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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask Your blessing upon our Nation. Bless the work of the Members of the people's House. May they toil diligently to bring about solutions to the pressing issues of these times.

Bless all men and women across our country, especially those who work in service to others: police, firefighters, health care providers, teachers, those who work in local, State and national government, and those men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

And bless those who give the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in service, from Santa Cruz, California, to Bangor, Maine, and comfort those who mourn their loss. May we all be inspired by the heroes who serve their neighbors.

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 gentleman from Texas (Mr. OLSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. OLSON 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 five requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle

BETTER TO DIE AS FREE MEN— THE ALAMO DEFENDERS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in a beat up old Spanish mission 177 years ago today, the sun rose in the mist for the last time on a small band of soldiers.

The fiery group of 187 Texas volunteers stood defiant against Dictator Santa Anna and his invading Mexican Army of several thousand on this, the 13-day siege of the Alamo.

They came from many States and many foreign countries. There were 11 Tejanos—Texans of Spanish descent. Their names were Jim Bowie, Jim Bonham, David Crockett, and William Barret Travis. They were all killed on March 6, 1836, fighting for liberty over tyranny.

Col. Travis was correct when he said that "victory would be more costly for Santa Anna than defeat." Mexican losses were so huge that General Sam Houston had time to rally a Texas army and defeat the dictator, Santa Anna, on the plains of San Jacinto, on April 21, 1836.

Texas became a free and independent nation, a republic.

The guns and bugles are silent at the Alamo, but all freedom-loving people should thank the Good Lord that in history there are those who are willing to face overwhelming odds and die for freedom rather than to live under oppression and tyranny.

And that's just the way it is.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely disappointed that the sequestration has taken effect because Republicans refused to work with Democrats on a balanced plan to prevent it.

The automatic, arbitrary, and irrational cuts it has imposed could have, and I think will have, serious, negative effects. It could erode our military readiness and weaken our national security, and it could reverse the gains we've made in our economic recovery and see reductions in critical programs that help the poor and most vulnerable in our society.

Sequestration is not a solution. Only a balanced approach can achieve the savings we need to get our fiscal house in order and end the uncertainty that is keeping our businesses from creating the jobs we need.

It is not too late to act. This Republican-controlled Congress may not have been able to avert the sequester, but it can limit its impact if both sides work together. And I still believe that if Republicans are willing to compromise, we can achieve the big, balanced solution to deficits the American people expect from us.

Today's vote is on whether you think sequester is rational. The next vote will be on keeping government open.

THE FALL OF THE ALAMO AND COLONEL TRAVIS' LAST PLEA FOR HELP

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, 177 years ago on this day, the Alamo fell. Every Texan fighting for liberty was killed.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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I would like to read parts of the letter sent by the Alamo's commander pleading for help:

To the people of Texas and all Americans in the world, I am besieged by 1,000 or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man.

The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise the garrison are to be put to the sword if the fort is taken. I have answered that demand with a cannon shot.

I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country: victory or death.

William Barret Travis, Lieutenant Colonel Commandant.

Remember the Alamo, and God bless the republic of Texas.

DUMB AND CRUEL CUTS

(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, snow is keeping Federal workers at home today, and Congress will keep up to a million at home with the sequester cuts in today's CR.

No emergency like snow or even the deficit will be responsible. The responsibility lies with the House majority, which has abdicated its responsibility to govern. The CR on the floor today embeds cuts that might be tolerated if spread intelligently and selectively over time.

But even if the deficit demanded cutting, for example, the Women, Infants, and Children program, there could be no justification for doing it in only 6 months, guaranteeing that over 600,000 low-income women and our most vulnerable children will lose basic nutrition assistance.

Dumb cuts are bad; cruel cuts are much worse.

CONDEMNING ATTACKS ON MEK MEMBERS AT CAMP LIBERTY

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

Mr. COTTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Chairman POE's resolution condemning the February 9 rocket and mortar attacks at Camp Liberty in Iraq and urging the President to work with the Iraqi Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to relocate the members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq back to Camp Ashraf.

