

Mr. Speaker, I appeal to my Democratic colleagues to consider the damage that this law is doing, both to the American health care system and to the rule of law itself and, above all, to the families who are struggling to deal with its effects.

I ask them to heed the growing pleas of the American people to have their health plans restored to them. I ask them to join Republicans in repealing ObamaCare and to help us replace it with the patient-centered health care system that we have long proposed: reforms that preserve the best of American health care while repairing its flaws.

BUDGET CONFERENCE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we have 10 days left in this year's session, according to the schedule. We are supposed to adjourn on December 13—somewhat ironically, Friday the 13th; and yet, Mr. Speaker, we see time is running out and we are not addressing the critical issue and the critical responsibility of funding the government and of applying resources to our priorities.

Time is running out, Mr. Speaker, for budget conferees to send us legislation so we can avoid another government shutdown in January.

A budget conference agreement will require compromise from both sides—a step that Budget Chairman PAUL RYAN and many of his colleagues seem unprepared to take.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my premise that the reason we did not go to conference for the last 7 months, notwithstanding the fact that the Senate passed a budget and the House passed a budget, is that Chairman RYAN knows there is no compromise that he could reach that he could bring back and have the support of his colleagues on the Republican side; and as a result, we have no compromise. As a result, we have no product to consider.

This is an extremely disappointing position, Mr. Speaker, because it is clear that the Ryan budget is not a viable blueprint for governing. It was not when we passed it, and it is not now. It was a pretense of fiscal responsibility without any of the substance of fiscal reality or courage. That fact was made evident this summer as Republicans could only pass funding bills for defense and veterans programs, pulling their transportation funding bill and not even bringing the other appropriations bills to the floor.

Yesterday, all 12 of the Republican subcommittee chairs of the Appropriations Committee sent a letter to PAUL RYAN, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Senator MURRAY, and Senator SESSIONS, saying, We need to have a budget. We need to have a compromise agreement; and we need to have a sequester number eliminated and a rational number replacing it—a number that can work for America.

In fact, they said, If you don't do it, we are going to have to have a meat-ax—their verbiage, not mine, Mr. Speaker—not only on the domestic side of the budget—education, health care, the environment, law enforcement—but also on the national security side of the budget.

We all know how the budget that was offered by Mr. RYAN achieves balance—severe cuts, in the same vein as the irrational sequester, that target the most vulnerable Americans and place our economic recovery in jeopardy.

It is somewhat ironic that on the front page of The Washington Post today we see where Mr. RYAN was not focused on the budget; he is focused on the poor. That is a proper focus, and this Congress ought to be focused on that. But it is interesting that the Ryan budget does exactly the opposite of what we need to do to make sure that the poor are reduced in number and the middle class are expanded in number.

That is why, in my view, Mr. Speaker, regarding this budget, so many of his own party could not support appropriations bills within the framework of the Ryan budget. That is why the bills were not brought to the floor.

Already, some Republicans are admitting that only a balanced approach will enable us to achieve the level of deficit reduction we need; and contrary to Mr. RYAN's view, this means that revenues—that hated word—must be on the table.

Representative TOM COLE of Oklahoma, the former chairman of the Republican Campaign Committee is one of them, telling reporters on October 25:

I think both sides would like to deal with the sequester. And we're willing to put more revenue on the table to do that.

Mr. COLE was one of the signers of that letter to which I referred that said, Let's replace the meat-ax represented by the sequester. Unfortunately, Chairman RYAN continues to rule out any talk of revenues, which is the key to any meaningful compromise that will replace the sequester.

Mr. Speaker, as you probably know and as I think my Republicans colleague know, I have said now and I have said in the past that we must also deal with entitlements. We need a balanced plan, not an unbalanced plan; but without a balanced plan, the sequester will remain in place, and it will hurt America.

Instead of just saying what he is against, it is time for Mr. RYAN and Republicans to show a readiness to compromise to achieve results for the American people.

