

identity and the information of enrollees in the health care exchange is another of the problems there that is worthy of discussion of this program.

#### THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND HEAD START

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I place a loving picture of a little one and the excitement that comes from a Head Start program to emphasize my story this morning and the discussion I want to raise this morning for a brief amount of time.

All of us have seen those western movies where the train is rushing down the track and coming to a point where the tracks are no more. Black-and-white television, we used to sit on the edge of our seats, wondering what would happen. For the aesthetics of the movie, we would see that train fall into a deep abyss, people screaming out of the window or some takeaway that doesn't see the final crash, or maybe it does.

So as I listen to my friends on the other side this morning, it seems as if I were watching that same movie. Today is October 15, the 15th day of a government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, we are in crisis, and there are those who are rising to the floor of the House to misrepresent to the American people some discussion about ObamaCare, which is working every day in this Nation. Albeit as Medicare and Medicare part D, we all need to sit down and knuckle down and look at ways that we can make it work better for the American people.

But we are in crisis today, and I think it is important to know that there are thousands of Head Start teachers and Head Start positions for little ones like my good friend here, the son of Marlon. He is Hector, who is not able to be in a Head Start program right now today.

For my friends, let me say that we have reason to be able to engage in a reasonable solution, a responsible solution. Where are they in coming together to make sure that we don't default in the next 24 hours? Maybe I should educate them with a little graph that shows that, in actuality, the debt-to-GNP under President Obama has actually gone down, meaning the debt has gone down.

The sizable increase in the debt was in the past administration, of President Bush, under Afghanistan and Iraq—everyone knows that—with a Republican-dominated Congress, a Republican President, a war that many did not like, but no one saw the Democrats try to shut the government down. Why don't they acknowledge where this original debt has accelerated itself?

So now we want to move forward and invest in American infrastructure, and they are crying about giving Americans affordable health care. Where is the reason?

So our friends in the Senate, Senate Democrats, are leading on a proposal to which many of us yesterday would have said that we wanted a long extension of the debt ceiling.

Mr. Speaker, I have come here to be responsible on behalf of the American people. Let me read one sentence. On November 16, 1983, "Dear Howard." Howard was the majority leader, Howard Baker. "This letter is to ask for your help and support and that of your colleagues on the passage of an increase in the limit on the public debt." Signed, Ronald Reagan.

It is a misrepresentation to suggest that this is a political stunt. Raising the debt ceiling has been done year after year to pay the Nation's bills. While countries like our friends like China are pushing forward by saying maybe you don't need to rely upon America, which the world does because their currency is not flowing in the world cycle, we are watching while Rome is burning. So I am asking my colleagues to be responsible.

First, they could have put the Senate proposal of a short-term CR on the floor days ago, weeks ago. So now we have a proposal that many of us will probably find challenging to vote for, but I am ready to listen; and I am disappointed that our friends are not realizing the devastation that is happening with the government shutdown.

As a member of the House Judiciary Committee, it troubles me to hear that James Comey, the Director of the FBI, has said that he has laid off 3,000 people—3,000 FBI agents who are in the midst of law enforcement for America. What kind of country are we?

Judges—the Federal courts are saying they don't know if they are going to be able to go past October 15.

The greatest insult is the payments that are due the American people on Social Security and veterans' benefits that may be in jeopardy on November 1 if we don't do the work that we are sent here to do.

So I would ask my friends to lower the discord. Let's not wave Confederate flags in front of the White House, something that burns in my heart—individuals that want to divide America. Let's not call the President what is a faith that we should be respecting. Let's not denigrate ourselves by suggesting that our President worships Allah, but it is not denigrating the President as much as it is denigrating millions of Americans who are Muslims. I am outraged that we would raise it to this temperature.

So, Mr. Speaker, all I can say is let us be in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln, who wanted to bring America together, and let us pass a reasonable response to the government shutdown. Let's not be talking about imploding or tearing this country down.

