

people from this law's disastrous effects.

SEQUESTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NEGRETE McLEOD) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. NEGRETE McLEOD. Mr. Speaker, as budget negotiations move forward, Congress must remain committed to work in a bipartisan manner to find reasonable solutions to create jobs, expand the economy, and strengthen the middle class, while continuing to reduce the deficit in a responsible way.

To do so, Congress must lift the across-the-board sequester cuts that are inflicting damage to communities across the Nation. There is no question that we need to cut the deficit, but we should do so without cutting programs that seniors, veterans, small business owners, students, and our children rely on.

In California, it is estimated that, with sequestration, more than 15,000 children will not receive vaccinations for diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and influenza, and 8,200 children will be eliminated from federally funded early childhood education programs such as Head Start. This is unacceptable, and Congress must fix it.

After the extensive damage done by the government shutdown that cost the economy \$24 billion, according to an assessment by Standard & Poor's, we must avoid another shutdown and another crisis by passing a budget that does away with sequestration. Americans cannot afford budget policies that weaken our economy, squeeze the middle class, and cost hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Congress needs to come to a compromise on a real spending plan that will increase revenue rather than just slashing critical programs. Congress needs to make sure that Medicare and Medicaid are protected and strengthened.

Mr. Speaker, I stand ready to support a commonsense, job-creating budget.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 51 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As we face a new day, help us to discover the power of resting in You and receiving assurance and encouragement in Your amazing grace.

Send Your Spirit down upon the Members of the people's House. May they be reminded always of who they are. Grant them wisdom, insight, and vision, that the work they do will be for the betterment of our Nation during a time of struggle for so many Americans.

May they earn the trust and respect of those they represent, whether or not they had earned their vote, and make history that expands the great legacy of so many who have served in this Chamber before now—a legacy of noble service, sometimes political risk, but always great leadership.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HAHN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HAHN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

JULIA'S STORY PROVES PRESIDENT OBAMA'S EMPTY PROMISES

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I was saddened and angered by a recent email I received from a distraught constituent. Julia from Gurnee, Illinois, told me she is now one of the millions whose health insurance will be canceled because of ObamaCare. Buying a comparable plan means her out-of-pocket expenses will jump more than \$5,200 a year. Worse, the smaller network excludes her current doctor—the doctor she has seen for 33 years. Only doubling her premiums would allow her to keep the doctor who has known and cared for her for most of her adult life.

The President promised middle class families would pay \$2,500 less in annual health care costs under ObamaCare. He promised they would be able to keep their insurance plans and their doctors. Julia's story proves again how empty those promises were.

The Senate and the President must act, as the House has, to allow all Americans to keep their doctors. Americans can't afford more broken promises.

PROYECTO INMIGRANTE

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

Mr. VEASEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Proyecto Inmigrante on their 8-year anniversary on December 7. Proyecto Inmigrante is a nonprofit organization in Dallas and Fort Worth that, since 2005, has served our community by providing low-cost and reliable immigration counseling.

I admire the hard work and perseverance of its executive director, Douglas Interiano, and the entire staff and volunteers who work hard to help their clients navigate the immigration system to become permanent residents and citizens and to also help them apply for deferred action.

Proyecto also serves a very critical role in protecting a vulnerable immigrant community from fraud and abuse. These efforts take courage, conviction, and selflessness that, as the holiday season approaches, remind us that we should serve others and look beyond ourselves.

Respecting our immigrant community and working hard to enact comprehensive immigration reform should be an urgent national priority for the country. I look forward to continuing that fight, and I am honored that our Nation will have Proyecto Inmigrante as an ally in that effort. Keep up the good work, and good luck on future years of service.

J.W. HENDRIX WAS RIGHT

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, constituents across South Carolina's Second Congressional District are hurting because of the President's failing government health care takeover. As millions of Americans continue to receive policy cancellations, it is increasingly clear that ObamaCare is destroying jobs.

Angela from Lexington writes:

ObamaCare has caused my son to lose his insurance that was provided through his employer. They said they could not afford the new requirements. My son finally got a job that provided medical insurance, and then the President takes it away. There's definitely something wrong here.

The President has broken multiple promises to the American people. As

premiums increase, insurance is lost, and patients lose access to their doctors, we must work together to continue to replace ObamaCare with positive plans, as long introduced by Congressman Dr. TOM PRICE.

Small businessowners such as the late J.W. Hendrix warned of Big Government abuses' denying young people opportunity to fulfill the American Dream.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

NEW MARKETS TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the New Markets Tax Credit program which is set to expire at the end of this year.

