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Our U.S. Attorney, our housing organizations across this country, those Attorneys General who are awake in our 50 States, we need to go after the source, the source that created the collapse that our communities are still suffering from. They must be held accountable for the mortgages they still hold, and recoup for millions and millions of our people the home equity that was taken from them so cruelly.

#### AUDIE MURPHY RECEIVES TEXAS LEGISLATIVE MEDAL OF HONOR

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

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the floor on a subject that Republicans and Democrats agree upon. Several of the other previous speakers have done so, and that is the idea of freedom for this country.

But I also rise today to pay special attention and give tribute to one of our Nation's greatest World War II war heroes, Audie Murphy. Major Murphy, who hailed from the Fourth District of Texas—my district—was an extraordinary man in many ways. Initially turned away by several branches of the United States armed services due to his young age and his slight build, Audie Murphy's patriotism led him to misrepresent his age in order to serve and defend his country.

This patriotism and his unusual courage in battle led him to distinction as the most decorated combat soldier of World War II, earning every U.S. military combat award for valor available from the United States Army, including the Medal of Honor, two Silver Stars, three Purple Hearts, and the Distinguished Service Cross. It is, therefore, fitting, though belated, that Major Murphy was awarded Texas' highest military honor, the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor, on October 29, 2013.

Major Murphy earned his first Medal of Honor on January 26, 1945, in France. Six tanks and waves of Nazi infantry attacked his Company B, but Second Lieutenant Murphy remained at his command post throughout the fierce fighting. Although he suffered a leg wound, he continued to fight for more than an hour until his ammunition was exhausted and the enemy was in retreat.

Audie Murphy did not stop where most men would on the battlefield, in fighting for his own life, or in fighting for his country. In fact, he lived out the remainder of his years after the war as an accredited writer, actor, and songwriter.

Mr. Speaker, despite this prestige, it should be noted that he was also a man of deep modesty who considered himself "just another man." He fought not because he loved war, but because he loved the values and freedoms we enjoy in America. He felt compelled to do his

duty to his country. Audie Murphy represents some of the greatest qualities of a hero, including an unflinching sense of duty, a strong sense of patriotism, and a degree of modesty that recognizes the humble roots of this great country.

We remember Audie Murphy because of his outstanding feats but also because he remains perhaps one of the truest examples of what it means to be American. I was proud to ride in many veterans parades with Audie Murphy and was pleased to know him as a personal friend. I also met his sisters. He was always loyal to his family and found time for them.

As a Representative of the Fourth District of Texas, I am proud to call Audie Murphy's home my home as well. The folks in the Fourth District are pleased that the great State of Texas has given Major Murphy due recognition for his outstanding service to our country by awarding him the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering this great American, this great hero, and to thank him and his family for his service.

#### PASS A BUDGET

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it was just about a year ago right now that I and 84 other new Members of Congress arrived in Washington to begin our orientation in the process of joining this body; and both Democrats and Republicans of that class of 2012, though we come from different perspectives and different districts, we received a pretty strong message from the electorate in 2012. It was the same message that I think many of us heard when we were back home last week for our Thanksgiving break. The message was: set aside the hyper-partisanship and get about the business of attending to the work of the American people.

So now as we face yet another set of self-inflicted wounds, political deadlines that have been set, we hear some rumblings that we may not do what we committed to do just a few weeks ago, and that is, put together a real budget that is a reflection of the values, the interests, and the needs of the American people.

We have already gone through one government shutdown just this last year which cost the American economy \$24 billion. We cannot afford to let that happen again, and we cannot afford another short-term deal that does not provide the stability and the certainty that the private sector needs in order to make the kinds of investments that will put the American people back to work and get our economy moving again.

I am glad that there finally was agreement to go to conference on a budget, and many of us took that

agreement at face value. We took the Members who agreed to that and the leadership at their word that it would be an effort to put together a budget that is a reflection of the needs and values of the American people, a budget that will invest in our kids, that will give them the skills they need in order to compete, that will invest in infrastructure, that will help industry deliver products to market and grow the economy, that will invest in manufacturing by passing the Make It In America plan, a plan of some 40 bills that would reinvigorate our manufacturing sector in this country.

And we can do it without slashing important programs simply by being more rational in terms of how we manage our budget. Cut the big tax loopholes for Big Oil and corporations that pay virtually no taxes in this country; and for sure, Mr. Speaker, end this mindless sequester, a scheme that was designed to be so bad that it would force the two parties together around a more rational approach to making decisions for the American people.

But instead of that, it has now been embraced by some in Congress not as something to be avoided but as the starting point for the next round of cuts to the essential programs that we need in order to drive investment and grow our economy. We just cannot afford to continue down this path.

According to the CBO, sequestration is already costing us jobs. Up to 1.6 million Americans are out of work or will be out of work because of these mindless cuts. And we are further cutting our safety net—programs like SNAP, unemployment, those things that we need in order to make sure that we have a floor of decency below which no American should ever be allowed to fall in the world's biggest, most powerful democracy and economy. It is unacceptable.

These cuts also hurt our future by slashing key investments in research at the NIH, trying to crack the code and solve some of the most difficult problems that we have in the diseases that so many Americans are struggling with. Yet we set aside that investment in the name of partisan politics.

We have got to get back to work. We have got to get back to the work that we were sent here to do because I think the 85 of us that came in last year at this time are not really that much different than the rest of the Members of this House. We were all sent here with that charge to get the business of the American people done. But somewhere along the way, partisanship has overcome democracy. We need to set aside this hyper-partisanship, get back to the business that we were sent here to do, and do the work of the American people.

Pass a budget. I am calling on my colleagues to do that and to not be drawn into what could be another partisan squabble for political purposes.

