

REPUBLICAN SHUTDOWN HAS
BEEN A DISASTER

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the Republican government shutdown has been a disaster. A lot of people all across this country have been hurt. Hopefully, the press reports that I am reading this morning are true and that, by the end of the day, this House of Representatives will support a Senate compromise that will reopen our government and will avoid our defaulting on our debt. So, I hope that in a bipartisan way, before this day is out, we can come together and do that.

This shutdown and this threat of default has made this Chamber look ridiculous. People of every political persuasion are disappointed in the behavior, especially of some elements of this House that have driven us to this shutdown and threatened a default of our Nation for the first time in history.

END HUNGER NOW

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few minutes here to speak about another aspect of this shutdown and, indeed, some of the policies that we have approved of here in this House of Representatives, policies that have adversely impacted most, especially the poor and the hungry and the vulnerable.

We have 50 million people in the United States of America who are hungry; 17 million are children. This shutdown and this sequester and the farm bill that this House of Representatives approved goes after the very programs that provide so many of our needy people in this country food. That is it, nothing else but food.

We have a hunger problem in the United States of America, and we all should be ashamed of that. This shutdown, coupled with the sequester, has threatened programs like WIC—the Women, Infants, and Children program. It has gone after the SNAP program, which used to be known as food stamps, threatening the amount that people get to be able to put food on their tables. It has threatened funding for food banks. We have had food banks all across this country that have shut down because of the sequester and also because of what this shutdown has done.

We are a much better country than that. I know that the majority of people in this Chamber, deep down, care about the most vulnerable, but we haven't acted that way. There is a pattern in this House of Representatives and this Republican-led Congress that has diminished the plight of poor people, that has trivialized the need for people to be able to put food on their tables for their families and for their children.

We passed a farm bill in the Congress here that cuts food stamps by \$40 billion. That would mean 3.8 million peo-

ple who currently rely on this benefit would be thrown off the program. We would literally be taking food away from families who need it. It would throw hundreds of thousands of children off the free breakfast and lunch program at school. That cut would result in over 170,000 veterans being thrown off that program. Veterans—men and women who have served our country overseas in battle, who are having trouble finding a job, getting stability in their lives, who need this program to be able to put food on their tables for themselves and their families—we are going to throw them off the program. That is just not right. That is just not right.

The farm bill is going to go to conference, and my hope is that we can come to some sort of a bipartisan agreement to reverse kind of the negative aspects of what the House has done. We can do much better. We can do much better. We need to do much better.

Mr. Speaker, it is not fashionable in this House of Representatives to worry about the poor, I guess maybe because they don't have super PACs; they don't donate to our campaigns; they don't have big lobbies here in Washington. But if government stands for anything, we need to stand for those people. Donald Trump doesn't need us, doesn't need government; but some returning veteran who cannot find a job, or some single mother who is trying to raise her kids and doesn't have enough to put food on the table, or some unemployed man who has worked all of his life and all of a sudden because of this lousy economy has found himself without a job and is trying to support his family, they need us, and we need to be there for them. That should not be a controversial or radical idea; yet, in this House of Representatives, it has been. So, from the shutdown to the sequester to the farm bill, over and over and over again, we have targeted the most vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, we need to reverse this trend. When this is all over with, I hope we can come together in a bipartisan way and actually talk about hunger; and I hope that the White House will come forward and embrace a White House conference on food and nutrition so we can have some leadership at the national level to come up with a plan to end hunger and to end poverty in this country.

TIME TO END SHUTDOWN AND GO
TO WORK ON LONG-TERM PROBLEMS

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

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, it is a rather important day today. Sometime today or in the next 24 hours, the United States Treasury will run out of its ability to borrow money, that is, to roll over its debt, to pay all of the obli-

gations that the United States Government has.

I guess, even this morning, we remain the world's biggest economy. We certainly remain the oldest democracy; although, that seems to be somewhat in doubt here on the floor of the House of Representatives where we don't operate as a democracy. We really operate more as a dictatorship, or at least as an oligarchy, in which one or two or a handful of people makes the decision for the majority of the House.