Mr. RYAN is the chairman of the conference committee. Yet he has to this date not put on the table what chairmen always do—the chairman's mark, chairman's suggestion, or chairman's proposal.

Democrats have been clear that we are willing to compromise and are ready to do what it takes to achieve a

balanced and bipartisan deal on the budget. This was evident when we voted unanimously alongside 87 Republicans to end the government shutdown, even when it meant supporting a continuing resolution—an appropriations bill for the government—at a level we believed was too low. But we understood compromise was necessary. And so all 198 Democrats voted to open up the government and to pay America's bills, while 147 Republicans—approximately 62 percent of the Republicans—voted to keep the government shut down and to not pay America's bills.

I was encouraged to read the letter sent yesterday, as I said, by Chairman ROGERS and the Appropriations Subcommittee chairs, making clear how important it is for conferees to send us a budget by Thanksgiving—that would have to be this Friday, because we are not going to be here next week—rather than risk another painful shutdown and the continuation of the irrational sequester this coming year.

Many Republicans now agree with Democrats that the sequester is unworkable.

Who says so? Mr. RYAN says he doesn't like the sequester. Mr. CANTOR, the majority leader, says he doesn't like the sequester. And HAL ROGERS has said it is unworkable and inadvisable.

The Budget Conference has a larger mission than to simply rearrange the sequester's severe cuts. This is an opportunity to replace the sequester with a sensible approach that permits Congress to look strategically at our budget priorities and our long-term fiscal and economic goals. If we do so, in my view, it will be the most important stimulus of our economy and job-creating action that this Congress could take.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Chairman RYAN will set his flawed budget aside and instead embrace the approach that many of his Republican colleagues are already recognizing is the only realistic path toward a compromise by this committee. To do so could usher in a historic agreement to achieve real fiscal responsibility for America for years to come. I hope Mr. RYAN's leadership will result in that objective.

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27TH CENTRE COUNTY TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in 1947, Major Bill Hendricks, with the support of his Los Angeles Marine Corps Reserve unit, collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children. Since the program's adoption nationally as Toys for Tots in 1948, the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program has collected

and distributed close to 500 million toys.

On Monday, I had the honor of attending the Centre County Toys for Tots' kickoff breakfast in central Pennsylvania. Chaired by Gene Weller, a retired Marine major, 2013 marks the 27th Centre County Toys for Tots campaign, organized by the Nittany Leathernecks Detachment 302. About 250 collection points around Centre County will accept new, unwrapped toys, books, and games for infants to teenagers until December 15. This program has grown with the support of area food banks, fire departments, businesses, and hundreds of local volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years, Marines have distributed an annual average of 15 million toys, bringing joy to an average of more than 6.3 million less fortunate children each year.

We thank you in more ways than one every day, Marines, and I thank you for supporting these children in need.

IRAN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, in an era of violence in the Middle East, tragedy in Syria, and turmoil in Egypt, there is some very encouraging news surrounding Iran.

The most important signal may have been the election of Hassan Rouhani as President of Iran who is by no means a moderate by anyone's stretch of the imagination except in the context of Iran. He was the choice of the Iranian people for change, for a different path to reduce the collision course with the United States and the crippling sanctions we have imposed. His foreign minister, Mohammad Zarif, is an able and experienced diplomat with strong relationships with the people who have dealt with him for years both in the United States and Iran.

I am encouraged by the reports in the news and in the opinion pages which point out something I have long argued on the floor of this House: the convergence of interests between the United States and Iran.

People forget the key role that the United States played in the emergence of the modern state of Iran, of the constitutional revolution beginning in 1905, where American influence was profoundly felt. Unfortunately, for the last 60 years, we have serially mismanaged our relationship with Iran.

How would we have felt if a foreign power worked to overthrow our democratically elected government and install a dictator? That is exactly what the United States and Great Britain did in 1953 and how the Shah returned to power.

