

306(k) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 242k), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individual on the part of the House to the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics for a term of 4 years:

Dr. Vickie M. Mays, Los Angeles, California.

DEPARTING MEMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the gentleman from Georgia, before he leaves the floor, that I wish him the best of luck, Doc. And I wish the other Doc, the gentleman from Washington who has already left the floor, the best of luck. The gentleman from New Jersey, RUSH HOLT, who is going to speak after me, is leaving as well.

And I must say some things about all three of you, if I may, because you fit into these particular characteristics. The three of you are gentlemen. The three of you are real patriots. The three of you are civil in every respect. The three of you have a good sense of the Congress. The three of you have a great respect for the institution. And you will be missed.

God bless you. Godspeed. And good luck to you and your families.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the state of our Nation's economy. I have been waiting for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker. This is the time to do it.

Six years ago, when President Obama raised his hand on the steps of the Capitol of the United States of America and was sworn in as President, we were losing over 800,000 jobs every month, and these were mostly middle-income and lower-income Americans who were out of work. In the final 6 months of President Bush's administration, we lost 3.5 million jobs. By the time the recession was over, 8.8 million Americans were out of work. The ending of that recession technically was in June of 2009, but we did not start to create new jobs until March of 2010, and many of those jobs came from the census that was going on that year.

Our country's gross domestic product, GDP, in the fourth quarter of 2008—the last months of President Bush's administration—decreased by 8.9 percent. That is an unbelievable number. And President Bush was not solely responsible; we all shared in our financial demise. We have been digging ourselves out of this deep, deep hole ever since, with almost no help from our friends on the other side.

And I am glad my friend from Georgia mentioned that legislation that we passed in 2003, plan D. Because right after we lost that debate and lost that vote, we became part and parcel of that legislation which had been democrat-

ically passed in this House, although we didn't like it. We cooperated. We didn't try to undercut. We did not try to minimize. But the record will show that Democrats stood up, shook off their loss, and became part of what American democracy is all about. We cooperated.

Now, what have we had from the other side of the aisle? We have had no cooperation. We have had very little goodwill. We have had, simply speaking, no poetry whatsoever. In fact, just the opposite. We have seen the seeds sown in division, in fear, in disharmony.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which passed in February of 2009, our first response to the crisis, received zero votes from our friends on the other side of the aisle. We know now that this bill saved or created 3.6 million jobs in this country, although it was far too small to dig us out of the hole. But we were on our way.

The Affordable Care Act will allow a new generation of entrepreneurs to create a business, provide incentives for small business to offer health insurance, and attract qualified employees, even cut health care costs growth to unheard of levels, freeing up cash so that businesses can invest more and hire more workers—again, zero votes from our friends on the other side.

And then when you lose, you undermine as much as is humanly possible.

Where was the other side of the aisle when the unemployment insurance for long-term unemployed expired, cutting off 3.6 million Americans, including 350,000 veterans, at the end of September of 2014? When we had lost over 550,000 government jobs, dragging down our economy, our entire economic recovery, instead of working to keep people on the job, my friends on the other side of the aisle were pushing more and more disastrous, job-killing budget cuts.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me say this: The record will bear me out. We now have the lowest number of Federal employees, the lowest amount of employees, since 1966. So when our friends on the other side talk about Big Government, they ought to know about it since they created it. We have had the lowest amount of Federal workers. And for the last 5 or 6 years, many of those workers—forget about us—have not even gotten a cost of living increase.

So you can understand very clearly why the American people are frustrated with the pace of our recovery. And in many ways, I share their frustration. It has taken far too long, and the fruits of the recovery have not been equally distributed.

During the recovery, incomes have been flat for the vast majority of Americans while the folks at the top of the income scale are doing better than ever. No one should try to undermine anybody making a living and a good living, but everybody should be part of making sure that there are shared

fruits on the line and everybody gets a chance and an opportunity.

The stock market is up over 165 percent since the low it hit at the depths of the recession. While stocks have fully recovered and continue to set record highs, the job market has lagged behind, not recovering all the jobs lost in the recession until just 6 months ago, 5 years after the recession officially ended.

