I have come to this House floor and talked about the importance of a farm bill and the need to have a farm bill for our national security interests. Our producers in this country make sure the people that live in this country have the opportunity to partake in an affordable and safe food supply, not relying on another country to feed us, or they truly would control us.

We don't have a farm bill today, but the Speaker has assured me we will go to conference soon and get one done. But let me tell you about a tragedy that happened in South Dakota last week.

This picture beside me would be very sad if it just reflected one situation in South Dakota, but western South Dakota is littered with tens of thousands of dead cows, horses, and sheep that were killed by a tragic blizzard that hit South Dakota just last week.

The stories we have heard of losses to families are tragic. One mother visited with us and told us about driving her kids to school every day, and it looks like she is driving down a road covered with dead cattle filling the ditches.

We have a farm bill because we need to make sure that there are disaster programs to cover situations like this. The livestock programs that I authored that are included in the farm bill that needs to be signed into law would help protect some of these families and keep them in business in the future.

WE HAVE WORK TO DO

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, it is day 10 of the unnecessary and harmful government shutdown and a week away from when we reach the debt ceiling and risk an economic shutdown. It is time to end this dysfunction.

Across this country, people are out of work and wondering, When will this shutdown end? Will the United States default on its debt? And, importantly, Why can't our elected Representatives resolve this?

We can resolve this, and we can do it today. A majority of the House and Senate and our President support compromise legislation to reopen the government. The Speaker should schedule a vote now. And the majority of Americans—our constituents—are opposed to letting a debate about the Affordable Care Act excuse Congress from fulfilling its basic obligation to pay the Nation's bills.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, let's get the government open, make sure we don't cause the Nation to default, and sit down and face the challenges together. We have work to do to build the economy and to begin to rebuild and restore our Nation's confidence in this United States House of Representatives.

GET OUR FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is so interesting to hear my colleagues talk about how they want a clean CR. Just so that everyone realizes, Mr. Speaker, what they are saying is give us the money—no strings attached, no accountability.

What we continue to say to our colleagues is we want an accountable CR—accountable to the U.S. taxpayer, who is footing the bill for this government. It is not Federal money that we appropriate or that we spend. It is taxpayer money coming out of the pockets of hardworking men and women.

As I read emails from my district in Tennessee, what I hear repeatedly is, number one, We cannot afford the \$17 trillion in debt. It really scares us. It frightens us for the future of our children and grandchildren.

We cannot continue to monetize \$75 billion worth of debt each month. We have to get our fiscal house in order. That is what we seek to do.

VOTE ON A CLEAN CR

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, while Republicans are trying to destroy the Affordable Care Act, the American people are embracing it—and have been for the past 3 years. Even my district, which is rightly upset over not being included in the exchanges like other Americans, has benefited.

Let me tell you a story I heard from one of our doctors.

According to one doctor, the preventive care without copays and 26-year-olds being able to stay on their parents' insurance has helped keep her practice afloat. The up-to-35 percent tax credit for small businesses and the rebate from insurance companies that didn't meet their medical loss ratio allowed her to relieve her employees of their portion of the health insurance premiums. This, and many other ways, is how the Affordable Care Act is working in my community.

Like a few other places in the law, fixes may be needed, like for the territories. The President and Democrats will address them, but in a rational manner.

So I am calling on my Republican colleagues to end the hostage-taking of this Congress, of our Federal employees, of our economy, and the good faith and credit of our Nation. Don't fight us. Join us. Support the Affordable Care Act—a good law that is expanding access to affordable health care for all of us. When some of us benefit, all of us benefit.

Let's vote on a clean CR, open up our government, and lift the debt ceiling today.