

pointing. The truth is, it took both parties, the House, the Senate, and the President, to approve sequestration. And it's going to take both parties, Republicans and Democrats, a House, a Senate, and the President, to resolve it. The decisions we will have to make won't be easy, and no one—no one—will get everything they want, but that's why we were elected. That's why our constituents entrusted us to serve in this body.

So let us take this opportunity to do the job that we were sent to Washington, D.C., to be in this House, the privilege of serving in this House, let's do our jobs, do what our constituents sent us to do. Let's put aside the partisan politics. Let's work together, compromise with principle, and govern, govern like statesmen. It is expected and, I will say, Mr. Speaker, it is demanded of us.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I thank the gentleman for those words.

I'll close by saying this. This job is not easy. It's not exactly what everybody might think it is, but it's something that we don't need to squander.

□ 1720

It's an opportunity that everybody in this House has been given that probably less than 12,000 people have ever had since this country has been founded. We don't need to squander this opportunity.

And we need to honor those that have come before us, that have fought and died, the men and women right now that are in Afghanistan and other parts of the world that are putting their lives on the line and in danger every day, not for us to be running up the debt on them.

We've got less than 1 percent of the people in this country that protect the rest of us. And so, you know, why are we trying to do them harm?

We're trying to fix that, and I want them to know that, that we are trying to fix that, and we're going to try to fix it in the CR.

And for the young voters out there, I want y'all to know that this is not something that we're purposely doing to hurt you or your family. This is something that we're doing for your children, or trying to do for your children.

All we're asking is that you might encourage others to join us in this fight, to try to save this country from going down the road of debt and bankruptcy that we're headed on, and instead turn it around to the bright future that we all want to have for this country and for a better Republic, and something that will bring us back to the forefront, to be held in the same esteem that we've always been held in by the other countries in this world, not somebody that's continuing to dig a hole of debt for our future.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). The Chair would ask Mem-

bers to address their remarks to the Chair.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS HOUR: SEQUESTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus to repeat and enhance the calls made by our colleagues today to put a stop to these disastrous spending cuts known as sequestration.

It's been interesting. For the last 45 minutes I've listened to people from the other side of the aisle talk very passionately about their concerns on government spending, on debt, on government waste. And yet, almost not a single one of those issues is covered by what we have before us in the next 48 hours, which is sequestration.

Sequestration is a thoughtless approach that makes irresponsible, indiscriminate cuts down virtually every single budget line. If you think there is waste with a \$4 million TV station in the IRS, as one speaker said, sequestration won't stop that. If you think we have too much debt, sequestration won't stop that. If you think we have too much fraud, abuse, and waste, sequestration won't stop that.

But what sequestration will do is have a real impact on the middle class families, not just in Wisconsin, where I come from, but across the country, and that's why so many of the people in the Progressive Caucus and Democrats have such a strong concern about what this country is facing, because of this House, this Chamber's inability to act in the next 48 hours.

You will hear from a number of people from different parts of the country this afternoon who are going to talk about the very real impact of sequestration on their States and on their districts, and the very impact that I think the middle class is feeling that doesn't really relate to what we heard for the last 45 minutes, but relates to the very issues that people care about—education, health care and so many other areas.

It's funny, last week I got a chance to be back home in my district, and as I talked to the people of south central Wisconsin, it's not at all what you hear talked about here in Washington, D.C. It's almost as if it was a different country, not just the District of Columbia, but a completely different country when we talk about sequestration.

And what people care about is, how do they make sure they've got a job? How do they make sure they've got enough money to pay for the food on their table, to support their children, to provide opportunities for their families?

But instead what we see is quite different with the sequestration cuts that

are going to happen. There's a real impact on the middle class, and it's pending and it's looming because we can't get the people in this room to sit down and get our jobs done.

I heard multiple stories over the last week, and just in the last 45 minutes, about how sequestration came about. I can tell you, people in Beloit and people in Barneveld and people in Baraboo and small communities across Wisconsin don't care about the finger-pointing of how it happened. They don't care that in 1985 this idea started, and it's been a bad idea. It was such a bad idea that it was agreed to last year because they thought absolutely no one would go for this idea, and now we have people arguing, don't worry; we'll fix it a month from now.