In my home State of New Jersey, total employment is still well below where we were at the start of the recession. There are over 130,000 fewer jobs in New Jersey than in December of 2007. Our unemployment rate is nearly a full point higher than the national average. Take heed what happens to your own State, never mind what happens in other States.

Wages have also been stagnant, stuck at around 2 percent for the last few years. If wage growth had been a more robust 4 percent—enough to factor in inflation and growth in productivity—the average worker would be making more than \$3 more per hour today than they are. That is a fact. It is undeniable.

□ 2100

It is undeniable. This is because, for example, during the first 3 years since the end of the recession, the top 1 percent of Americans captured 95 percent of the entire country's income gains. This wage stagnation didn't just start with the recession.

Incomes for the middle class had been stagnant for the past 15 years, and if you adjust for inflation, middle class wages are lower than they were in 1989. That is a fact. There are many reasons for the middle class to feel like they are left out, like the recovery has left them behind. It is because the entire economy is leaving them behind.

This year, it seems like we may have finally begun to turn that corner, and our economic recovery is still and really accelerating. Last week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the economy created 321,000 jobs.

That makes for 57 straight months of job growth, the longest streak of consecutive months of job creation on record for a total of over 10.9 million new jobs. For the last 10 of these months, we have created over 200,000 jobs per month. That is the first time we have had a streak of that with robust job creation since the 1990s.

The 321,000 jobs created in November brings the total number of jobs created just this year to 2.65 million jobs, so with 1 month to go, we have already created more jobs—get this—than any year since the 1990s. Now, those are some of the statistics about the job numbers you might read in USA Today.

Manufacturing is the linchpin of our economy, adding 28,000 good-paying jobs just last month for a total nearly of three-quarters of a million new jobs. Wages, as I mentioned, have been stagnant. You will see a nice monthly gain of 0.4 percent.

We have not had a month this year when wages have fallen, and for the first time since 2008, we have had 4 months where they have grown at least 0.3 percent. The average workweek increased to 34.6 hours, meaning more workers are finding full-time employment, instead of part-time jobs.

According to the Labor Department, we are seeing increasing churn in the job market with the highest number of employees being hired for jobs and voluntarily quitting their jobs since early 2008. This means more workers are confident enough in the job market strength to leave and look for a better opportunity.

The first week average of weekly jobless claims has been below 300,000 for the last several months, another welcome sign, and according to the Commerce Department, construction spending increased 1.1 percent in October, including a 1.8 percent increase in home building.

Total construction spending is up 3.3 percent from last year, part of the reason why unemployment amongst construction workers has fallen from 8.6 percent to 7.5 percent for the last year.

I say to the American people: we know it has been a long, tough road over the last couple of years and the last couple of decades; we know many of us have been frustrated that it has taken so long to get back on our feet, but today, the American worker is the strongest in the world.

We should feel good that not only are we on the right track, but we are moving faster. The only thing now that could hold us back is if we sabotage the economy by returning to some of the favorite old tactics, shut the place down, shutting down the government, or defaulting on our national debt. We are now only 1 day away from shutting down the government.

The last time, the tantrum over defending affordable care cost us \$24 billion. I don't know who the austere party is. I don't know who the party is that is going to watch every dime that is being spent. Twenty-four billion dollars is not chump change, and that resulted in 120,000 fewer jobs being created. We are going to have to be a little bit more creative than just shutting down the government. Maybe they will only try to shut down parts of the government.

But this pales in comparison to the negative economic impact of brinkmanship over our country's debt ceiling. We all know just how devastating actually refusing to raise the debt ceiling could be.

Credit markets would freeze, interest rates would skyrocket, and the dollar would crash. Even the possibility of hitting the debt limit does serious damage for our economy. The first time we did this back in 2011, consumer confidence declined to levels not seen since the Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008.

Business uncertainty is not what we need. That has led to a slowing of job

growth, and our credit rating was downgraded for the first time in our history. All of these economic wounds were self-inflicted.

