

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?

□ 1030

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

history of the United States has ever failed to pay its bills. It will be the Republican House majority that has failed America for the first time in American history by refusing to pay our bills, not because we don't have the money, not because we are not good for it, but because their political ideology dictates that, so they are sacrificing our Nation.

Here is what is going to happen. We don't know all, but we do know a few things. We know there will be higher interest rates and less access to business loans needed to finance payrolls. We know the businesses that want to build inventories and invest in equipment and in construction are going to face higher interest rates. It is going to cost more to do that. We know it is estimated that there are about 3.4 million veterans who may see their disability benefits in jeopardy. We will see catastrophic economic effects to our economy. We could see the average home buyer pay an extra \$100 a month.

Mr. Speaker, I will just close by saying this: we have to get our business in order, and I urge Republican moderates to join with us to reopen the government and to pay this country's debts.

LET US VOTE

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

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, this is a critical moment for the 113th Congress of the United States. We have an opportunity to let this House work its will, to end the government shutdown, to protect the full faith and credit of our country, to show the whole world that after a 3-week bout with insanity, the duly elected Representatives of the people in this Congress finally came to their senses.

But I am concerned that that is not where we are heading here in the 11th hour of this crisis as we approach the precipice of the debt ceiling and the prospect of default. Instead of working together to develop a budget that would work for Americans, my colleagues across the aisle in the Republican Party continue to let reckless ideologues drive their agenda and drive all of us further into a national crisis.

I have the honor of serving on the Budget Committee; and along with Ranking Member VAN HOLLEN, the Democratic members of that committee have been calling since the spring for a conference committee so that we could actually work out a budget that could work for both parties and for the American people, but the GOP leadership in this House has refused to appoint conferees, has refused to go into that negotiation. Why did they do that? Because they preferred the strategy of taking us to this point, into this crisis with the government shutdown, up to the edge of the cliff with the possibility of default because they wanted to maximize their leverage.

Why have they shut down the government? Why have they put us in this position? Well, we heard for months that it was their obsession with the Affordable Care Act, with repealing, delaying, defunding ObamaCare. Yet all of a sudden, 3 weeks into this crisis, the goalposts are moving. It is not so much about ObamaCare. Sometimes it is in, and sometimes it is out on their list of demands. What about the deficit and the debt? Sometimes that is part of the stated reason for this manufactured crisis.

Back to ObamaCare. There is no question about it that the CBO says that moving forward with the Affordable Care Act will actually improve our deficit, will actually help us better manage our long-term debt. We know that there are all sorts of things that we could do together if reducing the deficit and managing our debt was the goal. For example, we could pass bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform, which again the CBO tells us would lower our deficits, lower our national debt, but that doesn't seem to really be what this Republican-manufactured crisis is all about.

It calls to mind the farewell address of our first President—the Founder of our country, George Washington—who warned about political parties who were at war with their own government. He warned about factions that were driven to defeat other factions by the spirit of revenge and dissension and how that itself would become a frightful form of despotism.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that we are walking very close to that awful scenario that our first President dreaded. Now we are hearing a bit of good news from the other House that Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL are close to a bipartisan agreement to help resolve this crisis. I have no doubt there would be enough votes in this House to pass that kind of agreement.

So to my Republican friends, let us vote on that deal or, even better, let us vote on the clean CR that has been pending in this House for weeks that could get us out of this crisis. It would temporarily fund the government at Republican funding levels while we work on a longer-term budget solution. Let us vote.

It seems to me that the GOP needs to simply take "yes" for an answer, allow this House to work its will and get out of this crisis. Unfortunately, we have heard from Senator REID that there were deals reached weeks ago. When Speaker BOEHNER brought those deals back to this House, he found that the Tea Party faction in his caucus wouldn't support him, and, instead, they chose to shut this government down and take us into this crisis. They did something worse than that. They rigged the rules of this House with the so-called martial law that has prevented Democrats from offering any alternatives, any off-ramps for this crisis. They shut down the government, and they hardwired it to stay shut

down, and now, like the dog that finally catches the car, my Republican friends don't know what to do with the situation they have created.

I have a suggestion. Instead of continuing to grope for overreaching concessions and fig leaves, cut your losses. Admit that this scorched-Earth politics of obstruction—this war against the very government that you were sent here to govern—is a bad idea. Let us vote on solutions to end this crisis.

We don't even need an apology for all of the damage you have caused—for the \$160 million a day that has undermined our economic recovery and economic losses from this shutdown. We don't even need an apology for the thousands of Federal employees indefinitely furloughed, for the national parks and forests that have been shuttered, for the loans to farmers and families, who are trying to purchase homes, that have been held up. We don't need you to apologize for halting lifesaving research, for any of that.

Just let us vote to end this crisis. If you don't, don't bother apologizing, because the American people will never forgive the damage you have done to this country and to our standing in the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 42 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Andrew Hofer, OP, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

All powerful and merciful God, we ask You to put forth Your spirit of blessings upon the world which You have freely made, this Nation, which trusts in You, and upon all here on Capitol Hill who turn to You.

We have been wrong and we have sinned. Give us all a share of Your wisdom and Your mercy. Enlighten us so that we can turn from our error and live by the power of Your truth. Strengthened by You, may we stand united in necessary matters, acknowledge liberty in doubtful matters, and be charitable in all matters.

We ask this of You, the source of all unity, liberty, and charity, to whom be glory and honor now and forever.

Amen.