I can tell you, in Wisconsin, we're a little different. When our check oil comes on in Wisconsin, we check our oil, and if we have to we put oil in the engine. Here in Washington, D.C., we just keep running it until the car stops and the engine breaks down, and then we all decide that we're going to somehow fix the engine, which is a much more costly process. But I guess that Wisconsin common sense doesn't happen in Washington, D.C., and it's clearly not happening in this House as we deal with sequestration.

I have a couple of colleagues here who are going to share some stories, and then I'm going to come back and share some more stories from my area, some of the very cuts you're going to see in Wisconsin and nationwide. I'm going to share some real stories from people who, not just from my district but across the country, are talking about the impact on their lives.

I want to share a little bit about my experience. I spent 6 years on a budget-writing committee in the Wisconsin Legislature, and I chaired that committee. And we did things in a very different way and in a very bipartisan way, something that is a foreign concept to Washington, D.C.

First I would like to recognize one of my colleagues from the west coast. Representative MARK TAKANO is a fellow freshman. He represents the Riverside area of California. A teacher by profession for over 20 years, also a community college board member, so he's had a lot of experience and is recognized in our caucus as one of our foremost experts on education. But he knows the real-life impact that this is going to have on California and on his district.

I would like to yield some of my time, Mr. Speaker, to the gentleman from California.

Mr. TAKANO. I'd like to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for yielding some time to me this evening.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a lot of talk from my friends on the other side of the aisle about whose idea the sequester was, instead of actually working to stop this from happening.

Make no mistake. If the House Republican leadership really wanted to

stop the sequester from taking effect, they could do so. It's the House Republican leadership that is sitting back and letting the sequester go through.

My friends on the other side of the aisle seem to forget how we arrived here. In 2011, it was the Democrats who wanted a clean raise of the debt ceiling, which had been the process for decades, under Republican and Democratic Presidents. But the extreme wing of the Republican Conference demanded cuts, and chose to hold the American economy hostage.

What we got was the Budget Control Act of 2011, which Speaker BOEHNER said was 98 percent of what he wanted. And here we are, a year and a half later, Mr. Speaker, up to the eleventh hour again, dealing with another manufactured crisis instead of talking about jobs and how to improve the economy.

But again, we must deal with the soap opera that is the House of Representatives. Every time the House of Representatives wants to pass some meaningful legislation, we're forced to go through this pattern where our citizens are put through weeks of drama on pins and needles wondering what will happen. But then what happens is the governing majority finally comes together to pass legislation with substance, legislation that is sensible.

But who is this governing majority that passes meaningful legislation?

It's made up nearly of the entire Democratic Caucus, and a handful of moderate, sensible Republicans. When we faced the fiscal cliff, which nearly every credible economist said would be disastrous for our economy, it took a commonsense governing majority of 172 Democrats and 85 Republicans to come together to save the economy from ruin.

□ 1730

On the vote to provide aid to victims of Superstorm Sandy, after weeks and weeks of delay, with leaders of their own party up in arms, finally the governing majority emerged with 192 Democrats and only 49 Republicans. I understood the need to help the victims of Superstorm Sandy. I'm from California, where earthquakes and other natural disasters are a reality, as are tornados in the Midwest and hurricanes in Florida. Most Americans understand that it is a basic function of the Federal Government to provide aid to victims of natural disasters; but still the Republican caucus was divided, and it took reasonable people to come together to help those in need.

And just last night, we got word again that the governing majority is needed in order to pass some real legislation as we take up the Violence Against Women Act. The reality is, to pass anything with substance, Speaker BOEHNER needs the Democrats.

So when the House of Representatives takes up the Senate version of the Violence Against Women Act, what will the governing majority look like?

Go to Twitter and tell me what you think the vote will look like with the hash tag Boehner Needs Dems.

Mr. BOEHNER, the governing majority has done its job with the fiscal cliff, with aid to Sandy victims, and I'm willing to bet that the governing majority will do its job once again with the sequester and the Violence Against Women Act.

Speaker BOEHNER, when you're ready to get serious, we, the governing majority, are here to help.

Mr. POCAN. I'd like to thank the gentleman from California for those remarks.

You've heard a little bit from the west coast. You heard a little bit from the heartland. Now we can hear a little bit from the east coast, the State of Pennsylvania, and another colleague of mine, another member of our freshman class that we have of 49, and now soon to be 50 freshman Democrats in this House of the 113th Congress. Representative MATT CARTWRIGHT is a lawyer by trade. He represents consumers and making sure they get their fair share in this country. Mr. CARTWRIGHT also is a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, where he is the ranking Democrat on a committee to make sure that economic development is a priority for the people of this country.

