

rural areas is clear: higher costs, fewer hospitals, fewer insurance options, and fewer doctors.

Insurance premiums in rural northern California average 25 percent more than in southern California, and the region will be hit with premium increases of an additional 29 percent this year. About 50 rural hospitals across America have closed, and over 280 more are now on the brink of closure.

Finally, in much of my district, costly ObamaCare mandates have left my constituents with just one option for insurance, a plan that many doctors in the region won't even accept.

Mr. Speaker, the debate is over. ObamaCare is destroying the ability of rural Americans to receive and afford health care. Along with the EPA, unmanaged or closed-off Federal lands, it looks like the President has a war on rural America.

It is high time that we end this failed law and focus on meeting the needs of those with preexisting conditions and those without health care, not simply increasing cost to those who already have insurance.

The budget reconciliation that just passed today will need only 51 Senate votes. It will help rural America on the ACA by opening up more options to people for their health care. It will repeal the ACA taxes and individual employer mandates, which, again, will help give more options to rural America, and it will defund Planned Parenthood, which many people are demanding. Indeed, this is a big step for good and responsible healthcare choices.

LET'S GO, NEW YORK METS

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, baseball has often been called the national pastime, and those of us in New York have watched this past week with pride as the New York Mets have advanced to the World Series, representing the National League.

I have watched those players play as a team, and they have worked really, really hard. Perhaps we in the Congress can learn a little bit from them, that teamwork is possible and that we need all of us to pull together to move ahead.

I am going to be at the World Series. I am going to really enjoy watching the New York Mets win. I am going to really enjoy the young players.

I want to congratulate the ownership, Fred and Jeff Wilpon and Saul Katz. I want to congratulate all of the great players of the Mets, from Daniel Murphy to David Wright, to Yoenis Cespedes, and the great young pitching of deGrom and Harvey and Syndergaard. They really, really make us proud.

I just want to sum up this 1 minute in three little words: Let's go, Mets.

LONG-TERM HIGHWAY BILL

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

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, today I stand to recognize an important step that took place this week. Yesterday the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, a committee I have the privilege to serve on, marked up and passed a long-term highway bill.

Included in that multiyear bill that authorizes the transportation needs of our Nation is a vital designation for the State of Nevada. With my assistance, this highway bill contained the designation of Interstate 11, which will run from the city of Las Vegas north along the I-95 corridor up to I-80. This designation is the next step in advancing the Intermountain West corridor, which is crucial for my State, all western States, and this country.

As the vice chairman of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee, I am proud to have worked with my colleagues to help make sure that the people in Nevada gain this instrumental project. The future of I-11 is growing. Jobs are on the horizon.

DEBT CEILING

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, on November 3, our Treasury Department has informed us that we are going to begin to default on payment obligations that the United States Government has already entered into.

So let's be clear. We are talking about obligations that this House made, the President has signed, and that we have obligated ourselves to pay.

This default would be the first time ever. It is going to damage our credit. It is going to increase our borrowing cost. It is going to damage our economy. It is really going to damage the welfare of millions of our constituents.

These are financial obligations that the Congress has already entered into and agreed to pay. We put the name of the United States behind these commitments. These are our bills. We need to pay them.

We should not be playing political brinksmanship with the future of the United States economy, but this is where some in the majority have brought us to once again.

MISSOURI'S FOREST PRODUCTS

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

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate National Forest Products Week.

Forest products provide more than 60,000 jobs and inject more than \$9 bil-

lion in Missouri's economy. In southeast and south central Missouri, we produce everything from charcoal, lumber, wood flooring, whiskey and wine barrels, pallets, telephone poles, railroad ties, gunstocks, and much, much more.

The number one obstacle to expanding in Missouri is the availability of timber. Folks cannot get enough wood to make more products and employ more people.

At the same time, we have trees dying in the Mark Twain National Forest faster than the government will allow industry to cut them down. Each year 50 million board feet of timber, with an estimated value of nearly \$5 million, dies in the Mark Twain National Forest. Instead of being harvested, this timber is wasted and becomes a fire hazard.

We have increased the amount of the timber harvest at Mark Twain National Forest from 38 to 50 million board feet recently, but we can do much better. Better forest management is good for the forest and will put people back to work.

YOUTH JUSTICE AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, did you know that a child in the United States can go to jail just for skipping school or running away from an abusive home?

Did you know that the United States is the only country in the world that locks up kids for life without the possibility of parole, when nearly three in ten of those kids did not actually commit the crime and may not have been there at the time that someone was hurt?

For years we have been funding a juvenile justice system that is robbing children of their future and wasting billions of taxpayer dollars every year.

Today experts, academics, police departments, police chiefs, and sheriffs agree that we must change that system.

President Obama designated October as Youth Justice Awareness Month because it is time to stop wasting billions of dollars on a system that doesn't make our communities safer and is destroying a generation of our children.

This week I introduced two bills to make sure kids don't get put in jail for dumb reasons and to fund evidence-based intervention and prevention programs.

We must do better. We must not give up on our children.

PAKISTAN'S ACTIONS

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of deciding the defense authorization legislation that will determine how much we spend for our security. Yet, this bill, what we are talking about, includes tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions, of dollars for Pakistan.

Pakistan is a country that represses its own people, the Baloch people. We give Pakistan military assistance to fight radical Islam, and they use that money to kill the people of Balochistan and their own Sindhis population. They use that money to destabilize Afghanistan.

We all remember, of course, that this is the same country, Pakistan, that provided safe haven for Obama bin Laden for years, and now, when bin Laden was identified by Dr. Afridi, a courageous Pakistani, the Pakistan Government has him in a dungeon and we are doing nothing to help him.

