

These are immigrants who have done everything the right way: They are here legally; they work hard; they pay their taxes; and they have made themselves irreplaceable contributors to our communities.

Their immigration status has been extended by every President from Bill Clinton to Donald Trump. These would be undocumented citizens of our very own creation.

If you need the human argument, hear it from my constituent, Michael: “Going back to Liberia is not an option for me. My only brother, who we were not able to bring to America, died in Liberia a few years ago. My parents and siblings all live here in the United States.

“I was recently accepted into a doctoral program in education. My whole life is here. This is my home. Liberia is a fragile country still recovering from a decades-long war.”

Or Matthew, who could lose his older brother: “It affects me deeply as a U.S. citizen. This is someone I look up to. If he was to up and leave the U.S., that would be very difficult for him, for me. He has a daughter. I cannot take on that responsibility of being my niece’s caretaker.

“I cannot even imagine the nightmare that this will create in my community. This is not just about me and my family; it is about our community. We are going to be losing friends and family. I am not ready for this.”

We have the legislation. We have a fix ready to go to move DED holders to TPS for 3 years while we pass a more comprehensive fix.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say to my colleagues, ask yourselves: Are we here to make a difference? Are you here to make people’s lives better? Are you here to help business owners and workers, or are you here to keep playing politics with people’s lives?

Let’s rise to the occasion and be better than that and finally, at long last, give our Liberian community the peace of mind that they so richly deserve.

KINETIC KIDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to spotlight Kinetic Kids, an organization in my hometown that helps more than 2,800 children with special needs in San Antonio, Schertz, and New Braunfels.

A few weeks ago, I joined over 470 Texans in the cold and the wet to support these local children with special needs.

In 2001, Kinetic Kids was founded by Tracey Fontenot and Kacey Wernli, pediatric physical therapists who saw that children with special needs needed more exercise. They needed motivation; they needed camaraderie; they needed the joy that comes from being part of a team.

I am proud to be part of their team, and I will always be here to cheer them on.

Congratulations on a great event, and thank you for the important work you do in the community.

FIGHTING THE BUREAUCRACY

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my team and I are committed to fighting the bureaucracy for folks I represent across the 23rd Congressional District of Texas who can’t battle it on their own.

Recently, my team helped Kinney County in south Texas cut through Federal red tape to secure \$4 million in funding and spare the county from financial ruin. The county was being punished simply for following orders, but due to conflicting information from Washington bureaucrats regarding how much to pay employees at the county detention center, they were told they owed the Federal Government \$4 million.

Once my office heard about this issue, we worked relentlessly with the U.S. Marshals Service to ensure these costs were covered.

I thank Kinney County Judge Tully Shahan for informing me of this issue and the Department of Justice for working with my office to resolve this situation.

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Joyce Meyer once said that “teachers can change lives with just the right mix of chalk and challenges.”

For Amistad National Recreation Area Education Specialist Lisa Nielsen, her chalk is a trail, a shoreline, and a pair of binoculars. The 28-year National Park Service veteran has created several innovative and interactive programs that have educated tens of thousands of Texans I represent of all ages on the importance of conservation and maintaining our south and west Texas natural treasures for future generations to come.

I am proud to rise today to honor Lisa and all of the women who are making an impact each day across the 23rd Congressional District of Texas as we continue to celebrate Women’s History Month.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise out of a deep concern for our country and its ability to sustain investments in growing our economy and making opportunities available for our people.

Our country suffered the longest government shutdown in its history just a few months ago. For 35 days, 800,000 Federal employees and their families were forced to go without paychecks. Our economy was burdened by uncertainty and a lack of confidence in our leaders.

That shutdown was the direct result of the Trump administration’s confrontational approach to governing and its irresponsible decision to insist

on a position that Congress had already rejected.

I would have hoped that they learned from that experience, but it appears that that is not the case. Now President Trump and Mick Mulvaney—a former colleague of ours who voted not only to shut down the government, but against the wishes of the Republican Speaker, voted against opening government up—have sent to Congress a budget proposal that ramps up confrontation and sets up an even more difficult impasse.

