

with almost \$3 in spending cuts for every \$1 of revenue. Mr. Speaker, Democrats in the House and the Senate, along with the President, have put forward balanced proposals to avert these devastating cuts. I urge you to listen to the American people and bring balanced legislation to the floor for a vote. Our communities cannot afford to wait.

NATURAL GAS OFFERING ENERGY REVOLUTION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Natural Gas Caucus has relaunched with a four-member bipartisan leadership team in order to expand efforts and organizational resources in the 113th Congress.

Despite a fragile economic recovery, the Nation is witnessing an energy revolution through which energy resource development is offering economic growth, new jobs, and lower energy costs. America's newly found ability to access expansive reserves of natural gas is a large part of this new domestic resource base, which has afforded new opportunities for America's manufacturing sector based on the comparative advantages of lower energy costs and for American families as they heat their homes at a fraction of the cost.

Despite these new fortunes, there are countless policy challenges that must be leveraged for the Nation to continue benefiting from this abundant, clean, low-cost energy source.

The mission of the Congressional Natural Gas Caucus is to educate Members of Congress and the public about the importance of natural gas as a domestic energy resource and its role in meeting the Nation's energy demand and in attaining energy security.

I, along with my fellow cochairs—Representative GENE GREEN from Texas, Representative TOM REED from New York, and Representative JIM COSTA from California—encourage Members to join us in this effort today.

AVERTING SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because southern Illinois folks are worried about sequestration undermining the economy and costing us jobs. I want to share with you today a letter about those concerns. This letter is from the supervisor of a young National Guard family.

Sarah and Mike, a young couple, one small child and another on the way, both deployed to Afghanistan with us in 2008. If nothing changes, Sarah will get hit with the furloughs, and Mike will probably lose his full-time National Guard job entirely. This is just devastating. Obviously, don't blame

you. You weren't even in Congress when the Budget Control Act passed. But real people are going to get hurt—bad—veterans and soldiers. This is just incredible. I cannot believe Congress is going to let this train wreck happen. I know you know this, but it matters a great deal to us in DOD and the Guard, both to the civilian employees who will be the immediate victims, and to the rest of us who have to deal with the fallout.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION PLAYS POLITICS

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

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the administration, in an effort to drive home the devastating impacts of sequestration, indicated that they would begin releasing criminal aliens held in detention centers across the United States. This policy is not only a shortsighted scare tactic, but it is also a completely inappropriate way to handle our fiscal problems.

By releasing these criminals out into the communities, the Obama administration is also playing politics with American safety. Not to mention, the administration is placing an undue additional burden on the already strained Federal programs that have succeeded in identifying, arresting, and removing criminal aliens. Ordering the release of criminals back into our communities because their crimes aren't serious enough to qualify for deportation completely ignores DHS's core mission to address our Nation's illegal immigration problem. We're putting our communities at risk, stressing local law enforcement, and not saving a dime once repeat offenders find themselves back in the system.

Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation of laws. We would do well to remember that.

AVERTING SEQUESTRATION

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak out today against the automatic cuts known as sequestration which are set to kick in days from right now. These cuts were designed to be so painful and so terrible that they would never see the light of day. This is budgetary insanity. That is why I have opposed sequestration from the start.

Earlier today, I met with the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce and representatives from the Rock Island Arsenal. Last week, I met with a defense contractor from Rockford, Illinois, and I toured the USDA Research Lab in Peoria, Illinois. That's the place where they figured out how to mass produce penicillin, and these are the kinds of programs that are at risk. These programs are rightly worried about the impact of sequestration.

We will see job losses because of this flawed budget process, and it will have a trickle-down effect throughout the region that I represent. Our residents

will have less money to eat out. They'll have less money to see a movie or to shop at our small businesses. We cannot afford to have this happen.

I introduced my first piece of legislation a couple of weeks ago, the Government Waste Reduction Act. It is a bipartisan, commonsense approach to reduce government waste and not impact the middle class. This type of approach is reasonable, responsible, and rational, and that's what I would call for in a bipartisan fashion.

□ 1610

SEQUESTRATION

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

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Ruth. She's 91 years old, from my hometown. And Ruth, like many of my constituents, through the years, she's lost her network of family and friends.

After coming home from the hospital, she was unable to shop or cook and could barely get out of bed. According to Ruth, her life was literally saved by a Federal program called Meals on Wheels that delivers more than a million meals to seniors in need each day.

On Friday, as a result of mindless, indiscriminate budget cuts known as sequestration, folks like Ruth, across this country, will be in jeopardy of going hungry, and that is wrong. So I urge my colleagues to do what is right, come together, stop the sequestration, and implement a long-term, balanced approach to reducing our national debt.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 699, a balanced bill to replace the sequester with spending cuts and revenues.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BENTIVOLIO). Under the guidelines consistently issued by successive Speakers, as recorded on page 752 of the House Rules Manual, the Chair is constrained not to entertain the gentleman's request until it has been cleared by the bipartisan floor and committee leaderships.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, last week I traveled across my district listening to my neighbors, who cannot afford the cuts that will go into place under sequestration. At Harper College, school superintendents told me that sequestration will cut vital programs and jeopardize the future of our children.

In Hanover Park, I listened to officials discussing desperately needed

transportation investments. With sequestration, we will lose both construction jobs and potential new investments in our business parks.