These MEK refugees can only be safe and secure at Ashraf where they have lived for over 25 years. The Iraqi Government and the High Commissioner placed these MEK members at Camp Liberty despite the great danger to them there. Now the United Nations should take the necessary steps to return them to Ashraf or settle them abroad.

I look forward to the day when these refugees can return home to Iran once

the tyrannical regime there has fallen, a day that might have been hastened if President Obama had stood with brave Iranian protesters in 2009 instead of coddling the theocratic mullahs there. Let us not make that mistake again.

□ 1010

AUTISM AND SEQUESTRATION

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

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. On Sunday, March 3, 2 days after the failure of this body to stop the mindless budget cuts of the sequester that will slash millions of dollars for medical research, I was honored to join Bob and Suzanne Wright and thousands of others as we walked in downtown West Palm Beach to promote autism awareness, advocacy, and research.

One in 88 American children is affected by autism, which is America's fastest growing, serious developmental disability, and the Wrights will be the first to tell you that, even with the progress of their organization Autism Speaks and other fine organizations, it will take the investment of the United States of America in science to unlock the mystery of a disorder that cheats our children and stresses their families financially and emotionally.

Mr. Speaker, the sequester will hurt our most vulnerable loved ones and will risk slowing down our economy right when it is recovering. Let's come together now and stop the sequester and reduce our deficit in a balanced way. Instead of tax breaks for oil companies, let's give an autistic child a chance to be the best that he or she can be.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, the record is clear: the House of Representatives has acted responsibly. We've passed two pieces of legislation to be able to deal with sequestration and to be able to deal with it in a responsible way. The question yet to be answered is: Will the Senate, will the administration rise with us to be able to meet that challenge?

Right now, an American family making \$50,000 a year is taking about \$1,000 less home because of the expiration of the payroll tax deduction. That's a mortgage payment, books for school, a couple of months' worth of groceries. In fact, they're now under the highest tax burden since the year 2008. Families are making sacrifices while government continues to increase spending. Many Federal agencies and programs will actually receive more in their budgets this year, and the government will collect more tax revenue than ever before—\$2.7 trillion.

One of the major problems with the President's sequester is not that it initiates needed reductions in Federal spending but that its unwieldy nature casts a broad shadow of uncertainty with regards to how those cuts will be implemented. We need responsibility. This House has acted. We call on the Senate and the administration to join us.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today about the recent sequestration cuts to important Federal programs, cuts that are harmful to our national security, education system, transportation and infrastructure, and economy.

Congressional Democrats have worked for months in this very Chamber in order to avoid the harmful cuts, but the House majority has so politicized the budget process that it has prevented any resolution or compromise. The Republican majority has three times blocked the consideration of a Democratic bill to end sequestration, has refused to bring any bill of its own to the House floor to end the sequester and, instead, with partisan attacks, has tried to blame President Obama.

The sequester has already taken effect with an immediate \$85 billion across-the-board spending cut; and while the worst of these impacts is yet to come, Americans will see more teachers laid off, indiscriminate cuts to special education, a loss of 4 million meals for seniors, and debilitating health care cuts for our military families.

In my home State of Texas, the sequester puts close to 1,000 teaching jobs at risk. Over 80,000 workers will lose access to job training, over 50,000 civilian defense employees will be furloughed, and 9,700 fewer children will get vaccines for diseases like measles and the whooping cough.

SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. HANNA. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, sequestration went into effect. The House has passed two plans to replace sequestration with smarter, targeted spending cuts. Unfortunately, the Senate has not approved a plan. We desperately need to cut spending, but sequestration is an extremely poor way to do it.

Where I'm from in upstate New York, it means taking an ax to cybersecurity precisely when we need it the most. It means furloughing the men and women who make sure that our Armed Forces get paid. It also means slashing education programs that make our country more competitive.