It is my honor to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin.

I'm here to address the draconian and irresponsible and indiscriminate effects of this ridiculous sequestration program that's slated to take effect on March 1. I use the word "indiscriminate" advisedly. It is indiscriminate. It is as if the government were a surgeon and seeking to take out a cancer, a lesion making a patient sick. Instead of being given a scalpel to take out that lesion, the surgeon is forced to use a meat cleaver.

That is an appropriate analogy for what this sequestration is doing because it is an indiscriminate set of cuts across the board to the discretionary spending in the United States. No responsible business person would ever engage in such a budgetary process. No one with any sense would do this in the government. And yet we're left with this.

Instead of repealing it and replacing it promptly, what we see is that the Speaker is instead engaging in finger-pointing and in the blame game to avoid moving forward and fixing the problem in the first place. It's irresponsible, and it has to be dealt with differently.

I say that if Congress cannot come up with a replacement to the sequester before the end of this week, we should eliminate the sequester entirely. One million working Americans should not be forced to pay the price for what is nothing more and nothing less than stubbornness and hard-headedness. We would prefer to replace the sequester

with a balanced approach to deficit reduction.

The Progressive Caucus already introduced a bill called the Balancing Act that reflects what the American people already voted for this past November. The Progressive Caucus Balancing Act replaces the sequester with a balanced approach to new revenue and necessary Pentagon cuts, and it creates jobs all over the country. It equalizes the cuts we've already made with revenue by closing tax loopholes for America's wealthiest individuals and corporations.

But we shouldn't just sacrifice our economic recovery because Republicans are unwilling to vote for one single penny in new revenue, new contributions from their billionaire friends and corporations. We have to look at what these cuts mean in the sequester. The sequester involves 70,000 children being kicked off Head Start. No one in this Chamber disagrees about the importance of Head Start. Early childhood education is absolutely essential in creating the foundation for learning in children all over the world. And that's what Head Start is about. There will be 70,000 American children kicked off Head Start. That's what happens when you use a meat cleaver instead of a scalpel.

We're talking about more than a million kids who will see their schools lose education funding. We're talking about emergency responders who will lose their jobs, meaning slower response times and weaker disaster preparedness. We're talking about layoffs and furloughs for Social Security workers that is going to cause delays and hassles for millions and millions of Social Security recipients—people who depend month in and month out on their Social Security checks to put food on their table.

In my district, the 17th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, we have one county—Schuylkill County—where 149,000 people live. Out of 149,000 people who live there, fully 38,000 of them subsist on Social Security checks. If those checks are delayed, if those people get hassled getting those checks because of this sequester, that is a crying shame.

We're talking about cuts to air traffic controllers, for those of us who have to fly around as part of our jobs. We're talking about cuts to airport security agents. All of this is going to mean longer waits, travel disruptions.

The consequences of more massive budget cuts are real. This isn't a game we're talking about. In fact, economic growth in the United States is going to slow because of this sequester. Hundreds of thousands of jobs will be lost and more people will have to rely on government assistance to meet their basic needs than ever before. This is exactly the opposite of what we need to be doing in the United States, and it's the opposite of what the American people asked for in the November election. It's time that our colleagues across the

aisle—the Republicans—wake up to what is really about to happen to American families. It's time that we eliminate the sequester.

I want to talk to you a little bit about specific examples of what we expect to happen in my home State, the Keystone State of Pennsylvania. If sequestration was to take effect, we're talking about job losses to the Tobyhanna Army Depot, which is something that for the last 60 years has provided electronic refurbishing to Army equipment. We're talking about command and computer and communications control to Army equipment that is refurbished right there in Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, by as many as 5,400 dedicated, patriotic people supporting our warfighters for the last 60 years with this kind of electronic equipment.

□ 1740

We're talking about cuts to Tobyhanna Army Depot of \$309 million over 10 years as a result of this reckless and irresponsible sequester.

We're talking about teachers and schools. Pennsylvania is going to lose approximately \$26.4 million in funding for primary and secondary education, putting around 360 teacher and teachers' aide jobs at risk.

About 29,000 fewer students would be served and approximately 90 fewer schools would receive funding if this nonsensical sequester program goes through.

