



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 159

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2013

No. 146

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
October 15, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL HUIZENGA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

LOOK FOR AREAS OF POTENTIAL AGREEMENT

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, it is slowly dawning on some of my Republican colleagues, who were so gleeful about shutting down the government 2 weeks ago, that there will be no reward for not ruining the economy. Some think they should get a prize when they stop the senseless punishment of the American people, paying our employees not to work, and inflict-

ing needless disruption on the lives and costs to the taxpayers—billions of dollars.

It appears that the public has had a hard time figuring all of this out, but has understandably concluded that most of the blame is due to the Republican crusade against health care reform and their reckless choice of tactics.

Is it possible that something constructive can come from the Tea Party debacle? Absolutely. Maybe we can do our job and look for areas of potential agreement.

Last week, PAUL RYAN and I continued a long-standing partnership on agricultural reform. We led a debate showing the will of the House to limit subsidy for the terribly flawed and expensive crop insurance program by slightly reducing the lavish subsidies to the largest agribusinesses. It is not the final answer by any means. There is no guarantee the Ag conferees will pay attention to the will of the House, but it is a clear area in that we can reduce spending and improve programs for most farmers and ranchers.

Maybe we could find bipartisan agreement that we should not slash infrastructure spending even further. Let's have a hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee and explore how to fund the transportation bill that expires in 348 days and creates a devastating infrastructure cliff.

If people are concerned about the deficit and government spending, maybe the House could finish work on its own spending bills. My Republican friends shut down the appropriations process more than 2 months ago. It might be instructive, before demanding more reductions in funding services, to see if they can actually pass their own version of the budget. If they can't, maybe they would reconsider taking government spending down to the levels of 1962, which is what their budget program requires, when America had

140 million fewer people, when there was one-third the number of senior citizens.

Regardless, their pleas to negotiate ought to mean that they stop refusing to negotiate with the Senate about the budget. If they are serious and not cynical, they will appoint their conference committees and stop 6 months of stalling.

Let's debate whether, at a time of retrenchment at the Pentagon, we really need to spend two-thirds of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years on nuclear weapons we don't need and cannot use for American security. Ninety percent of the expensive, dangerous stockpile is unnecessary for even the most ardent believer in nuclear deterrence. It has just morphed into a grotesque jobs program.

Should America sign away its mineral wealth to foreign companies for free? Before we cut investments in our people and our future, maybe we should reexamine the Mining Act of 1872, which remains on the books exactly as it was signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant.

These are areas worthy not just of debate but of real, honest negotiation and compromise and action. We can agree on areas to get more value for the taxpayer, help those who need it most, not those who need it least, and allow the process of government to work. If you try in good faith, the American system of government is not as bad as it looks.

THE TIME FOR SOLUTIONS IS NOW

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the time for solutions is now. The American people expect their elected leaders to come to the table, work together, and put people above politics.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H6595

Today is the 15th day the Federal Government has been shut down, the 15th day national parks and memorials have been closed to the American people, the 15th day the NIH, WIC, and Head Start have not had the funding they were counting on.

Today is also 2 days shy of the deadline when America might reach its \$16.7 trillion debt limit. House Republicans, as we have for weeks, will continue to offer bipartisan common ground to reopen government and protect America's credit rating.

More than 70 Senators are on record as opposing ObamaCare's medical device tax. Let's put that tax on hold and reopen government.

It is not very fair that Members of Congress receive special help to pay for ObamaCare that isn't available to others. Let's remove the special treatment and reopen government.

It is not right that the American people are on the hook to provide health care subsidies to individuals whose incomes might not even qualify. Let's demand accountability for taxpayer dollars and reopen government.

Since the shutdown began, bipartisan majorities in the House of Representatives have voted to reopen government services and spare North Carolinians from Washington's dysfunction. We voted to open our parks and memorials because their closures are punitive, and they should never be disrespected by a theater of barricades.

We agree National Institutes of Health clinical trials should continue, so we voted to fund NIH. Similarly, we voted to ensure pay for all veterans and to restore FEMA, the FDA, Head Start, and the WIC program, among others; but most of our proposals to get government functioning again face Senate inaction and White House veto threats.

The our-way-or-the-highway mindset must stop. The challenges we face as a Nation require bipartisan solutions. Both parties need to work together to reopen government and manage our debt.