#### A BATTLE FOR THE ECONOMIC SURVIVAL OF THIS NATION

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, you can never satisfy government's appetite for money and land; they always want more. Now we are \$17 trillion in debt and are headed to \$25 trillion in less than a decade under the best case scenario. Those are figures that are humanly incomprehensible; yet our estimates of our future unfunded pension liabilities are much, much higher. They are, probably, at least \$75 trillion or more.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office is the one that has put out these estimates, and they estimated recently that interest on the national debt will quadruple in less than 10 years to an astounding \$857 billion in just 1 year. If we allow that to happen, the Federal Government could then pay only for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and interest on the debt—nothing for defense, national parks, interstate highways, and so forth. Obviously, future Congresses cannot or would not allow that to happen, so they will then come in with a combination of huge tax increases and a tremendous inflation of the currency.

The fight we are in now is over a lot more than the "Unaffordable Care Act." It is a battle for the economic survival of this Nation. Anyone who wants their Social Security or their Federal or military pensions in order to be able to buy anything—or buy much at all in the very near future—should be demanding much more fiscal conservatism now. We either bite some very painful bullets now or we face much more difficult times in the very near future that will make our present problems look small in comparison. We could end up with problems like Detroit has now, but multiplied all across this Nation.

President Obama, when he was in the Senate, opposed raising the debt ceiling and said we shouldn't do it to our children and our grandchildren; and when we are in this war now over this spending, this battle for the economic survival of our Nation, Mr. Speaker, surely we do not want to ruin the future of our children and our grandchildren.

#### THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND POTENTIAL DEFAULT

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this 15th day of the government shutdown, a shutdown which has put hundreds of thousands of Americans out of work, that will have untold damage on what is already a hesitant economic recovery; and I rise as we contemplate the last maybe 24, 36 hours before an event unprecedented in American history: the possibility that, for the first

time in this great Nation's history, we may not pay our bills—we may default on our obligations—with a plea for sanity and a last-minute plea that we set aside the irresponsibility and recklessness that has consumed this Congress for years now, culminating in this moment.

What has it profited anybody? Seventy-four percent of Americans disapprove of the way the Republican majority has handled this. Democrats could not have dreamed of a better plan to cut the ground out from under the Republicans.

This week, the International Monetary Fund met here in Washington, and global leader after global leader stood up and basically said: What has become of the United States? How can you be so irresponsible? How can this one indispensable Nation now be a laughing-stock?

My constituents are certainly disturbed. I had a conversation with one of them, a guy I have known for probably 25 years now, and he said: Explain to me what is going on in Washington. The Republicans, Senator CRUZ, the House majority are demanding a negotiation.

I said: Yes, they are demanding a negotiation. They are using the shutdown and the debt ceiling as leverage to achieve their goals.

He said: What are those goals?

It started out with a repeal of the Affordable Care Act—that is where Senator CRUZ started a couple of weeks ago—and then it moved on to we want Congress to not have its employer contribution; and then it moved on to simply talk to us; and then there was a long list of things—we want the XL pipeline approved; we want the Affordable Care Act delayed for 2 years—a long, long list of policy wishes that the Republicans have said they want in this negotiation.

And my friend says: So what do you get? What do the Democrats get? If you build the XL pipeline—whatever it is—and if you give them five of the things they want, what do you get? Do you get investment in roads and railways and networks?

I said: No, we don't get that.

Do you get a commitment to improve the education of America's children?

No, no, we don't get that.

Do you get something that pretty much most Americans think is a good idea, which is some kind of comprehensive immigration reform?

I said: No, we don't get that.

He said: Well, what do you get? What do you get in this negotiation?

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I said: All we get is that the government runs.

Really? The government runs. That is what Democrats get in this negotiation?

Yes.

He said: That is not a negotiation.

I said: That is exactly right. That is not a negotiation. That is something more akin to extortion.

And here we sit, where it is not just the government shutdown which is causing pain to Head Start kids in Bridgeport or fear amongst workers at Sikorsky who are building the Black Hawks that ferry our troops in and out of danger. Here we stand on the cusp of saying to the world that you can no longer rely on the full faith and credit of the United States Government.