Head Start and Early Head Start services in Pennsylvania alone would be eliminated for approximately 2,300 children, reducing access to critical, critical early education.

And then children with disabilities on top. Education for children with disabilities: Pennsylvania will lose about \$21.4 million in funds for about 260 teachers, teachers' aides, and staff who help children with disabilities in school.

Even worse, protections for clean air and clean water. Pennsylvania would lose as much as \$5.7 million in environmental funding to ensure clean air and air quality, as well as prevent pollution from pesticides and hazardous waste.

In addition, Pennsylvania could lose another \$1.5 million in grants for fish and wildlife protection.

We're going to sacrifice our schools, we're going to sacrifice the environment, all in the name of stubbornness and wrongheadedness—mule headedness—on the part of the people who should be coming to the people, the Republicans, who refuse to engage in any sort of responsible revenue legislation whatsoever.

Finally, military readiness. In Pennsylvania, about 26,000 civilian Department of Defense employees would be furloughed, reducing gross pay in Pennsylvania alone by around \$150.1 million in total.

This isn't a joke. We talk about deadlines here in Congress; there are hard deadlines and there are soft deadlines.

We have seen Congress only moves when there's a hard deadline, when there's an actual cliff we're about to go over.

This is irresponsible in itself because I think—it is the case that many here in this Chamber believe that March 1 is a “soft deadline” because all that's happening are furlough notices are going out and people are not actually losing their jobs for another 30 days or so. For example, the Tobyhanna Army Depot, furlough notices are slated to go out in the middle of March for furloughs that actually take place at the end of April. There are those in this Chamber who think that's a soft deadline that doesn't really matter, it's just a furlough notice anyway.

Well, I'm here to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that furlough notices go to real families—real families who have to plan for their budgets, real families who have to plan on how they're going to feed their children and clothe them and pay the mortgage and keep the car running and keep gas in the car. They have to think about how they're going to do all these things when they're holding a piece of paper that says you're losing your job in 30 days. It's cold comfort for them, for those families, to hear that, well, this may not happen when they're holding it in black and white, a letter that tells them they're going to be out of work in 30 days.

This is no way to run a government; this is no way to make a budget; and this is no way to be responsible with the finances of the United States of America.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, for continuing your fight for families in Pennsylvania and across the country.

When I listen to Mr. CARTWRIGHT and I listen to Mr. TAKANO and I listen to speakers throughout the day from the Democratic side of the aisle, I can't help but feel that there is an overwhelming—when you look at sequestration, you're really looking at what's happening right now in Europe, and it's called austerity. We know that right now, by doing these massive cuts in Europe like we're now trying to pattern right here in the United States, we know what the net effect is. Right now in England, they are facing a triple-dip recession—not just a double dip, a triple-dip recession. We look at where they are in unemployment; their unemployment is rising. We look at where their deficit is; it isn't going away. All they've done is taken away the very tools that stimulate our economy.

When you take away the jobs that Mr. CARTWRIGHT and Mr. TAKANO talked about, that means real people don't have money to spend and build the economy. When you take away the loan guarantees as this sequester will do, real small businesses don't have capital so they can grow and hire more workers. When you have the very effects that we are seeing done right now in Europe happen here, well, what ef-

fect do you think we're going to have? I can guarantee it's not going to be fixing that \$4 million TV station at the IRS that we heard about. Instead, it's going to have a real impact on every single family throughout the country that's not in the top 1 percent.

So at this point, I want to share a few statistics from the heartland, and then I've been joined by another colleague from Florida. We are literally going across the country and showing what these impacts have. But let me share some statistics from my State.

We know from a George Mason University study that over 2 million people in this country could lose their jobs because of the sequester. That's 36,000 jobs in Wisconsin, a State that, unfortunately, thanks to our Governor, we have not bounced back like other States in our region. It's those failed economic policies that we've had in Wisconsin by our Governor that have already held back our economic growth, and now we're going to jeopardize 36,000 more jobs in my home State.

Wisconsin is going to lose millions of dollars—\$19 million for education just for disadvantaged students and for special ed. That's going to affect tens of thousands of students in our State.

