

Ignore the false alarms and embrace the commonsense reforms in this bill. Pass the RAPID Act, call the President's bluff, give the Nation shovel-ready projects.

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

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise. The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARDY), having assumed the chair, Mr. LAMALFA, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 348) to provide for improved coordination of agency actions in the preparation and adoption of environmental documents for permitting determinations, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL RICE MONTH

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the 25th year of September being National Rice Month. Today I want to pay special tribute to the hard-working American farmers, millers, merchants, suppliers, and the consumers who make rice not only such a wholesome food, but an important part of our economy.

Rice farming in America actually predates our Nation's founding, beginning some 300 years ago in the Deep South. Today, America's rice industry creates 125,000 good-paying jobs and contributes an estimated \$34 billion to our Nation's economy.

America's rice farmers have also a longstanding commitment to protect and preserve natural resources. Today, U.S. rice farmers produce more rice, using less land, energy, and water, using cutting-edge technology in land-leveling, in yield, and in technology for using less chemicals.

The process is much more efficient than it was 20 years ago, while providing critical waterfowl habitat for hundreds of species. I know personally because I have leveled many of these fields myself.

America's rice farmers continue to serve as leaders in the farming community by producing a healthy, conservation-friendly rice crop that generates jobs and economic opportunity.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing September as National Rice Month.

□ 1600

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: FEDERAL SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor to serve here in the United States Congress, but we sully that honor when we waste the American people's time with misplaced priorities and manufactured crises.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has one fundamental responsibility: funding the Federal Government. But unfortunately, Republicans in Congress insist on undermining these responsibilities at virtually every turn.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans already insist on maintaining reckless sequester funding that chokes services for working and middle class Americans, seniors, veterans, and children. Instead of passing Republican budgets that meet the ever-changing needs of our Nation, Republicans choose to kick the can down the road through continuing resolutions that waste precious time and shortchange the American people.

But if sequestration and continuing resolutions weren't already bad enough, now we are facing a complete Federal shutdown because Republicans insist on holding Federal funds for women's health care hostage. Congress has just 4 legislative days remaining to pass a funding bill.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are fed up with this brinksmanship. It is time for us to run the country like adults.

Let's remember why this is happening: Republicans have pledged to shut down the entire Federal Government because of objections to abortion services by Planned Parenthood. Never mind that not a single cent of Federal money funds abortions by Planned Parenthood. Never mind that Planned Parenthood provides health care and education to more than 2.6 million Americans—both men and women—each year. Never mind that 97 percent of Planned Parenthood's health services are unrelated to abortions. Republicans would rather ignore these truths and instead rely on a series of distorted videos secretly filmed by discredited and shady antiabortion activists.

So instead of using this time to talk about creating jobs, building infrastructure, reducing college debt, and reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, I am forced to stand here on the House floor to remind the American people about the dangers we face with yet another Republican shutdown.

Here are a few ways that this shutdown would harm the American people:

A shutdown would close more than 400 national parks and monuments. It would increase backlogs for veterans' pensions, compensation, and disability claims. It would delay tax refunds and Federal home loan applications; prohibit the National Institutes of Health from accepting new patients; shut down E-Verify screening for businesses to limit hiring undocumented workers; shutter Head Start programs for low-income families and children; and close Federal courts.

The impact of a 2015 shutdown is hard to quantify, but we don't have to look too far back to estimate the potential impact. In 2013, Republicans shut the government down for 16 days in a failed attempt to defund the Affordable Care Act. That shutdown furloughed 850,000 Federal workers for a total of 6.6 million days. The 2013 shutdown cost \$2 billion in lost productivity. Standard & Poor's estimated that the shutdown cost the U.S. economy \$24 billion and stalled the creation of more than 100,000 private sector jobs, and \$4.4 billion in tax returns were delayed. Small businesses and private lenders had to delay loans due to lack of access to Federal Social Security number and income verification tools.

Knowing what we know, Mr. Speaker, it is inconceivable that we could walk into this type of catastrophe by choice. That must be why the Speaker of the House, in 2013, called that shutdown a "very predictable disaster."

Mr. Speaker, I would much rather be predicting solutions than disasters. That is why I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Congressional Progressive Caucus to stave off this irresponsible and dangerous shutdown. Again, this is the one thing our constituents sent us to Washington for: to fund the government. This is our job.

I implore my anti-women's health colleagues to set aside their partisan bickering and work with us to keep this government open.

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

HISTORIC BROOKVILLE TOWN SQUARE

(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, early this month, I visited Brookville, Jefferson County, located in my district, to congratulate local officials and community leaders on securing funds for a long-awaited project. The Historic Brookville Town Square is one of the most important pieces of the community's long-term plan and is the product of a very successful fundraising effort by Historic Brookville, Incorporated.

The Historic Brookville Town Square will be located next to the Jefferson County Courthouse on land once occupied by a vacant, rundown building.

The funding for the project includes more than \$300,000 raised by the community through the efforts of Historic Brookville, showing a real desire on behalf of the residents to beautify their community.

Mr. Speaker, this park represents a great public-private partnership, with the final \$150,000 in grant funding clearing the way for this project to enter the planning stages. I have been proud to work with the community leaders in Brookville to move this project one step closer to completion.