In Itasca, veterans who would sacrifice everything for our Nation wonder why Congress can't come together and stop the cuts that will hurt this country they love so much. They didn't go home until they got their mission accomplished, and we shouldn't go home until we revolve this self-inflicted crisis.

Both parties agreed to the sequester. The time for finger-pointing and assigning blame is over. We should immediately vote on and pass commonsense measures like stopping Medicare fraud, ending subsidies for oil and gas industries, and ending tax loopholes for large corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up House Resolution 699, a balanced bill to replace the sequester with spending cuts and revenues, a measure that would save thousands of jobs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, we are now less than 48 hours from sweeping and irresponsible, across-the-board budget cuts that will go into effect on Friday. These cuts will weaken our military, harm our border security, undermine economic recovery, and hurt southern Arizona families.

We must work together. We can, I am confident, craft a rational, bipartisan solution to reduce the debt so these cuts can be avoided.

Last week I stood with officials from the University of Arizona, the city of Tucson, law enforcement, Border Patrol agents, civilian employees of the airbase and the garrison at Fort Huachuca, and local health care groups and community agencies to demand that we take action on sequestration.

The critical services that these groups and individuals and countless others provide to Arizonans will be cut because Congress has not come together with a commonsense solution. In my districts, these cuts mean longer wait times at the border and ports of entry, and less security between them. This is absolutely unacceptable.

Sequestration hurts the ability of returning veterans to find a job. This is also unacceptable.

And as I've said before, I'm willing to work here with all of my colleagues to find a middle ground. We owe our communities a budget, one that balances new revenues, eliminates ineffective programs and allows vital services to continue.

We should not recess tomorrow. We should stay here and do our job.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, as a freshman here on the House floor just 2 years ago, it does my heart good to see my freshman colleagues coming down from the other side of the aisle, because I came down with that same vision 2 years ago to work together to address the big issues that are out there.

I serve on the Budget Committee, Mr. Speaker, and for fiscal year 2013, we're going to post a \$1 trillion annual deficit. This sequester that every Member is rightly concerned about is \$85 billion, less than one-tenth the magnitude of the decisions we really need to make to get America back on fiscal track.

Is the sequester anybody's idea of the right way to do it? I don't believe that it is.

Is everyone's idea of the right way to do it to deal with that part of the budget that we don't do in discretionary spending? The big two-thirds, that mandatory spending that we have to come together on to deal with? And the answer is absolutely, yes.

I stand ready to work with my freshman colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do those big things that need to be done. But Mr. Speaker, we have raised taxes already in 2013. The CBO reports that an additional \$1 trillion will come into the Treasury over the next 10 years.

What we need is not more taxes. What we need are responsible spending cuts, Mr. Speaker.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Ms. DELAURO. The House majority should bring legislation to this floor that will prevent the automatic, across-the-board cuts that will occur on Friday. These dangerous, indiscriminate cuts threaten our economy and vital services for our children, for women, for seniors, small businessmen, and our servicemembers in uniform.

Today, we are spending \$12 billion less on labor, health, and education programs than we were in 2002. And because of the cuts we made in the Budget Control Act, we will be spending \$21 billion less on these programs in 2022. And yet, despite these already made cuts the sequester will gut labor, health, and education programs by nearly another \$7 billion this year.

The results? Over 10,000 fewer people in my State will get the assistance they need to find jobs. Over 1,500 fewer Connecticut children will see vaccines for diseases. And 8,000 disadvantaged students will lose access to educational services. This will also relieve teachers and teacher aides of their jobs, thereby raising unemployment.

This is in addition to cuts that will impact food safety inspection, Meals on Wheels for seniors, support for public safety officers, and to keep air traffic controllers on the job.

I ask unanimous consent to bring up my colleague Mr. VAN HOLLEN's Stop the Sequester Job Loss Now Act. It replaces sequestration with a balanced, bipartisan approach to deficit reduction.

We have a responsibility in this body: pass a budget that protects the middle class, our seniors, and the most vulnerable—and we have to act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. As the Chair previously advised, that request cannot be entertained absent appropriate clearance.

□ 1620

HOUSE VOTED TWICE TO REPEAL THE SEQUESTER

(Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. What I want to remind the people of is that this House has twice passed legislation to repeal the sequester. The Senate has not done anything. Quite honestly, they have just chosen not to do their job over there.

The President has yet to give us a written proposal. But this House, the people's House, twice voted to repeal the sequester with responsible spending cuts.

THE SEQUESTER

(Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Time is short, Mr. Speaker. March 1 is just a few hours away, and the Republicans refuse to bring forward a balanced plan to replace the meat-ax approach to governing known as sequestration.

My constituents have been clear with me: We should stop the blame game, and we must stop this sequester from happening. New Mexicans are worried. They know what happens if we don't stop the sequester:

More than 750,000 jobs are at risk just this year.

Almost 10,000 New Mexicans won't be able to get the help and skills they need to find a job.

Small businesses, the backbone of our economy, won't be able to get the loans that they need to expand and grow.

Just in New Mexico, almost 7,000 civilian furloughs from the Defense Department, resulting in \$42 million less in gross pay for those employees, forcing middle class families to deal with losses equal to one mortgage payment or more.

Lastly, one of my State's and district's largest employers, Sandia National Laboratories, has implemented a