

fully fund our transportation responsibility.

Twenty-three short-term extensions of the transportation program in recent years is as embarrassing as it is destructive. No country became great building its infrastructure 9 months at a time.

You can bring this charade to a halt. With all the major agenda items on the table this spring for Congress, there is no way that we are going to be able to do anything but extend the May 31st transportation deadline, when the funding authorization expires. That is the most recent time when Congress kicked the can down the road, what it approved last fall all the way to this spring. I said at the time, When spring comes, we will be right back in the same situation. And we are.

This does not mean that we need to write off the entire year and beyond. It certainly does not mean that we need to throw this issue into the middle of the next Presidential campaign, which unfortunately has already started. You should give us a reasonable deadline: July 1st, August 1st, or even September 1st. Under no circumstances should you let this bleed into the next Federal fiscal year, starting October 1st.

We lost an opportunity at the end of the last Congress to force responsible action in the lame duck session after the 2014 election. We were close, but it eluded us. Please don't let that happen again. Make clear you will not sign any transportation extension beyond the end of the Federal fiscal year.

Mr. President, you don't have to dictate a solution. You have already indicated what you want in a robust 6-year bill; you have given an outline of how you would have Congress fund this significant reauthorization. Your Secretary of Transportation, Anthony Foxx, has been traveling the country, advancing a vision for transportation for decades to come; and he is clear about the need for bold action to properly fund it.

You and your administration have also made it clear that you are willing to sign any reasonable bipartisan legislation that meets the standards that we need. It needs to be sustainable; it needs to be dedicated; it needs to be big enough to get the job done. Let Congress put up or shut up. Force it to act by not extending the deadline past October 1st.

Recently, the historic solution driven by Speaker BOEHNER and Leader PELOSI took a problem that long seemed intractable here on Capitol Hill since 1998 on Medicare payments and the funding under the so-called “doc fix,” but yet enacted a permanent solution on a bipartisan basis, overwhelmingly approved in this House and in the Senate. It required leadership and for some people to relax somewhat their partisan talking points—if not their core principles—but we all got the job done under your leadership.

Let's do the same on transportation funding. Let's lay down an absolute

deadline. Let's refuse to let it slide past October 1, 2015. Let's all work together, demanding Congress do its job. Several hundred Members of Congress signed a letter recently circulated by Congressman RIBBLE and Congressman LIPINSKI, my colleague from Illinois, saying that that is what should happen. Well, let's actually do it.

Together, Congress can be forced to act. We can rebuild and renew America, putting hundreds of thousands of people to work at family wage jobs, making our communities more livable, our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure. It is not going to get easier if we stall. It is not going to be a smaller problem if it is going to be done next year or the year beyond. Let's decide this summer we are going to get the job done. Mr. President, you can help us by demanding that it be done according to a strict timeline, no later than October 1st.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, over the last 4 years, House Republicans have worked hard to put this Nation on a better path forward. We have passed numerous pieces of legislation to encourage job growth and strengthen America's standing in the global economy. We have also passed bills that would decrease energy costs and increase transparency in how tax dollars are spent.

Despite the short time we have had, the obstacles we have faced, and the enormity of our task, House Republicans have managed a number of conservative victories. For example, legislation I authored was signed into law last summer to streamline the Federal workforce development system, including the elimination of 15 duplicative programs.

We have worked tirelessly to minimize the damage caused by ObamaCare. The first pieces of legislation to pass in the 114th Congress included the Hire More Heroes Act, which would make it easier to hire veterans by exempting those who already have health insurance from being subject to the employer mandate in the President's health care law, and the Save American Workers Act to change ObamaCare's 30-hour definition of full-time employment and restore the traditional 40-hour workweek, which has long been the standard for full-time work.

Additionally, the House Republican working group has laid out an alternative vision to ObamaCare. It includes allowing affected States to opt out of ObamaCare's costly rules and regulations and to opt into a patient-centered

system focused on choice and lower cost.

House Republicans have been vigilant against any attempt that would impugn the Second Amendment rights of all Americans to own and bear firearms. Our Republican committee chairmen are using their gavels to exercise the constitutionally prescribed system of checks and balances to hold oversight hearings exposing the Obama administration for its unconstitutional overreach.

Much of the economic turmoil that has gripped this Nation is the result of the Federal Government spending beyond its means. In North Carolina I often hear from constituents who are worried that our ballooning national debt threatens economic stability and jeopardizes the American Dream for their families.

House Republicans have responded to those concerns by passing laws cutting Federal spending 2 years in a row for the first time since the Korean war. We banned earmarks and achieved the most significant spending reductions in modern history. We have protected tax cuts for individuals and families.

Unfortunately, President Obama's budget ignores our crushing debt burden. Despite proposing \$2.1 trillion in new tax increases, the President's budget never balances because it spends too much.

In contrast to the President's budget proposal that ignores our crushing debt burden, House Republicans recently approved a budget that balances in less than 10 years without raising taxes while cutting \$5.5 trillion in unnecessary spending. This budget not only places our country on a path to pay off the overwhelming mound of debt we face but will also spur economic growth and increase opportunity.