To his credit, the new majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, has stated he doesn't want another shutdown or default in our debt. However, as our Speaker, Mr. BOEHNER, has learned that sometimes the leader of the party will have a hard time keeping his troops in line. Every leader finds that out.

With our recovery finally picking up steam, the ideologues must cast aside their mentality of legislating by taking the economy hostage. This includes not only our debt ceiling and averting a government shutdown, but also the myriad of other deadlines Congress must deal with in the new year: the expiration of the highway funding, preventing a cut in Medicare payments to doctors, and expiring tax provisions.

Republicans and Democrats must come together really to tackle these issues in a way that accelerates our on-going recovery. We simply cannot get caught up in the endless brinksmanship and bickering that has defined the past 4 years.

Failure to do so would be an insult to the middle class who are just starting to see the fruits of recovery in their pocketbooks. Unemployment is finally down to the lowest rate in years, and we saw a big jump in hourly earnings in this past week.

Combined with the continued drop in gas prices, not once did I ever see someone come to this floor and give the President credit for anything on the other side—not once—whether it was falling gas prices—and we know what happened when the prices went up a few years ago. Not once did we see anything about the 321 new created jobs. Not one person came to this floor.

He has done a few things right, my brothers and sisters, believe it or not, and if you do admit it, nothing is going to happen to you. Believe me, nothing will happen to you.

Combined with these gas prices going down, the positive impact of the President's immigration order, which will bring money into America's Treasury, we are on a track for a great year for the American worker. The best thing Congress could do to make sure that happens is simple: just get out of the way. I say that with all respect.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. HOLT. I thank my colleague, Mr. PASCRELL from New Jersey, for underscoring the importance of what we do here in this House. Those are not just numbers on a page that he was quoting; those are people's lives and livelihoods, and we have work to do.

As I prepare to wind up my service here after 16 years, I seek the indulgence of my friend here and our colleagues to make a few observations for

the benefit of my constituents to whom I owe much.

When people call my office, we answer the phone, "Representative RUSH HOLT." Mr. Speaker, here in the House, for each of us, Representative is our title and our job description. It is an honor and a privilege for each of us to represent about three-quarters of a million people, to represent them here in the people's House, this House, that is the focal point of the U.S. Government laid out in article I, section 1, of the Constitution, right at the beginning.

Despite all the well-publicized frustrations of this place, this House is the greatest instrument for justice and human welfare in the world. We are a central part of the most successful experiment in human advancement in history. We must not forget that.

Speaking of not forgetting, we would all do well to develop a stronger sense of history, a sense among ourselves and our country. It is with a sense of history that we realize what progress we have made as a country.

In this time of frustration and cynicism, we should take note: the success of America economically, culturally, and socially has not been an accident, and it was not destined. Our success derives from our chosen system of governing ourselves. Without a sense of history, one cannot recognize progress, and humans need a sense of progress.

When I was first elected to Congress 16 years ago, some people asked me: "Why would a scientist leave a good research institution to get into the muck of politics?" The simple answer was that it was too important not to.

Sure, it was satisfying to win an election in a district where many said it couldn't be done, where no one of my party had been elected in almost anyone's memory, but it was clear to me that this was not a game of politics; it was a fight to defend the soul of America.

I came here an optimist about our country, our people, and their government, and I leave an optimist. I have had the help of many people, volunteers, staff and colleagues, smart, inspiring, tireless. I think of many.

I will mention several by name: my wife, Margaret Lancefield; my chief and deputy chief, Chris Gaston and Sarah Steward; and looking back, I think of those who have died during my time here.

As I speak here in glowing terms about our government, successes of this ingenious system of balancing competing interests, I would be obtuse not to recognize that many are discouraged about their government. Some politicians even foster distrust in government, taking people beyond the traditional healthy American skepticism to real destructive cynicism.

In every era, there have been naysayers: "The government is broken, special interests rule, and all politicians are corrupt." I know that is not true.

