

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 government.

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 nonseniors—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.

I want to make very clear, these actions are not about taking aid away from areas that are struggling with high unemployment. There are clear exceptions for those areas. Instead, this is about prompting more States and more citizens to experience the successes that have been experienced by Maine and by Arkansas.

We all know that every one of us does better, every single one of us does better, when we are pushed, when we are moved past our comfort level. Growth requires effort. That is true in athletics; that is true in academics; that is true in raising children; and that is true in all other areas of life as well. Denying millions of able-bodied SNAP recipients that push, that growth, also denies them a chance at a better future.

In States where work requirements have been reinstated, a clearer path out of poverty has reemerged. We have to do that elsewhere. We have to do that everywhere.

I close today, Mr. Speaker, by saying that work has dignity; work is opportunity; and work is an American value.

CELEBRATING VAISAKHI

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARDER of California). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the Sikh community in celebrating Vaisakhi.

On April 14, Sikhs around the world, including thousands and thousands in California's San Joaquin Valley, will celebrate the Vaisakhi festival. This week, we welcome members of the Congressional Sikh Caucus to the Hill to participate in those celebrations.

The festival marks the new year and the beginning of the spring season for the global Sikh community.

The date of the Vaisakhi festival has tremendous significance in Sikhism. The festival commemorates the year 1699, when Sikhism emerged as a collective faith in what is now modern-day India.

It also celebrates both the birthday of the 10th Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh, and the foundation of the Khalsa Panth, the Sikh brotherhood.

Sikhs across the globe celebrate this day with enthusiasm and joy. I know they do in the rich San Joaquin Valley that is home to so many who are farmers, businesspeople, and community leaders. I have the honor to represent them and to celebrate with them.

This festival models what all cultures strive for: strong communities coming together to celebrate progress, renew its dedication to helping one another, and peace.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in celebrating this special tradition in the Sikh community.

WOMEN TRAILBLAZERS

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, every March, we come together to honor trailblazing women who have come be-

fore us, who have made a difference throughout the history of our country and throughout the world, and those who continue to pave the way for the next generation, those who have broken the glass ceiling, and those who are role models.

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The unsung heroines of these courageous pioneering women continue to always make a difference.

The role model for me, and one who I must say made the incredible difference, was our mother, Lena Cordoza Costa, a daughter of immigrants, born before the Depression, raised during it, having to quit school as a freshman in high school to help raise her seven siblings because her father had been injured in an agricultural accident.

She went on with our father to be—as Tom Brokaw noted—perhaps America's greatest generation, striving with the values of hard work, of teaching us to treat others as we would want to be treated ourselves, and values of common sense.

As a young boy, learning that, Jim, you know, the truth is the truth, and that you should always never forget those who are less fortunate.

After our father passed away, my mother in her mid-70s quietly decided to go back to school and to get her GED. She didn't need to. She was a successful business person; she was an artist, a voracious reader, and a competitive bridge player.

And when she got her GED, she told my sister and me. We said, Mom, why didn't you tell us?

She says, Well, I wasn't sure I would do well.

Our mother did—everything that she did, she did well, and continued to serve as a role model.

Later on, the high school in which she had to quit as a freshman, at a 100th anniversary of that high school, asked her to come—with myself—and they presented her her high school diploma.

She was so proud of that high school diploma. And today, it sits on my desk. And I show students that you can be whatever you want to be if you have the proper role model and encouragement.

It is women who are guiding our Nation towards a more equal future—like our mother—who make a difference.

Today, I am proud to be a Member of the most diverse Congress in the United States' history, with over 102 women in this body, women serving the people's House.

We honor their sacrifice, their brilliance, and the strength of their service for our Nation.

JOE BIDEN: DECADES OF BEING WRONG

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, former Vice President Joe Biden has been in the

news a lot lately, along with a predictable narrative from the Washington know-it-all chorus and their mainstream media partners that he has a distinguished record and reputation as an expert on foreign policy.

How very "Washington" it is to assume that with his long Washington resume, especially his chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that Joe Biden is a foreign policy genius.

Nice guy that he is, let's look at the facts.

Because America's national security depends on America's wise choice of our next President, I want to quote the great Charles Krauthammer, who more accurately described Mr. Biden's record back in 2012.

The Vice President over the last 30 years holds the American record for being wrong on the most issues in Foreign Affairs ever. And the list starts with the nuclear freeze in the early eighties against Thatcher and Reagan, which is one of the follies of the era. He supported it.

He was against aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, which in the end brought democracy and ended the Sandinista rule at the time.

He was against Reagan's expansion of the defense budget, which bankrupted the Soviet Union and led to the end of the Soviet Empire.

He was against Reagan on strategic defenses, which is the big advantage that we have now in missile defense.

And look at where he was on Iraq. He opposed the first Iraq war, the Gulf war that liberated Kuwait, that everyone agrees was a good thing.

He supported the second Iraq war, which he, not I, say was a terrible mistake. And then when the surge happened, he opposed the surge in Iraq which rescued a losing war and ended in our leaving with our heads held high and some promise of the future.

He seems to be the Herbert Hoover of American foreign policy. And for him to be the spokesman for the Obama Administration on these affairs, I think is quite ironic.

It is not just conservative commentators who can see through the illusion of Vice President Biden's foreign policy judgment.

Robert Gates, former CIA director and Defense Secretary for George W. Bush and Barack Obama, had this to say about Biden in his book, "Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War":

"I think he has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades."

I rarely, if ever, agree with Barack Obama, and I am glad to see our country is now back on the road to a strong foreign policy. But I will give President Obama credit for wisely disregarding Vice President Biden's counsel on, arguably, the greatest achievement of Obama's presidency: his authorization in 2011 of the raid by America's SEAL Teams that killed Osama Bin Laden.

As Vice President Biden, himself, recalled to a group of Democrats in 2016, President Obama asked for a final recommendation from his national security team, and he asked, Joe, what do you think?