This program has proven critical toward making successful investments in communities like my own in western New York. In the city of Buffalo, New Markets investments have leveraged over \$180 million for projects, including restoration of historic Electric Tower and the development of the Innovation Center on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Thanks to New Markets Tax Credit-leveraged funding, construction is currently underway on Roswell Park Cancer Institute's new Clinical Sciences Center.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when our economy is recovering from collapse, support for programs that yield economic development and job creation is more critical than ever. I have joined my colleagues in seeking a permanent extension of this program, and I encourage our other colleagues to join us in the same pursuit.

OBAMACARE AND CHOICES

(Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about choices. For my constituents, ObamaCare is about tough choices and about unfair choices.

Barbara from Indianapolis recently logged on to my Web site to share her ObamaCare story, which is about her choices. She's a single mom trying to give her daughter the gift of a college education in a tough economy. President Obama's holiday gift to her, however, was a \$200 increase in her monthly premium. Barbara wrote:

For a single mother trying to put her child through college, it's too much. Where do I cut? My daughter's education? Medical coverage? A place to live? Food?

For Barbara, the choices posed by the increased premium posed by ObamaCare are tough and unfair. Too many of my constituents are being forced to make these same unfair

choices. They shouldn't have to choose between paying for college or paying for health insurance.

Mr. Speaker, our choice is clear: the law is not working. Barbara and her daughter deserve a better path forward.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking with just 8 legislative days left this year, but I believe there's still time to bring comprehensive immigration reform to this floor for a vote.

There is an incredible group of people that are fasting on the National Mall as a plea to us to pass some form of comprehensive immigration. Today marks day 22 of their fast, but their faith and commitment to change keeps them going.

These men and women are sacrificing their health, and do you mean to tell me that we can't find the humanity and compassion to pass a comprehensive immigration bill, Speaker BOEHNER? Are you kidding me?

This isn't who we are as a nation. Cesar Chavez and Mahatma Gandhi called fasting a fervent prayer, but we must do our part on behalf of the families who have been hurt by this delay of comprehensive immigration reform. I'm standing with these courageous people and immigrant families all across this Nation in demanding a vote on an immigration bill.

Let's stop this shameful delay and bring a bill to this floor for a vote by the end of the year.

THE MEDICARE OPT-OUT BILL

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at a time when Americans continue to see their health care options diminished by the President's disastrous health care law, it's critical that we work to return choice and freedom to the American people. That's why I introduced H.R. 3498, a common-sense bill that gives seniors the freedom to make their own health care decisions and opt out of Medicare.

If folks like Warren Buffett or Ross Perot want to opt out of Medicare part A but they don't want or need a government entitlement paying for their care, we should let them. This bill truly tells seniors "if you like your current coverage, you can keep it" without the risk of losing other benefits like Social Security.

Seniors want, need, and deserve the right to choose a health care plan that fits their needs. I urge my colleagues to join my efforts in returning freedom and choice to American seniors.

THE EFFECT OF BUDGET CUTS ON EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot about choices and constituents and what we should do. Well, let me say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to this Nation, our Nation is at a crossroads. The decisions we make today will affect the long-term economic stability of our Nation.

Congress must pass a budget that helps grow our Nation and creates jobs. We must eliminate the sequester and invest in our future by funding Federal research and education programs. For example, in my district, Ohio State University, one of the Nation's premier research institutions, has recently experienced a 7.2 percent decrease in Federal funding because of the sequester and other budget cuts to Federal research and development.

If this downward trend continues, no question—no question—it will affect our Nation's next generation of science, discovery, and innovation while slowing jobs growth. Federal investment in research and education are put to use in places like world-class laboratories, clinical trials, and energy innovation centers. We must sustain these investments. Our Nation's economic security depends on it.

BIPARTISAN SOLUTIONS FOR PROSPERITY

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

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, the American people are still most concerned about job opportunities and economic growth. They're concerned with their checkbooks and family budgets as the winter months and holiday seasons arrive.

All too often, Washington, D.C., makes it harder on the economy and the American people, not easier. Layer upon layer of government mandates, regulations, and taxes suffocate our struggling economy and come down hard upon the hardworking American people.

The House must remain committed to focusing on job creation, economic prosperity, and opportunities for all Americans to succeed. This week, the House will continue our efforts to put more Americans back to work by focusing on pro-jobs legislation that make it easier for our small businesses to access resources they need to expand and add employees.

We will work to pass legislation that builds on hydropower in our country, creating good-paying jobs through continuing to develop our all-of-the-above national energy policy.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want Congress to work together for the