I am reminded daily that through diligent and committed service to the people that a Representative can ensure that each person knows that she or he has a part in our democracy, a direct connection to his or her government, and that cooperative action, yes, government, benefits them.

We must continually show our constituents that we are committed to always improving the mechanisms of good democratic government: voting, legislation, and addressing grievances.

After eight terms, I look back with satisfaction at some things accomplished: preserving land and bits of history; improving educational opportunities; supporting education in science and foreign languages; expanding access to excellent health care, especially mental health care for our military veterans; protecting families' economic security in their nonwage-earning years; protecting postal workers when they are exposed to anthrax; enhancing the reliability, accessibility, and auditability of voting; strengthening civil protections of Muslim Americans and other minority groups; strengthening fairness in the workplace for LGBT workers; and increasing support for scientific research.

Through it all, our primary job, I would say, has been to beat back the cynicism about our ability as Americans to govern ourselves. Of course, we understand that passing laws and appropriating money is only part of a Representative's work.

I have taken opportunities to speak out about injustice, to extol people and programs that work well, to voice support for people who need a kind word and more, a little help. I present a vision for a government—not a government that vanishes, but a government that works for its citizens.

Of course, not all problems can be fixed by government, but it can be reassuring and uplifting to people to know that other people have their backs and can help; yes, that is government.

I continue to speak against intrusive surveillance by government that treats people as suspects first and citizens second. I have joined with others here to preserve our national legacies, our land and resources, a clean environment and to preserve memories of where we come from, and with my science background, I always try to present arguments based on evidence and open review.

On many issues and in many votes, I have found myself outvoted and in a minority, but it helps to recall the words of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg who has spoken about the satisfaction in crafting a strong dissenting opinion with the hope or expectation that it will become the prevailing majority opinion.

□ 2115

I am reminded of many shortcomings and work unfinished. Others may succeed in reviving the Office of Tech-

nology Assessment to provide Congress with badly needed assistance. Others remaining in Congress may move our country appreciably toward more sustainable practices. My colleagues here may yet reform the intelligence community. And acting with the recognition that peace is the best security, others may work to move our Nation away from militaristic responses to so many problems.

Again, this work over 16 years has been an honor and a great satisfaction. I thank my family and my staff. Especially, I thank the people of central New Jersey for this opportunity to serve.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 83, INSULAR AREAS AND FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES ENERGY DEVELOPMENT; WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-655) on the resolution (H. Res. 776) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 83) to require the Secretary of the Interior to assemble a team of technical, policy, and financial experts to address the energy needs of the insular areas of the United States and the Freely Associated States through the development of energy action plans aimed at promoting access to affordable, reliable energy, including increasing use of indigenous clean-energy resources, and for other purposes; waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules; and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CAPUANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for December 9 and the balance of the week on account of a family medical emergency.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, December 11, 2014, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

8203. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Program, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Certain Designated Counties in Idaho, and Malheur County, Oregon; Modification of Container Requirements [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-14-0046; FV14-945-2 FIR] received December 3, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8204. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Process for Establishing Rates Charged for AMS Services [Document Number: AMS-LPS-13-0050] (RIN: 0581-AD36) received December 3, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8205. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza [Docket No.: APHIS-2006-0074] (RIN: 0579-AC36) received December 1, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8206. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Avocados Grown in South Florida and Imported Avocados; Clarification of the Avocado Grade Requirements [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-13-0069; FV13-915-3 FR] received December 3, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

8207. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Report on the Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2249c; to the Committee on Armed Services.

8208. A letter from the Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of General Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., United States Army, and his advancement on the retired list to the grade of general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

8209. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Inspector General's semiannual report to Congress for the reporting period ending September 30, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

8210. A letter from the Chairman, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting Fiscal Year 2014 Agency Financial Report; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

8211. A letter from the Departmental Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Officer, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Public Information, Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Regulations [Docket No.: 140127076-4811-02] (RIN: 0605-AA33) received December 4, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

8212. A letter from the Administrator, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Corporation's annual financial audit and management report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, in accordance with OMB Circular A-136; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.