Why are we acting so stupidly? The Pakistanis are even giving their resources off to Communist China, the Port of Gwadar.

Pakistan is not our friend when they act like this. We need to put our foot down and say: If you are going to act in a hostile way, Pakistan, you are not going to receive 1 red cent of American tax dollars.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE SELECT INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARDY). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 2(a) of House Resolution 461, 114th Congress, and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Members to the Select Investigative Panel of the Committee on Energy and Commerce:

Mrs. BLACKBURN, Tennessee, Chair
 Mr. PITTS, Pennsylvania
 Mrs. BLACK, Tennessee
 Mr. BUCSHON, Indiana
 Mr. DUFFY, Wisconsin
 Mr. HARRIS, Maryland
 Mrs. HARTZLER, Missouri
 Mrs. LOVE, Utah

CRITICAL ISSUES FACING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it has been an interesting day and an interesting week. I was in here listening to the colloquy between Majority Leader McCARTHY and the minority whip.

I had heard my good friend, a very intelligent, clever, witty friend from Maryland, Mr. HOYER, indicate that Republicans bring us to the brink time and time again, talking about, I guess, the debt ceiling.

Sometimes it is just good to stop from the rhetoric here and the lines

like "bringing us to the brink," and it is really good to look at what the history of the situation is.

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Until Newt Gingrich led with the Contract With America, Republicans recaptured the majority in the House and Senate, for the first time in 40 years, the Democrats kept bringing us to the brink. It didn't matter who was in the White House. The Democratic Congress kept bringing us to the brink, spending more and more money.

We thought it was a great deal of money. They kept bringing us to the brink. It seemed so irresponsible not to be interested in trying to have a more balanced budget. There would be people like Phil Gramm, with the Gramm-Rudman law, that tried to force a balancing.

In fact, I know the President will probably in weeks to come continue the mistaken rhetoric. He is such a nice guy, but he is so often mistaken or whoever puts those mistakes in his teleprompter.

But the fact is that, repeatedly, this requirement that Congress raise the debt ceiling if more debt is to be incurred has been used as a vehicle to get laws passed that tried to rein in the irresponsible spending that has been going on for many decades.

I believe it was Morgenthau, Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of Treasury, who wrote in 1940: After 8 years, we have spent more money than anyone ever in history, and we have nothing to show for it but more debt. That was quite an admission, that the New Deal was a total failure, and it actually was.

It wasn't until World War II actually ended the Depression in America that we came out of the Great Depression. It was certainly none of the socialist policies that the United States began engaging in.

I know just since I have been here in January of 2005, in 2006, as I recall, we were having debate. Republicans were in the majority. My friends, Mr. Speaker, on the Democratic side of the room over here were repeatedly making the point about how irresponsible it was for Republicans to be spending—I think at the time it was around \$160 billion—more than we were bringing in to the Federal Treasury.

I agreed. Actually, we should have balanced the budget back in 2005 and 2006. We were only \$160 billion, at one point, away from doing that.

I think that was part of the reason the Democrats continued beating up on Republicans for overspending what was coming in, \$160 billion or so.

Little would I ever dream that, after being pummeled verbally by my Democratic friends, as a Republican spending \$160 billion more or so than we had coming in, that those same friends would do the unthinkable and increase that debt in one year more than 10 times the \$160 billion.

You would have thought that perhaps they would remember some of those

things they used to say with such vitriol right here on the House floor about how spending more than \$160 billion more than we were taking in was so irresponsible.

You would have thought they might have remembered some of those because, when you say one thing one year and then you get the majority and you are 10 times worse than what you accused the other side of—more than 10 times worse—some people feel a little sensitive.

We have to be careful because we certainly don't want to violate the House rules on what we say here. But, you know, some people feel guilty when they accuse somebody else of doing something they are 10 times more guilty of.

But, apparently, that guilt didn't exist. If it did, it was short lived and didn't prevent even my friend from Maryland from coming to the floor today and again launching the inappropriate statement that it is Republicans that keep bringing us to the brink.

I realize that it was our own Speaker that went on the Jay Leno show and said that Republicans shut down the government, but, you know, sometimes he is engaged in activity that keeps him from realizing exactly what is going on.

But if you go back and look at the actual RECORD, September 29, September 30 of 2013, the record is very clear. There was one party in Congress that was trying to be responsible, that was trying to rein in spending, that was trying not to shut the government down, was compromising against ourselves repeatedly, and it was the Republican Party.

We didn't get a lot of help across the aisle. In fact, what we had from the other end of the hall here, from Majority Leader REID, was an all-out effort to shut down the government. And that is a fact as to who shut down the government. If anyone bothers to go look, yes, you will see we had a spending bill that gave HARRY REID everything he and the President wanted plus some.

It was hard for a guy like me to vote for that. But, yes, in the initial bill, we defunded ObamaCare. Why wouldn't we? We know. We hear from constituents how bad that is, how they have lost their insurance, lost their doctor, they can't get the medicine they did before. Instead of paying \$105 now they are paying \$100 for prescriptions. We are hearing all those things. So why wouldn't we vote to do what we believe is best for our constituents? We did.

We voted to fund everything they wanted plus some, but defund ObamaCare. Yes, that is what we passed first. HARRY REID would not bring it to the floor for a vote. So we compromised against ourselves because there was no negotiating.

I believe—and, Mr. Speaker, this is just my thought—it sure seemed there was plenty of evidence to show that HARRY REID believed the conventional wisdom here in Washington, that if