Head Start funding, while we know the impacts that are going to happen nationwide that Mr. CARTWRIGHT talked about, it's going to have hundreds of kids who are not going to have that funding in my State of Wisconsin.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison—which is one of the most important public universities in this country, it is a world-class institution for research, for stem cell research, for all sorts of biotech and high-tech innovations, one of the best graduate programs in almost every program in the entire country, and yet we know they're going to see about \$36 million lost that would go into research and development and financial aid and other programs that will affect real people and real jobs in my State.

I have had doctors come and medical schools come to us in the State of Wisconsin and say they are going to lose the ability, because of the sequester, to have people in residence programs. I think it was 900 or 1,000 people won't have positions. And one of the best ways we keep doctors in Wisconsin, in the rural parts of Wisconsin where it's tough sometimes to keep those doctors, is by having residency programs. That will be cut because of the sequester.

Nine hundred thousand fewer patients will be served as a result of \$120 million in cuts to community health centers that are vital in those rural communities in Wisconsin. In my district, in Dane County alone, we have an agricultural economy that's greater than 15 States in this country—that's just one county in my district—and yet we're going to see those programs hurt and cut, as well as programs like Meals on Wheels. Four million meals may not

happen in Wisconsin because of those cuts.

Finally, one of the areas that I think we hear lip service to from people on the other side of the aisle—and you see real action from people on this side of the aisle—is what are we doing for small businesses, not the big businesses, not those who outsource jobs overseas, not those who domicile in other countries so they don't have to pay taxes. I'm talking about the small businesses like mine that I deal with on a daily basis.

For 25 years I've had a small business. It's the people who pay their taxes and who hire the workers who are the real economic engines for our community.

□ 1750

Well, thanks to the sequester, we could see up to \$900 million less in loan guarantees to help stimulate the economy. So what sequester is is nothing more than an austerity policy that's going to provide so many cuts and damages to the economy that we will see, according to what we've been told by the experts, could cut our economic growth in half in the next year. And we can't afford to have a double-dip recession, much less a triple-dip recession, like we're seeing right now in Europe.

With that, I would like to yield to yet another great freshman colleague of mine. This is a woman from southern Florida. Like myself, we've spent time in our legislatures. She is an expert in many areas, and she was a legislative leader in the State of Florida. I could think of no one better to tell us about the potential cuts in her State than Ms. FRANKEL from south Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Thank you, Congressman, and thank you for inviting me to join you today. I don't want to go through all the statistics. I guess I could because sometimes we forget that we're talking about real people. Let me just keep it very, very simple.

First of all, in the State of Florida, the beautiful State of Florida—I tell people I live in paradise—we're finally turning the corner with the economy. Over the last several years, we literally lost millions of jobs. Our construction industry went bust. Of course, the whole country was hurting, so tourism got hurt. And now we're starting to turn things around. The value of our homes is going up, the tourists are coming back, and people are finding work.

The worst thing that could happen right now—the worst thing that we could do here in Congress to our economy back home—is to remove so much money in such a quick time from our economy that it would put our job market in a tailspin. Outside analysts say that just in the State of Florida, over the next year, we could lose 80,000 jobs. Now, we're not talking about 80,000 government jobs. We're talking about the removal of government spending—that horrible government

spending—from our economy. It will mean 80,000 Floridians, mom and pops are not going to be able to pay their mortgage or send their kids to college. And they could be a teacher, or they could be a bus driver, or they could be a manager in a hotel. It's going to affect all walks of life.

Just like your State—and I heard Mr. POCAN talk about the effects where he lives—we will lose money from education, our science programs, and our transportation infrastructure. But what I want to talk about is a couple people today. I want to talk about real people.

I talked earlier today about Ruth. I don't know if you heard me talk about Ruth, but if you didn't hear me talk about Ruth, I want you to know about Ruth, because Ruth is 91 years old. Congratulations, Ruth, for getting that far along in life.

But let me tell you what happens when you get to be 91. I know. I'm not 91 yet, but I have a lot of constituents in Florida who have retired to the area where I live. Do you know what happens when you get to be 91? So many of the people who you love, so many of the people who you grew up with, your children, your friends, your neighbors, they pass on. And by the time you get to be 91 and you've moved away from your family—in Florida it happens often—you are left alone. So when Ruth came home from a stay in the hospital, she was alone. She had no ability, by herself, to shop and to cook, and she could barely get out of bed. She had nobody to help her, except she had us. She had us, the safety net of the United States of America.