PREVENTING VETERAN SUICIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of preventing veteran suicide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize September as Suicide Prevention Month. I want to thank my colleague, KYRSTEN SINEMA, for joining me and putting together this Special Order hour. For the next hour, we will discuss an issue that is very important to me and should be unacceptable in a nation of our resources: veteran suicide.

A veteran in this country commits suicide every 65 minutes. That is 22 lives extinguished every day.

As the father of a veteran, a doctor who worked at a VA hospital in northern Michigan, and the chairman of the Health Subcommittee on Veterans' Affairs, I know that the challenges of military life do not end once our servicemembers retire from Active Duty. The mental wounds of war may be invisible, but they are no less real to the young men and women suffering from them.

Facing high unemployment rates, the stigma of post-traumatic stress disorder, and a loss of military fellowship, returning veterans often face a crisis of confidence at the very moment they should feel nothing but relief and rest.

Congress did make a real impact early this year when we passed the Clay Hunt SAV Act, which is helping the VA put the very best mental healthcare professionals to work for our veterans and creating peer support groups to help catch those transitioning servicemembers who may otherwise fall through the cracks. However, so much more needs to be done.

I am grateful to my colleagues for standing with me today for our most vulnerable veterans and their families.

I look forward to hearing what they have to say and to working with them to end veteran suicide.

I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM).

Mr. ABRAHAM. Thank you, Dr. BENISHEK, for having this.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues to raise awareness of veteran suicide prevention. Let me underscore the word "prevention"—prevention because veteran suicide is a public health tragedy. As a doctor, I know it is a preventable tragedy. For far too long, PTSD has been stigmatized, and it is time to remove that stigma.

Twenty-two percent of Americans who commit suicide are veterans. That statistic is unacceptable to me, and it should be unacceptable to the American people. Our Nation's heroes should come home to readily available mental health care. They should not have to wait days, weeks, or even months to receive treatment. Veterans should not have to wait at all.

The Clay Hunt SAV Act, which was signed into law earlier this year, was an excellent first step in giving veterans options, but there is more work to be done.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and a veteran myself, I will continue to fight for a more streamlined system to treat our veterans suffering from PTSD and continue to work to reform the VA system to be a system that puts the veteran first, not the bureaucrat.

Mr. BENISHEK. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA).

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you, Congressman BENISHEK, for joining me today as a cohost of tonight's Special Order.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time for our Nation to raise awareness about the persistent scourge of suicide. Tens of thousands of Americans each year purposefully die by their own actions. They are our neighbors and our friends, our sons and our daughters; and too often, they are the men and women who have served our country honorably in the United States military.

An estimated 22 veterans lose their lives to suicide every single day in our country. That is one life lost every 65 minutes.

Typically, time in the House Chamber is split. Republicans have 1 hour and Democrats have another hour, but Congressman BENISHEK and I believe that this issue is too important to be overshadowed by partisan politics. That is why we have joined together today, with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, to show our commitment to solving this problem together and to finding real solutions for our country's veterans.

This is the third year we have assembled in this Chamber to raise awareness and to send a clear message that the epidemic of veteran suicide must end. We have so much work left to do. So today, we demonstrate our ongoing support for the individuals, organiza-

tions, and agencies devoted to preventing the epidemic of veteran suicide. Today, we challenge the VA, the Department of Defense, and our fellow lawmakers to do more. We are failing in our obligation to do right by those who have served so honorably.

Finally, we send a message to military families who have experienced this tragedy in their own families: Your family's loss is not forgotten. We work for the memory of your loved ones. We will not rest until every veteran in this country has access to the care that he or she needs.

□ 1615

I have often shared the story of a young veteran in my district, Sergeant Daniel Somers. Sergeant Somers was an Army veteran of two tours in Iraq.

Diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, Sergeant Somers took his own life after struggling with the VA bureaucracy and not getting the help he needed in time.

Together with the Somers family, we worked to develop the Classified Veterans Access to Care Act to ensure that all veterans, including those who served with classified experiences, can get immediate access to the mental health care that they need in the appropriate care setting.

I recently testified before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on the need for this important legislation, and I am grateful for the committee's support for this legislation. I am grateful for my cosponsor, Congressman DAN BENISHEK.

I will continue working with the committee to ensure that no veteran feels trapped, like Sergeant Somers did, and that all of our veterans have access to appropriate mental health care.

My State, Arizona, is ground zero for the VA's failure to take care of our veterans. It has been over a year since we learned about the veterans at the Phoenix VA Hospital who were kept on secret waiting lists, forced to wait months, even years, before seeing a doctor, unable to access the care they needed.

These revelations were shocking and sickening. Arizona veterans died while waiting for care. That is absolutely unacceptable and, frankly, it is un-American.

So in Arizona, we took immediate action when we learned from brave whistleblowers about this tragedy. Not waiting for the Phoenix VA to fix their problems, we came together as a community to make sure that Arizona veterans get the access to the care they needed.

Mr. Speaker, since last summer, we have held six veterans clinic, helping nearly 1,000 veterans and military families get access to the benefits they have earned. Our team helps veterans in getting access to benefits, to housing, to job placement, to education.

We established a Veterans Mental Health Working Group for community