It is a very, very, very important moment that this Nation moves towards, the moment in which it, for the first time in its history, would default on its payments, default on its debt. We have already seen the effects of this. Banks all around the world are selling, that is, getting out of America's short-term obligations or those obligations, bonds, that are due now or in the next week or so. So they are shedding American debt. They are running away from the world's reserve currency.

Why?

Because this House, the House of Representatives, the people's House, is being jerked around, led around by a small contingent of folks who is not thinking clearly, who is not willing to understand the import, the importance, of the soundness of the American dollar, the importance of the full faith and credit of this Nation, of the 200-plus years of history where this House, where this government, where the people of America have always stood behind its obligations. But that group of individuals who is unwilling to be rational, who is the Tea Party faction of the Republican Party, seems to want to take this Nation into a new era, an era in which the world cannot count on the United States of America.

We are also in the 16th day of the shutdown of the United States Government in which the United States Government is only partially operating; in which the national parks, with the exception of just three, are not open; where the Fish and Wildlife Service's refuges are not available to the public, where much of the government is not operating. We are in the 16th day. Why? Why are we in this situation?

When it started 16 days ago, it was to end the Affordable Health Care Act, and then it was to modify it, and then it was to change it, and then it was to delay it, and now it is not even on the agenda.

So why are we still shut down?

There is no reason that is being presented other than what you might see in a preschool class with some kid who is too tired and is down on the floor, throwing a tantrum, screaming and yelling and trying to stop everything. Kid, get your blanket. Get your bottle and take a nap.

We don't need tantrums around here, but apparently that is the only reason the government continues to be shut down, because some 40 or 50 Members of the Tea Party caucus of the Republican Party are throwing a tantrum, led by Senator CRUZ.

We don't need tantrums; we need cooperation; we need to work together. We have got serious problems. The shutdown has created even more serious problems and, as we run up to the debt crisis, yet one more problem, because 40 or 50 people are throwing a tantrum.

This is the House of Representatives, 435 of us elected to represent the people of America, to do right by them, to do right by this Nation's economy, by the working men and women. Even those who are laid off because of the shutdown want to work.

It is time for us to end this. It is time for us to go to work on the long-term problems.

WHY WE MUST DEFUND OBAMACARE

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

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago, when the President and the Democratic-controlled House and Senate forced ObamaCare into law without a single Republican vote, my constituents wrote and called my office, telling me they didn't want a government takeover of health care. They expressed many concerns, including losing a health care plan they liked, higher costs, overbearing regulations that would prevent businesses and their owners' ability to hire workers, and the government making health care decisions for citizens, just to name a few.

My constituents' concerns proved true. The ObamaCare Web site has been up for 2 weeks or more, and for those who were able to get the Web site to work, the reports have proved disappointing and anything but affordable: rate hikes of 260 percent, \$12,600 deductibles, copays up to 40 percent, and zero competition. Perhaps that is why, according to the Daily Mail, on October 11, in the first week, only 51,000 people completed ObamaCare applications.

My constituents continue to write me about their concerns with this bad law, and today, I would like to read a letter from one of my constituents, Lee Stanley. Mr. Stanley is a small business owner from Atlanta, Texas, who is facing difficult decisions due to ObamaCare. Mr. Stanley wrote to my office as follows:

Dear Congressman Hall, I don't know if you are getting any input from small business owners like us regarding ObamaCare. We are really in a dilemma here at Guard-Line.

We found that there are items that we can manufacture here at the same cost as we currently import from Mexico, China, and Pakistan. We would like to bring these jobs back here, but looming in the background is ObamaCare. We employ 85 people in our Atlanta facility. We compete in a world market with distributors or importers that maybe have 15 to 30 employees, and they fall below the 50 employees and, therefore, do not have to pay the \$2,000 penalty for not providing health insurance.

Our industry business model does not provide for employee benefits as it is mostly a minimum-wage industry with profit margins very low.