Folks, I used to work in finance, and there is nothing in finance—there is no share of stock, there is no bond, there is no income-producing property, there is no asset out there—whose value doesn't rest on the unalterable proposition that the United States Treasury is risk free. But the House majority is saying, first of all, that that may not be true, that maybe a default is not a big problem. Maybe it can be managed. It never happened before, but maybe it can be managed. This bedrock, I like to say in doing finance without the concept of a risk-free rate, is like trying to do physics without gravity. Nobody knows what it means, and we are putting this at risk.

So I plead for sanity, and I point out the fact that there are very real costs. The Macroeconomic Advisers, a research firm, has said that the last couple of years have resulted in 900,000 jobs not being created because of this constant hostage taking, this idea that we are going to run the country by crisis. Almost 1 million American jobs are not there because this Congress has done that.

Colleagues, the American people deserve better. It is time at this moment to come together, to be responsible, and to do right by the country.

#### REOPEN THE GOVERNMENT AND PAY OUR COUNTRY'S DEBTS

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I think it is so important as we come here today to take us back where this whole shutdown-debt ceiling crisis began, and that is when my colleagues on the other side of the aisle said that we will not open and fund the government, we will not pass a continuing resolution unless you repeal, defund, delay the Affordable Care Act.

That was their mantra. They were standing at those microphones right over there. They were gleeful; they were pounding the table; and they were really thinking that—you know what?—the Democrats are willing to go back to a day when Americans were filing for bankruptcy because they got sick or got injured. They really believed we were going to allow America to go back to a day when you couldn't get insurance if you had a preexisting condition. They thought we were going to return to a time when we weren't trying to address this big doughnut hole that they created with Medicare part D.

We told them, it is not because we spent so much time on it, that it is not

because you tried to repeal it 45 times and you failed, that it is not because the Supreme Court said it was constitutional, and that it is not because in the last election the Presidential candidate who said I am going to implement health care reform in the Affordable Care Act won and beat the one who said he would repeal it by 5 million votes. Those are not the reasons we stand here.

We stand here because we have little kids and seniors and hardworking Americans who go bankrupt when they get sick, who sometimes are denied access to care which results in loss of life. That is why we said no. We said we can talk about a lot of things—we can negotiate on anything you want—but we are not going to say, if we repeal, delay, defund the Affordable Care Act, then you will do what it is your duty to do, which is to open the government.

So my friends in the Republican caucus knew that—you know what?—the American public is on to our game. We are trying to do everything we can to trick people into thinking it is not really us who are being obstructionists, extortionists, hostage takers. We don't want people to believe that is really us doing it. So, you know what? We have got to say something else. We have got to do something else.

Many of you, Mr. Speaker, who were listening heard a very interesting dialogue that occurred—and you can look it up on YouTube—between Senator RAND PAUL and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, in which they were sort of gaming out what words they should use and how they should sort of reposition themselves to look reasonable, to say, oh, let's negotiate, let's negotiate, when, in fact, they knew that their position was to defund the Affordable Care Act. They started saying things like, Negotiate. Let's negotiate. They even came up with this hash tag, Let's talk.

The bottom line is it was 6 months ago when we wanted to talk—and we still do—but we are not going to say we are going to get rid of the Affordable Care Act and put millions of Americans back in jeopardy, and then as a condition of doing that you will reopen the government.

What they are trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is to say, in exchange for throwing people off health care, they will then do their job. In exchange for putting people back at the tender mercies of an insurance company, they will do their job.

Now, Mr. Speaker, things have gotten really bad because the fact is we are only a few days—we are two days—away from when the Treasury has said they cannot engage in extraordinary measures anymore, that they cannot negotiate America's bills anymore, and on October 17 it is D-day. We have got to do something or bad things are going to happen.

As Mr. HIMES pointed out, no one really knows everything that is going to happen because no Congress in the