With the safety net of the United States of America, she had delivered to her, on a regular basis, meals from a program called Meals on Wheels, so she could eat every day. It astonishes me that on Friday—it's Friday, right? On Friday, we hit a phase of our history, what we call sequestration, which means that literally hundreds of thousands of our seniors like Ruth across this country face the prospect of not having a meal each day.

I'm going to tell you one more story, and then I'm going to yield back. This is a story of a young woman named Tanjee. And this is a good story, because Tanjee, when she was a young mother, a young single mother, when she was working really hard but not making a lot of money—a lot of people in this country work really hard but they don't make a lot of money—and she has four children. And in order for her to go to work every day to provide for those children, she needed to leave them in a safe, nurturing environment, and she did so in a location in my town called the YWCA. They had a Head Start program. And today, her children, one has become a teacher, one is in the military, and two are in high school. What would have happened to her children had the United States of America not been there for her?

I want everybody to know that it's not just about numbers. There's lots of

numbers. This is about flesh-and-blood people who are going to be hurt by our inaction.

So, with that, Congressman, I want to yield my time back to you and thank you for inviting me to participate today. Let's keep fighting to stop the sequestration, and let's get our fiscal house in order in this country in a balanced way and not in a way to kick people out of jobs and take food from seniors and quality child care from children.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, can I inquire how much time remains?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman from Florida hit it exactly on the head. This is about real people. This is about the effects that sequestration will have on real people, the kind of people who, when they hear "sequestration," they think it's a medieval torture. Average people don't come up with a term that only Washington could devise, which is what we've done with the sequester.

Let me tell a real story from my district. There's a woman in Marshall, Wisconsin, who sent me an email. I'd like to share that with the American people.

Here's what she says:

It's being reported that the effect of the sequester on average Americans will be minimal. In the case of our family, this is not true. My son is a civilian firefighter at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha. Today, he gave me a call to tell me that all the firefighters would be getting a letter Friday explaining that their shift crew size will go from 19 to seven immediately. As a firefighter, he must work 106 hours—versus 80 for the rest of us—to receive overtime. In addition, their overtime will be eliminated. That will result in a 40 percent reduction in pay for my son's family. His wife is in graduate school, and they had their first child in December 2012. There is a real face to the reductions. Please use your energy and Wisconsin progressive common sense to put a stop to this across-the-board reduction.

That's another real story of someone being affected. It's not about a \$4 million TV station at the IRS. It's about the real people in this country who will see the impact in the next month and the next month and the next month.

□ 1800

And as much as the Republicans tell us that they'll try to fix it a month from now—again, I don't know why you wouldn't just fix it instead of letting these devastating cuts come in.

I want to share another story that came in from Oregon, Wisconsin. This is from a case manager who works with seniors at Meals on Wheels. Let me read their story. They said:

I work in Beaverton, Oregon, as a case manager for seniors and people with disabilities. I work with seniors who live on \$700 a month. That's all they have to pay for rent, utilities, food, and medication. If Congress cuts funding for the programs that my department administers, the seniors I work with could end up in the hospital, sick, or just living on the streets.

Budget cuts also affect our jobs. I'm a single parent with a child who goes to school. So if there are cuts, I might need assistance myself.

We see the faces of our seniors, we see their homes, and we see how they live on a very limited income. Some legislators say it's too much money and we can't afford it. But if we don't provide services, these people could literally die if we take away their life support. That's what our services represent to the seniors who I work with: life support.

Look, this isn't about pointing fingers and assessing blame on whose idea this was. Let's figure out how to get it done, how to fix this.

I can tell you, when I served on our finance committee in the State legislature in Wisconsin, I had the opportunity to serve on that for 6 years. I served on that 16-member committee when there were 12 Republicans and 4 Democrats; I served on that committee when there were eight Republicans and eight Democrats; and I served on that committee and chaired it when there were 12 Democrats and 4 Republicans. I've been on pretty much every configuration you can have. The way we did our budgeting was we would literally spend 3 days a week, 8 hours a day for 3 or 4 months just agonizing over every detail of the budget because it was important. Every single program we had, every single dollar we spent meant something to someone. We had to make sure that we were spending it in the most wise and efficient way possible.

I've heard a lot about how Federal Government spends too much, how there's waste, fraud, and abuse, but the sequester doesn't address that. The sequester addresses these across-the-board, indiscriminate, irresponsible cuts we would never do when we were actually laying out the budgets we did back in our State of Wisconsin.