House Republicans remain committed to responsible, bipartisan solutions to end the shutdown and defend our credit rating. We hope our counterparts in the Senate are as well.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN'S HUMAN CONSEQUENCES

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

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again speak about the human consequences of this reckless and irrational government shutdown. We have now reached day 15 of this foolishness.

Each day, I spend time speaking with people from my congressional district who are suffering through this through no fault of their own. Dorothy Lara, from Rockford, Illinois, shared the story of her family's history and their truly deep connection and commitment

to this country. Dating back to the early 1600s, her family has literally given their blood, sweat, and tears for America's freedom and democracy.

Nine generations ago, her family helped build the Mayflower, and not only that, they then helped coordinate its voyage. Her family's ancestors have served in nearly every war in this country—in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, both World Wars—and just recently, she welcomed home her son from Iraq.

Dorothy said it better than I ever could myself. She said—and these are her exact words—“All of my forefathers would be ashamed of what has been going on in this country today.” She went on to say, “What happened to a government by the people, for the people?” and then said, “What I want to see is what my forebearers have fought for: equality, job creation, honor, and respect. They are owed that much.”

We have the votes right now—right here—to reopen our government. We can end this madness and go back to governing our country the way we should be governing our country. Dorothy's family and so many other families throughout our country are, indeed, owed that much.

DEFICIT SPENDING AND THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being recognized for the time, and I appreciate the recognition that this Chamber and my colleagues are putting on the issues before us.

As we look at Federal spending, what we have to do is say: What is causing us to be in a position where we are borrowing \$2 billion a day? And if we are borrowing \$2 billion a day, we have to ask: Is that a sustainable practice and something that we as a Nation can continue? Of course the answer to that is, no, it is not sustainable. Therefore, we have to look at what is causing us to spend more money than we are taking in, and one of the things that is at the top of that list that is too expensive to afford is the ObamaCare program, the Affordable Care Act.

What I would like to do today is focus my comments on what we are seeing from the Affordable Care Act and what has happened with the cost of this program and why it has become too expensive to afford and why we have to talk about it and focus on it and put it on the table as we talk about what our Nation spends.

Now, we all remember supposedly ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, was going to be a \$900 billion program, roughly, that was to give access to affordable health insurance for those who didn't have access to health insurance, but let's look at what has happened.

This was the estimate: under a trillion dollars, \$900 billion, when the pro-

gram was passed. But, oh, remember, we had to pass it in order to read it to find out what was in it. After we read it the first time, \$1.4 trillion. My source on this is the Congressional Budget Office, the CBO. Every time it has been reviewed, with some of the nearly 13,000 pages of rules and regulations, guess what has happened? The cost estimate has gone up. Now ObamaCare is a \$2.6 trillion program. So what we are looking at is a near tripling in cost before the program goes into effect. This is why we continue to say, as we look at fiscal health, fiscal restraint, you have to look at what is happening with the cost projections on ObamaCare.

Now, for those of us from my State of Tennessee, this is something that is not new to us. We had the test case for HillaryCare in our State. It is called TennCare. What happened with the TennCare program was it ended up quadrupling in cost in a period of 5 years.

Now, this causes us a little bit of concern because we look at what has happened with the cost of government-managed and -delivered health care services. Well, let's take a look at Medicare and where it was supposed to be in 1968 and then what has happened with its costs. You can look at these lines, the red line.

These are on my Web site for our colleagues that would like to go and look at the Web site.

You can see what happened in 1968, and the red line shows where it has grown to today. For something that was to end up being about \$12 billion a year, we are now spending over \$400 billion a year on. You can see what were to be the projections here on this bottom line, and you see how far it has exceeded its projections. So because of this, we are quite concerned with the growth and the projections of growth for ObamaCare.

Look at the track record of government spending. Do programs generally come in below their estimates? No. They generally exceed those estimates. So we continue to be very concerned about what will happen with the cost of ObamaCare and the impact this is going to have on our \$3.5-trillion-a-year budget, and we continue to say: We have to review this; it is too expensive to afford; and does it fit into what the American taxpayer is willing to pay for?

Because every penny we spend here in Washington, D.C., comes out of the taxpayers' pockets from money that they have earned and then have paid in taxes, sent to Washington, they expect us to be very careful stewards of those dollars.

Before my time expires, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out one other concern that we have with the exchanges and the way they are going to handle information. Six hundred million dollars to build a computer system that doesn't work and doesn't protect the