## CONGRATULATING ERIC COWDEN

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Eric Cowden, a resident of Pennsylvania Furnace, Pennsylvania, a constituent of mine. This past month, Eric, a graduate of Penn State University, was recognized by the National Future Farmers of America with the organization's highest honor, the FFA Honorary American Degree.

As a youngster growing up on the family farm in Washington County, Pennsylvania, Eric was involved with the FFA, like many students in rural communities, showing steer, heifers, and lambs from a young age. Upon graduating from Penn State with a degree in agricultural sciences and earning his master's in business from Delaware Valley College, Eric went on to work for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. There, he administered the Rural Youth grant program, led the county fair in the agri-tourism division, and eventually rose to director of the central region office for the department. Eric also holds several leadership roles with the Marcellus Shale Coalition, bringing together two of Pennsylvania's most historic and important industries: energy and agriculture.

Eric is well deserving of this honor, and we thank him for his leadership in the field of agriculture and agricultural education.

## SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

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

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, on February 15, a small group of Democratic Members of the House joined together to form the Safe Climate Caucus. We vowed to come to the House floor every day to talk about the defining environmental challenge of our time: climate change. Today marks the 100th day we have spoken on the House floor.

The Safe Climate Caucus is composed of Representatives from across this country. We come from the west coast, the east coast, the North, the South, and the Midwest. We come from coastal regions, urban areas, and rural communities. We represent a cross-section of America.

We started the Safe Climate Caucus because of the enormous disconnect that exists between what scientists are telling us about the dangers of climate change and the conspiracy of silence and denial that exists in this House. There is a mountain of evidence that climate change is a real and dangerous threat to the future of our children and grandchildren. Yet this body refuses to accept the scientific reality.

I wish my Republican colleagues would open their eyes and escape their congressional bubble. Firefighters

across the West know that fires are getting bigger and more dangerous. Farmers in the Midwest know that droughts and floods are becoming more common and more intense. Coastal communities know that rising sea levels and extreme storms threaten their very existence. And just last month, a supertyphoon—perhaps the strongest ever recorded—demolished entire cities in the Philippines.

Extreme weather, sea level rise, heat waves, droughts, flooding, wildfires, pests—that is what climate change looks like. So what is this House doing? Denying, obstructing, and weakening the Clean Air Act.

In June, the International Energy Agency warned that, if we don't act now, avoiding catastrophic climate change will cost trillions of dollars. In October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that the evidence that the Earth is warming is "unequivocal." This is the same level of confidence that scientists have that smoking causes cancer. Last month, the World Meteorological Association reported that the levels of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere set new records, reaching concentrations higher than any in the last 800,000 years. Yet this House endures it all.

We challenged the Republicans on the Energy and Commerce Committee to come to the floor and debate us, to defend their record of inaction. They never showed up. The committee won't even hold a hearing to listen to the scientists. Democrats are in the minority, so we can't call hearings. But we won't be muzzled.

Since February, the members of the Safe Climate Caucus reported on the alarms that the scientists are sounding.

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In fact, today marks the 100th legislative day that members from the Safe Climate Caucus have spoken out. Except during the Republican shutdown of the government, our members have come to the floor every day we have been in session. It has not always been easy to keep this streak of speeches alive, but we have come because of the commitment of our 31 members to take action before it is too late.

We are speaking out because we know we have a duty to our neighbors, to our children, and to our grandchildren. We know that when future generations look back at these times, they won't remember the debates we have had on the deficit. They won't remember the debates we have had on boosting oil drilling. What they will want to know is whether we acted to protect the world from catastrophic climate change while we still had time, and they will want to know whether we made the investments we need to make the United States the world leader in the clean energy technologies of the future.

We are at a critical juncture. I urge all Members to join with the Safe Cli-

mate Caucus in ensuring we make the right choices for our future and for our economy.

## OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, since ObamaCare implementation began on October 1, the President has spent much of his time talking about the malfunctioning Web site. However, I would remind the President of his own words several weeks ago: ObamaCare is more than just a Web site.

The Web site was supposed to be the easy part, and as more people sign onto it, they will be made aware of the real problems with ObamaCare. In fact, when the millions of Americans currently losing their health care plans try to log on to healthcare.gov, they will be met with drastically increased premiums, skyrocketing out-of-pocket costs, and reduced access to the doctors and hospitals they know. These problems are in direct contrast to the repeated promises made by the President.

My constituents are rightly concerned with these broken promises and are regularly contacting me and my office to voice their concerns. For instance, Jillian in Sparta, Tennessee, wrote to me:

Every year in the past, my health care insurance has increased by a small percentage—sometimes 5 percent, sometimes 7 percent. This past week, I received my new premiums for 2014. They increased by 250 percent. Same plan, same coverage, same insurance company.

And Jillian isn't alone. Nearly three times as many Americans say they have been hurt rather than helped by ObamaCare, according to a recent poll. This from a law that the President promised would lower insurance premiums by as much as \$2,500.

Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare is much more than a Web site. It is an unmitigated disaster. The effects of this law are wreaking havoc on our health care system and exposing the President's broken promises to Americans across this country.

My House Republican colleagues and I have tried repeatedly to protect Americans from this law, but the only way to do so is for Democrats to join us. For instance, the Senate can act right now to pass the Fairness for American Families Act that was passed out of the House this summer. This legislation would give fairness under ObamaCare by delaying the law's mandate for people, not just big businesses.

The President may be all in on his health care law, but that doesn't mean congressional Democrats need to follow him off of a cliff.

As disapproval of ObamaCare continues to rise, I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to distance themselves from ObamaCare and join us by trying to protect the American