

great example to all Americans. I rise to be able to honor a great Oklahoma citizen, Ralph Ellison, and begin a one-year celebration of his 100th birthday.

THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION OF AZERBAIJAN

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

Ms. CHU. This year marks the 25th anniversary of a critical turning point in the political freedom of the Armenian people of Azerbaijan. Let us take this occasion to remember their struggle for self-determination and freedom.

In 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan petitioned to become part of Armenia. For the next 2 years, the Armenian population was the target of racially motivated pogroms. Hundreds of Armenians were murdered and more wounded during three violent attacks in Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku.

In 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh officially declared independence, becoming a democratic state committed to freedom and respect for human rights. But today, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh are still forced to live under authoritarian rule. As we commemorate their century-long struggle, let us not forget their quest for autonomy and justice.

WE MUST RESTRAIN SPENDING

(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, this year the United States Treasury received more revenue than any year in the history of our Nation, yet we will spend a third more than we take in. Clearly, we do not have a revenue problem. We have a spending problem.

The Budget Control Act signed into law last year was a good first step towards deficit reduction, half of which has already been put in motion. With the Supercommittee's failure to achieve the other half, those cuts are now going into effect under sequestration.

Can these cuts be made smartly, targeting waste and overspending? Absolutely, but only if the President stops playing scare politics and begins working with Congress to make these reductions in a manner that best protects national defense and domestic priorities.

If the sequester takes full effect, the Nation's budget is still on a path to grow exponentially over the next 10 years. Unless we continue to restrain spending, our \$17 trillion national debt will continue to grow, crowding out the Nation's ability to even provide for the most in need.

We have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. More taxes won't solve it, but a little more leadership sure would help.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of National School Breakfast Week. We know that the simple act of a child eating a healthy breakfast can have dramatic effects, not only on their health, but on their academic performance.

I am cochair of the Congressional School Health and Safety Caucus, and I was honored to join the Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign discussing last week, in a briefing, the importance of the School Breakfast Program.

I was proud to vote for the bipartisan Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that helped to expand the School Breakfast Program, but I'm disheartened that only about half of eligible students are participating in the program. We can do better.

I spent years as a school nurse, and I saw, firsthand, how hunger can cause children to lack focus in school, often get sick, and eventually fall behind. And that's why students are encouraged to eat, and often provided with a breakfast on the day of a big test. But we need to make sure they eat breakfast every day.

We've put the School Breakfast Program in place, and now we need to increase awareness and ensure access for all eligible students. That's why I encourage my colleagues to join me in recognizing National School Breakfast Week because, after all, breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

SEQUESTRATION IS AFFECTING US ALL

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

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't seem like good leadership practice for the President to be going around the country reminding Americans that he failed to prevent his own sequestration, but to each his own.

Unfortunately, the President's sequestration is affecting us all. Why should he have shackled us all with the sequestration?

The truth is, the President's inability to lead has shackled us. The truth is, the President has not only a spending problem but a denial problem.

Well, make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. Sequestration is here. I implore the President to come back, work with Congress, and quit campaigning in the media.

SEQUESTRATION HAS BEGUN

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, Congress' failure to avert the sequestration with a balanced and responsible plan before the March 1 deadline is not just sad, it's inexcusable. The ramifications of failure are anything but artificial. They are real and they are severe. While the sequestration process has begun, it is not too late to work together to put us back on the right path.

Funny enough, Democrats and Republicans actually agree on one thing: that we can and must adjust the way we spend money. But we have dramatically different ideas about the best approach.

Democrats in Congress have a balanced approach, which includes spending cuts and revenue through closing tax loopholes to reduce our debt. This sequestration plan is not the answer to dealing with our deficits, and neither is another eleventh-hour temporary solution.

We owe it to the American people to move the needle forward and come to a compromise on a real plan that will increase revenue from sources other than just slashing critical programs.

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

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

GOVERNMENT SPENDING IS THE PROBLEM

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

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, last week I sat around the table with a group of young people, Millennials, who wanted to talk with me about solving our Nation's spending problem. These Millennials want all the same thing: a solution to Washington's spending problem today to stop hurting America's youth tomorrow.

I heard from one young college student who had just recently graduated, and she said, you know, I was excited to embrace all the opportunities that America had to offer, only to have many people tell me to expect 5 years of unemployment.

Unfortunately, these challenges are not unique, and their experiences are not uncommon. The national debt is more than a \$16 trillion pricetag. It's more than just a number.

Washington's out-of-control spending threatens the next generation of America's leaders from finding jobs after they graduate and having the tools they need to keep America competitive. Why?

Because spending is the problem. So we will continue to urge the Democrats

who run Washington to work with us to cut spending in a responsible way.

Republicans keep fighting for smarter spending cuts and, most of all, for an economy in which young people are afforded the opportunities they deserve.

SEQUESTRATION CUTS ARE TAKING EFFECT

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it's now March 5, and sequestration cuts are starting to take effect. Instead of working together to find a compromise that would avoid these automatic spending cuts, House Republicans stood by and watched the March 1 deadline come and go.