Their budget proposal rejects 6 years of governing consensus enshrined in three 2-year budget agreements to raise the caps put in place by the Budget Control Act in a bipartisan way and according to the principles of parity, fairness, and equality.

Adhering to that path and working together to raise the caps responsibly and at the same rate for defense and nondefense investments would be, in my view, the best way to ensure that appropriations for next year proceed on a bipartisan basis so that we can do the job of funding the government and avert another unnecessary, dangerous, and harmful shutdown in October.

The administration’s proposal of using the overseas contingency operations account to avoid negotiating with Congress on responsibly dealing with the BCA caps and hiding increases in defense funding is a massive gimmick.

Who said that? The Republican majority said that a number of years ago.

It is more than just an accounting sleight of hand, with real implications for our national security planning and long-term strategy.

The OCO account, again, overseas contingency operations account, was created to fund imminent defense priorities outside of the normal Pentagon budget planning cycle.

Now Mr. Mulvaney wants to use OCO at the rate of some \$175 billion-plus as if Afghanistan, in which we have been involved for some 17 years, is a contingency. It is not a contingency. It is an operating expense.

If OCO were used in the way the administration intends, it could cripple multiyear planning by our military by calling into question every penny shifted into that account in future years.

It is also disingenuous for them to demand that Congress pour money into defense through what Mr. Mulvaney himself has called a “backdoor slush fund.” That is what he called OCO in 2015 when he was a Member of Congress.

And now that same Mr. Mulvaney, the Acting Chief of Staff and, frankly, I believe, also, the Acting OMB Director, proposes to use what he called a backdoor slush fund without acknowledging the need to compromise elsewhere on the ledger.

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This is fiscal irresponsibility at its worst, because it is a veneer of concern

for fiscal discipline used to hide the ugly truth of fiscal recklessness and brinksmanship. The Trump-Mulvaney budget is, to put it bluntly, a fraud.

It is the Congress' job to move ahead with good faith efforts to agree on raising the caps. We have a procedure called sequester that, if we do not amend the caps, will go into effect 15 days after we adjourn this session and cut to levels that no Member of Congress, in my view, believes is reasonable, rational, or responsible. It would automatically occur if we do not pass a caps bill.

That is indicative that there is bipartisan agreement, which has happened over the last 6 years in 2-year cycles, that the caps required by the sequester bill were irrational. I think there is a consensus. So, as opposed to confrontation, and to avoid a shutdown in October, we ought to come to an agreement. The President, of course, needs to be part of that agreement, because he would need to sign legislation amending the sequester act.

Appropriators need guidance, also, to begin the hard work of writing funding bills. They need to know what the agreed spending level will be. We call it a 302(a). What it really means is: How much money are you going to spend on discretionary spending for defense and nondefense objectives?

Now, I am an appropriator. I haven't served on the committee for some years, because I am in the leadership, but I am on leave. I understand as well as anyone how important it is to have agreed-upon top-line numbers in order for the committee to do its work effectively on a bipartisan basis.

I will tell my Republican colleagues, as I have told my Democratic colleagues, it is my intention, as majority of the House of Representatives, to provide for the passage of the appropriations bills through the House of Representatives by the end of June.

The Budget Act requires us to do it by June 30. We have never done it. We haven't done it on our side; the Republicans haven't done it on their side. What inevitably happens is we don't get our work done, and we had a shutdown last year and this year of historic proportions and of historic cost and of historic undermining of confidence in the United States of America here and around the world.

We need to get to work; we need to get to work together; and we need to get this job done. Let's strive to achieve that which I know is achievable.

I have talked to Ms. GRANGER. I have talked to the ranking member of the Budget Committee here in the House, STEVE WOMACK, a good friend of mine. I have talked to Senator ENZI, the chairman in the Senate. And I have talked to Senator McCONNELL. I haven't heard from anybody who doesn't think we need to get caps established so that we can do our work for the American people and reestablish confidence in the rational oper-

ations of the Congress. It won't be easy, but it is necessary.