The situation we are in is that we would have to pay \$170,000 in penalties under ObamaCare. This is another example of the government picking the winners and the losers, and we begin to show up here totally as the losers. There is no way I can be competitive if I have to raise my prices to cover the \$170,000.

Here are my options:

One, don't pay the penalty;

Two, raise my prices and go out of business—85 people lose their jobs;

Three, lay off 15 to 35 employees to get under 50 in order to not pay the penalty, and move more production out of this country;

Four, reduce 35 jobs to part-time, under 30 hours a week, and move more production out of this country.

As you can see from the above options, there is really not a good one. We are having to run our business in a way that does not make very much business sense as we have to always keep in mind the effects of ObamaCare. We are in a position that we can add more jobs here in the USA, and are being penalized for doing that. This country will never be able to completely recover with restrictions on business like that. I am sure we are not the only employer in this situation. I don't know what we can do except express our concerns to our representatives.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, I will continue to fight to defund as much of this bad law as possible. ObamaCare remains widely, completely unpopular across the country for good reason—it is hurting jobs, hurting pocketbooks of already struggling Americans, and preventing people from making their own health care decisions.

The American people deserve better. Responsible health care reform should do better, that offers true health, job, financial, and personal security.

WORK TOGETHER ON BUDGET MATTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 17 days ago, I came to the House floor to talk about how disappointed I was that a topic of such importance, the medical device tax repeal or delay, was being reduced to the level of political squabbling over whether we are going to continue the function of the government, but here we go again. We are here again to vote on that same policy 17 days later, but we have further delved into the realm of pettiness because the Republican leadership continues to insist that our economy's future should be tied to whether Members of Congress, Cabinet members, the President, and our staffs should have the same health care insurance that other Federal employees receive.

I am surprised. Are we really going to keep the United States Government shut down and threaten the full faith and credit of our country based on whether Members of Congress, our

staffs, and the President and Cabinet get the same health care that thousands of other Federal employees get? It is bordering on pettiness. It sounds so silly to be able to deal with this.

I was fortunate enough, I worked 23 years at a company at which they not only subsidized my health insurance, but they paid for my family's. Governments all over the country do that. The State of Texas, where I am proud to be from, pays for health insurance for State employees. The City of Houston has a health insurance plan for their employees that they help pay for. Harris County does it. All governments do that. Frankly, I represent a lot of petrochemical refineries and plants. Exxon, Shell, the ones who are serving our area, all of them have "subsidies," as the Republicans call it, for the health care for their employees; and yet, on the floor of the House, we think it is a dirty word.

Our goal with the Affordable Care Act was to have everyone in the country have access to quality health care, not just because you got to work for the government or work for an Exxon or a Shell, which are great companies—everyone. So that was the goal of it. If you look at the national exchanges, if we ever get the computers fixed, we will see that. People will have the option to be able to have the same options that we have as Members of Congress or as Federal employees or that I had in the private business that I helped manage. That is what we are talking about.

But to put that in a continuing resolution to open up the government and to make it that you have to vote for this or we are not going to pay the TSA, who screens us when we go into the airport—they are working, but they are worried about getting their paychecks; so is the military; so are a lot of folks. But to make that the end-all, the be-all—I can't believe our forefathers and our veterans sacrificed for our country to make sure we have this freedom—to lower it to the level of we are not going to vote for this unless we can take away the President's health care or the Cabinet officials' or the Members of Congress'.

Our constituents expect us to act more responsibly. We should be ashamed of what this House of Representatives has come to over the last number of months, because we need to talk about making sure our country continues to grow. What is so sad is that, last week, some of us were briefed that every week of the government shutdown costs 0.3 percent of our gross domestic product. We want jobs, but here we are, 2 weeks and going on 3 weeks into the shutdown, and we are adding to that unemployment because of what the Federal Government is doing.

Again, we should be embarrassed at what the House of Representatives is doing. Let us pass a continuing resolution. Let us pay our debts that this House of Representatives has voted for.