It is amazing that the majority of Iranians still has positive feelings towards the United States, which they do. People forget the alignment of interests between the United States and

Iran after 9/11 that led them to help us deal with post-Taliban Afghanistan. In the capitals of some of our supposed allies in the Middle East, people were cheering on that tragedy. On 9/11, people in Tehran were standing in solidarity with Americans. This, of course, was before George Bush recklessly included them in his infamous "axis of evil" pronouncement. The Iranian people are distinct from the Arabs and are proud of their Persian heritage, stretching back thousands of years.

Iran is an important part of any ultimate solution in stabilizing Iraq and in resolving the Syrian conflict. Yes, they have advanced nuclear development, and we rightly should be deeply concerned with their pursuit of nuclear weapons. That is why one of the Obama administration's greatest foreign policy triumphs has been to marshal support of the world for this stringent, comprehensive regime of sanctions. It has made a huge difference—driving down the value of their currency, depleting their foreign reserves, and creating extreme inflationary pressures on their economy.

Now is the time to see if a solution can be developed. It is decidedly not the time to ratchet up sanctions even further. Nothing would undercut the more moderate forces in Iran, and more pressure could be very counterproductive because we are at risk of sanctions fatigue by our partners. Other countries that do not share our same policy positions and deep hostility towards the Iranians have gone along with sanctions. To expect that countries like China, India, and Russia are going to follow us with even more extreme sanctions and turn their backs on the progress is questionable at best. At worst, it would end up losing support for the sanctions regime we have now, would strengthen the hand of the hard-liners who do hate America, and would set back long-term prospects for peace, not just for Iran, but for Syria, Iraq, and throughout the Middle East.

Most experts I have encountered feel Iran could have built a nuclear bomb years ago, but they didn't. Recently, they have slowed the pace of their nuclear activities and have been open to proposals unthinkable a year ago. The rush to undercut the process is short-sighted, counterproductive, and it risks accelerating the development of Iranian nuclear weapons.

Now is the time to accelerate diplomacy, not to walk away. It is decidedly not the time for the United States Congress to throw a monkey wrench in the diplomatic procedures and to ratchet up sanctions. We can always reimpose sanctions, but may not be able to recreate this diplomatic opportunity.

GEORGE TURNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American,

George Turner, from Wilmington, North Carolina, for his recent induction into the Wake County Boys & Girls Club Hall of Fame.

George is a man of character and conviction, who exudes principle and selflessness. He is a tireless worker and leader in his community. George's success in business is equally matched by his giving nature.

Earlier this month, George was honored for his years of service to the Wake County Boys & Girls Club, and was inducted into their Hall of Fame. Over 700 people came to the Raleigh Convention Center to see George be honored for his service to the Boys & Girls Club. This is a testament to how many lives he has touched in his decades of work with the organization. As a longtime board member of the Wake County Boys & Girls Club, previously leading the organization as board president, George is a great role model to kids across North Carolina.

George attended East Carolina University and served in the United States Coast Guard, Active and Reserves, from 1960 to 1968. Before he retired, George was CEO of the Ready Mixed Concrete Company in my hometown of Raleigh, North Carolina.

George is a real leader in business and in education, serving on the board of directors for the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, the North Carolina State University Engineering School, the North Carolina State University College of Design, and the Raleigh YMCA.

George is a truly giving man, and I can think of no one more deserving of the Hall of Fame than he. I congratulate him on receiving this award, and I thank him for his unwavering dedication to his community. It is spirit and enterprise like George Turner's that will rebuild our Nation and rebuild our economy.

SUPPORTING ONEIDA INDIAN NATION'S "CHANGE THE MASCOT" CAMPAIGN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MAFFEI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MAFFEI. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent central New York, home of the six nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which was also known as the Iroquois Confederacy. It includes the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Onondagas, the Cayugas, the Senecas, and, later, the Tuscaroras. It spread across New York, and was one of the earliest civil governments in territory that now lies within the United States and Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Oneidas' leader Ray Halbritter's efforts to change the name of the Washington, D.C., National Football League team. The name of the Washington football team is derogatory to the Native Americans of this country. For many Native Americans across the