Let us not delude ourselves into believing, just a few weeks removed from the longest government shutdown in our history, that the administration's shortsighted approach will lead to anything but another shutdown at the end of the fiscal year. Divided government need not be confrontational govern-

I tell people on a regular basis that the Congress is less than the sum of its parts. What do I mean by that? I mean the individual Members have integrity and a willingness to work together, but, as a body, we have found ourselves unable or unwilling to do just that. We are less than the sum of our parts, less than the sum of our Members' intellect and willingness to act responsibly.

We can disagree on details, but we must try to reach agreement on the caps in order to assist appropriators, promote fiscal responsibility, reduce uncertainty, and protect the ability of our military to plan its budget over the long term with confidence.

If OCO is relied upon, in terms of billions of dollars, they cannot do that. It is undermining our national security, as well as undermining the ability to meet our domestic needs.

The Trump-Mulvaney budget proposal was, sadly, a missed opportunity and more of a fiscally irresponsible charade.

I say to my friends on both sides of the aisle: Let us strive to not miss our own opportunity to meet in good faith and produce a budget caps agreement that promotes fiscal sanity, upholds the principle of parity, and allows us to invest in a better future for our country. Certainly, we ought to expect no less of ourselves, and, certainly, that is what our constituents expect of us.

Then, let us proceed to achieve a realistic, fiscally responsible path toward a real, sustainable budget agreement worthy of our duty to our country and constituents and to future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to come together, to reason together, and to establish a plan to proceed, not just for this year, but for a decade to come, that is fiscally responsible, meets the challenges that we have, and seizes the opportunities that are in front of us.

DIGNITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND AMERICAN VALUE OF WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a large working-class family in central South Dakota. I suppose there were some years when we were more poor than we were working class. But I want to make it clear, my parents worked hard every single day. So did I, and so did my brother and my sisters.

Even with that hard work, there were times when we needed help from gov-

ernment to get by. I am who I am today because of the experiences of both welfare and hard work.

Government assistance can help meet people's basic needs. We all know that. But on its own, welfare alone means surviving just barely on the edges. Welfare can meet short-term basic needs, but education and work—yes, education and work—they deliver long-term hope and dignity and purpose and opportunity.

That brings me, today, to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP. Many of us call it food stamps. I know this program well from a number of personal and professional experiences.

Most of you probably know that, under Federal law, able-bodied non-seniors—people between the ages of 18 and 50—who don't have children at home are required to work or train or volunteer or go to school for 20 hours a week to receive their benefits.

To most Americans, these work requirements are common sense, just as they were when they were passed, in 1986, into law in a bipartisan manner. They are common sense because work isn't punishment. Work is opportunity.

Unfortunately, over the years, some States have used gimmicks and loopholes to trigger waivers. Those waivers water down the work requirements that we have been talking about. These, I am sure, well-intentioned but misguided efforts, mean that one-third of our country lives in an area with no work requirements.

Today, despite a record-high 7 million job openings, we have 2.7 million SNAP recipients who can work but who aren't. There is a better way, I am happy to say, and I want to tell you about it.

A few years ago, because of State waivers, too many Arkansans were not experiencing the kind of dignity and opportunity that comes from work, so Arkansas changed course. They put their work requirements back into place, and the results were breathtaking. They were impressive.

People who left the program because they didn't work or didn't train or didn't volunteer ended up better off than they were on welfare. Necessity pushed them into a job path that brought them more resources than welfare alone could ever provide.

With all of those people moving off the welfare rolls and into the workplace, they were earning money, and the State saw its revenues go up.

That kind of success can, and is, happening elsewhere. When Maine reimplemented work requirements, incomes of former enrollees more than doubled and caseloads declined by 90 percent.

These results show all of us how important it is for us to close these loopholes. USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue should be commended for his efforts to do just that through a proposed rule, making sure that food stamp recipients are encouraged and rewarded for their work.