Now, \$85 billion in deep, indiscriminate cuts that will eliminate 31,000 Michigan jobs are upon us. These cuts will harm Michigan families and slash programs that my constituents rely on every day. And many of the most dire consequences of the sequester won't be felt immediately. The truth is, due to Republican inaction, the wheels are now in motion, and we are on a course that has real negative impacts on millions of Americans.

Congress should be working to find a bipartisan solution to avoid these indiscriminate cuts. Democrats put forth a plan to stop the sequester. I know, I cosponsored it. House Republicans would not even let it come to the floor for a vote.

Mr. Speaker, we need to work on an approach that will fix sequestration while reducing the deficit responsibly. I stand ready to act. So do my Democratic colleagues. Let's get to work.

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CHEN GUANGCHENG

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, today, Capitol Hill is hosting a great Chinese defender of human rights, blind lawyer Chen Guangcheng. A few moments ago, I had the honor of again meeting with Chen as he continues to advocate for the freedom of the Chinese people. His amazing story of escape from house arrest is a great encouragement for all in China suffering under political persecution. The authorities could not silence him as he sought justice for victims of forced abortions and environmental abuse.

The story of China's rise is not about the success of an autocratic government. It is instead the story of a people whose ingenuity and vigor have finally been unleashed after decades of repression. China has developed not because of smart planning, but because the people have used a relatively small amount of economic freedom to transform their nation. Given more freedom,

I believe there's no limit to how China will grow and how her people will impact the world. We must support Chen and other human rights defenders as they seek justice for their people.

GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, as a resident of Louisiana, the sportsman's paradise, I'm a strong supporter of the Second Amendment. However, I do not subscribe to the belief that Congress has no role in responding to the gun violence epidemic plaguing communities like New Orleans, Chicago, and Detroit.

According to the FBI, 1,464 people were killed by a firearm in New Orleans between 2008 and 2011. That's 1,464 families who will never see their loved ones again. We can't afford to do nothing. We can no longer be the do-nothing Congress. We have a moral obligation to reduce the broad epidemic of gun violence in this country.

So I urge my colleagues in Congress to join with me in standing with the victims and families of gun violence to approve legislation that invests in our mental health system, institute more rigorous background checks, and place a ban on assault rifles and high-capacity magazines. Even incremental progress means fewer heart-broken families. I don't want to see another child fall victim to our selfish efforts to preserve what obviously needs to change. I would remind my colleagues that the life we save may be our own.

SPENDING PROBLEM IN THIS COUNTRY

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

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, in January, the President asked hardworking taxpayers to contribute 2 percent more of their hard-earned paychecks to the Federal Government in the form of a payroll tax increase. They had to cut their household budgets by 2 percent. The President's sequester that went into effect last Friday called for a less-than-2-percent decrease in government spending, but the President now thinks that 2 percent is too much to cut from each Federal dollar. We all know the President's sequester is probably not the right way to control spending because it cuts programs across the board without any prioritization. But we all know this country has a spending problem, and we need to get it under control.

I can't help but think if the American people had to just cut 2 percent from their budgets, why can't the Federal Government? If hardworking taxpayers had to figure out how to manage with 2 percent less, can't the Federal Government figure out how to

spend two less pennies out of every Federal dollar?

SEQUESTRATION IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, because the Congress refuses to compromise, across-the-board spending cuts known as the sequester—and uncertainty around the Federal economy and the budget—are casting a cloud over our entire economy. In New Hampshire, we are already seeing the impacts of these cuts.

Right now, there's a Federal prison in Berlin, New Hampshire, with over 100 open jobs, but funding fights in Washington are preventing Granite Staters from filling them.

There's a Salem company, Micro-Precision Technologies, that wants to hire more workers; but sequestration is creating uncertainty and standing in the way.

There are technicians in New Hampshire's National Guard who want to do their jobs, but deep cuts to defense means they're facing the possibility of furloughs.

These are all examples of businesses that will have to delay hiring and people who will lose their jobs simply because Democrats and Republicans will not compromise. This is not what responsible governing looks like. We owe it to New Hampshire families to work across the aisle, responsibly reduce the deficit, and stop these mindless cuts.

CRYING WOLF

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, Republicans cry that the President and Democrats are crying wolf about sequester cuts and furloughs. But, the wolf is already biting. In my hand is a furlough notice from the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. In D.C., the U.S. Attorney still handles major local crimes for this big city as well as some of the most important Federal matters, including terrorism suspects.

The U.S. Attorney's notice says there will be up to 14 days—that's 2 weeks—of furlough days for Assistant U.S. Attorneys and other personnel. On furlough days, the notice says, Assistant U.S. Attorneys and other staff are not permitted to even come to the office to volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, the problem with making sequester a budget rather than a prod, as intended, is not the 2 percent sequester cut. It's the compression upfront in a short period of time. The American people who depend on U.S. Attorneys deserve better than a deliberate and avoidable public safety furlough.