I feel that these real cuts, these real effects that we're going to see could be stopped, but the only way we can do that is to actually have that impact right here in this House of Representatives. We need to get people to come back to the table. Stop the finger-pointing, stop the blaming, stop saying you'll fix something a month later, maybe.

I'll tell you, last week when I was back in Wisconsin, I have heard more than 10 or 20 times that people have no confidence in Washington. How many times have we just kicked the can on the debt ceiling? How many times have we faced a deadline and the days before maybe started talking? Here we are 2 days before these meat-ax cuts will take effect, and this House has done nothing.

We need to take a much wiser approach to this. We need to make sure that we stop these cuts that are going to have real impacts to small business owners, to seniors, to parents with children who go to school, to health care for so many hundreds of thousands of people across this country, to the people who are going to medical school, to the people going to our uni-

versities, to the researchers, to everything that we've heard of just in the last 45 minutes. From California, to Pennsylvania, to Florida, to Wisconsin, you've heard the real impacts of the sequester. Now it's up to us, the House of Representatives, to act. Yet we haven't.

We've had our opportunities, and the Progressive Caucus and the Democrats have put forth real alternatives that will provide both cuts and revenue that will really deal with the amount of money that we have to face in the next 2 days to take care of, and yet no one has come to the table. There's no other plan in this room right now offered to deal with the sequester that we're going to face in the next 48 hours.

On behalf of the Progressive Caucus and our ability to talk today to the public, I hope you've heard the real impact of the sequester. I hope you'll contact your Representatives, no matter where they are across the country. Email them, call them and tell them, Go get the job done. You've got 48 hours to do that. I don't want cuts to the schools that my kids go to. I don't want my grandparent or my parent or my neighbor to lose their ability to get that Meals on Wheels. I don't want my neighbor who is a small business owner who is trying to jump-start the economy to lose access to capital.

You have to make that call because you're our bosses. So, please, in the next 24 hours, reach out to us and tell your Member of Congress to get to work. Our job is to end the sequester. If we don't, you'll be watching, and you expect more of us.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 27, 2013 at 1:57 p.m.:

Appointments:
Joint Committee on Taxation.
With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 30 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to compliment the gentleman from Wis-

consin and the freshman Members who participated in the last hour for a job well done in underscoring what the sequester means to Americans across the country.

I'm going to shift gears now as I'm joined by my good colleague from Virginia (Mr. MORAN). We're going to talk about gun violence.

Those of us who've been victims of gun violence see horrific pictures in our minds over and over again. Mine was over 30 years ago, but I am still haunted by visuals of that day: my leg being blown up, my arm being blown up, and really thinking that I was going to die.

When you look death in the eye, there's a certain clarity that comes to you, a certain clarity about what's important, a certain fearlessness to deal with issues that maybe you wouldn't have dealt with under other circumstances.

Now I am haunted by more recent events in Newtown. I'm haunted by the story told by Veronique Pozner about little Noah, her son.

Little Noah was shot 11 times. A little child was shot 11 times. She made a point of having an open casket at his funeral for one reason, because this is not just about numbers. This is about human beings. This is about visualizing what happens when someone is gunned down.

She had an open casket, and she invited the Governor of Connecticut to the funeral because she wanted the Governor to see this little cherub face. She said it's not little angels going to Heaven. This little boy had his mouth blown off and his jaw gone and his hand gone. She wanted the Governor to remember that little face when legislation came to his desk.

It's time for all of us here in this House to stop thinking about numbers and start thinking about people. Yes, over 1,800 people have died since Newtown, and over 500 of them have been children. If we do nothing else but focus on the children in this country, that should call us to action.

I'm going to talk about a child, a child from my district, an infant, a 3-month-old infant. This infant was named Izak Jimenez. He was just a little tyke. His parents had come from the baby shower, had put him in his car seat, and the mother and the father with the 4-year-old child were in the front seat.

□ 1810

It was mistaken identity. Gang members—two young kids, 16 and 17 years of age—came and shot up their truck. They killed this little baby. They killed him. The parents were shot. The 4-year-old was spared. They were 16- and 17-year-old kids. When they were found, they had extra handguns. They're not legally allowed to have those handguns, but somehow they got them into their hands.

We are not debating the Second Amendment when we talk about gun