Balanced Budget for a Stronger America also provides a framework for completely repealing ObamaCare and calls on Congress to pass comprehensive tax reform that lowers rates for individuals, families, and employers.

Following approval of the budget, the House continued its record of tackling tough issues by passing bipartisan legislation to help stabilize Medicare and secure seniors' access to their doctors. By transitioning to a new provider payment system focused on quality, value, and accountability, we have laid the groundwork for future Medicare reforms.

It has been said that no one hears the plane that landed safely. What that very apt adage suggests is that we are often unaware of the good work being done every day, and it isn't until something goes wrong that people take notice.

House Republicans are working hard to continue our good work and advance solutions that will build a healthy economy, empowering all Americans to seek new opportunities and achieve a better life.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JOYCE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day. Lead us this day in Your ways, that our Nation might be guided along the roads of peace, justice, and goodwill.

Grant strength and wisdom to our Speaker, leaders, and Members of both the people's House and the Senate, to our President and his Cabinet, and to our Supreme Court.

Bless as well the moral and military leaders of our country, and may those who are the captains of business, industry, and unions learn to work together toward the mutual benefit of all, walking in the ways of righteousness and working for the highest good of our beloved land.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE 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.

CONGRATULATIONS TO J.F. KRUSE JEWELERS

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Jim Kruse and Melissa Kelley of J.F. Kruse Jewelers in St. Cloud, Minnesota. They

have been named the Minnesota Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Last year, the St. Cloud Area Chamber honored them as the Small Business of the Year.

Jim Kruse opened J.F. Kruse 15 years ago. From humble beginnings, using secondhand jewelry cases, to a newly built facility and a team of 17 people, the father-daughter duo built a dynamic business that has seen steady growth year after year.

Family-run businesses like J.F. Kruse are the backbone of central Minnesota, and I know I speak for everyone when I say congratulations and good luck in competing for the national title.

THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE NEW REPUBLICAN CONGRESS

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the contrast between Democratic and Republican priorities in Congress could not be more clear after the first 100 days here.

Instead of passing legislation that would help American families buy a home or put away money to save for their kids' college or save even for a secure retirement, we have seen again and again tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. That is the priority that supersedes the needs of the American family.

Instead of focusing on growing paychecks and improving our infrastructure, a vital need, one that should be a bipartisan effort, we just continue to vote for more tax giveaways to the wealthiest special interests.

Mr. Speaker, it is long past time that this Congress work on the priorities of hard-working, middle class Americans, priorities that are simple: Own a home, help your kids prepare for their future, have something set aside for retirement, take care of our crumbling infrastructure, reinvest in our future.

I know we stand ready to work together on these big questions. It is time Congress set aside the needs of the few and focused on what we were sent here to do, and that is take care of the American family.

APPLAUDING THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 1105

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

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the House of Representatives for passing H.R. 1105, the Death Tax Repeal Act, last week, and to call for its swift consideration and passage in the Senate.

This devastating tax, which requires families to pay as much as 40 percent of the value of an estate they inherit above a certain threshold, has damaged our economy, hurt small businesses,

and forced many families out of a legacy they worked hard to build.

In my district of Georgia, many of those hit hardest by the death tax are our family farms; hard-working Americans who have paid taxes on their property all their lives, only to have it taxed again when they try to pass it on to the next generation. In some cases, children are often forced to sell the land, ending a family business, costing real jobs, and destroying a family legacy. Unfortunately, this is not a rare occurrence.

As a proud cosponsor of this bill, I applaud my colleagues in the House for passage of this legislation to repeal the death tax and urge quick consideration and approval in the Senate.

NATIONAL LEARN TO SWIM MONTH

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

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, April is the month when pools, beaches, streams, and lakes across the United States open up for the spring and summer months.

As a former collegiate swimmer, I feel compelled to ensure that everyone is safe in the water during the upcoming months.

I am proud to introduce bipartisan H. Res. 205 with another former college swimmer, Representative JIM BRIDENSTINE, on behalf of USA Masters Swimming Association and their president, Nadine Day, to declare April as National Learn to Swim Month.

Last year, 3,335 Americans unintentionally drowned. The number of American adults and children that are unable to swim can be reduced, and we are in a position to speak out and prevent this.

Swimming proficiency is a problem that we can solve together, and with the help of State governments we can highlight this so that we are able to make water activities safe for everyone.

Please join me, Mr. Speaker, in declaring April as National Learn to Swim Month.

FORT HOOD VICTIMS RECEIVE PURPLE HEARTS AND FULL BENEFITS

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it has been more than 5 years since the 2009 shooting in Fort Hood, Texas. The whole country was shocked by this senseless activity. Finally, earlier this month, the 47 soldiers and surviving family members of this tragic event did receive Purple Heart medals for their sacrifice, and they will be provided with every benefit that this commendation obliges.