

I have the privilege of serving as the ranking member of the normally bipartisan Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee. However, this year, my Republican colleagues plan to slash medical care for toxic-exposed veterans, rolling back a promise this body made just last year when we passed the bipartisan PACT Act into law.

The PACT Act created the Toxic Exposures Fund, which is a pledge in law to provide a dedicated funding source to ensure the care related to toxic exposures will always be set aside and not have to compete with other veterans' priorities at VA and other agencies.

As you can see in this chart from the Republicans' VA budget report, President Biden honored this promise by carefully calculating the need and proposing \$20.3 billion for the TEF in his fiscal year 2024 budget. The Republicans' bill only provides \$5.5 billion, a quarter of the request. Not only do they shortchange the TEF by \$14.7 in 2024, but Republicans completely eliminate it, they zeroed it out in 2025.

Republicans can protest all they want, but their broken promise to our veterans is right here in black and white. We must keep our promise to our veterans, just like Joe Biden and the Democrats do.

REPUBLICAN FAILURE TO ACT ON DEBT CEILING

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because after weeks of pointing fingers on the debt ceiling negotiations, House Republicans have finally shown their true colors.

It is Republican leadership that controls this Chamber. It is Speaker MCCARTHY who controls the floor. Yet, instead of working overtime to make sure that we don't default on our Nation's debt and send the economy into a tailspin and stop the benefits of millions of Americans, Members of Congress are going home this weekend.

The interesting thing is that many of these folks, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, are the same people that clowned me on Twitter for not having the best credit after my campaign and being denied an apartment here in D.C.

Imagine the hypocrisy of poor-shaming working people for trying to pay off their debts, and then turn around and refuse to pay the country's debt to pay for tax cuts for billionaires. It is distasteful, disgraceful, and we have to do better.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

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

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, on a day like this, the last day of the week when Members get to vote by 11 o'clock, and then they start running out that door, I used to be envious.

Today, I am actually astonished; astonished at the problem before us and that people have decided to take a break for Memorial Day. When I go home, I have to go home and face 700 families, veterans and their families, and their question is going to be: What is going to happen to our benefits?

You might have to fill out extra paperwork to get it. People will lose access to their food benefits and their health benefits. Teachers, firemen, first responders, and police officers, these are the individuals who are going to lose access to the benefits that they usually get either from Social Security, from their VA checks, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should all come back tomorrow and continue the work we have before us. It is too important to allow us to go home.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today we are in the midst of a manufactured crisis that would have very real devastating consequences for the American people.

The extreme MAGA Republicans have taken the American economy hostage and presented the country with two disastrous choices: default or draconian spending cuts.

A default would erase millions of jobs, trigger a recession, devastate retirement accounts, and increase borrowing costs.

On the other hand, the cuts being promoted by the extreme MAGA Republicans would take Medicaid away from millions, snatch food assistance away from families, and even slash veterans' healthcare.

We need five moderate Republicans to sign the petition. New York State sent five moderate Republicans to the House.

Where are they today?

New York State, please take notice. When we needed them, they were not here doing right by the American people.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

(Ms. MENG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my Republican colleagues—although I don't see them—to put people over politics. I invite five of my Republican colleagues to simply sign the petition to raise the debt ceiling.

This will directly impact my Queens' families if action is not taken. It would kill over 7,000 jobs in my district, jeopardize Social Security payments for

over 85,000 families, threaten retirement savings of over 100,000 people.

This Memorial Day weekend, it is not enough to march in parades and post pictures on social media. Republicans are risking benefits for over 300,000 people in my district alone that rely on Medicare, Medicaid, or veterans' health coverage.

Smiling and posing for pictures with veterans as they work to cut veterans' benefits and lay off first responders, that is unacceptable.

We just need five Republican colleagues to save our country.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

(Ms. SALINAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SALINAS. Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe it has come to this. It is astonishing and, frankly, angering that Republicans have chosen to take Memorial Day weekend off, when they spent the last 3 weeks working overtime to shortchange our veterans and military members.

Let's be clear about what has happened here. Republicans are walking away because they can't get their way because President Biden won't cave to their anti-servicemembers and anti-veteran demands.

Instead, we are teetering on the verge of a default; a default that would disproportionately harm our Nation's heroes.

When the government runs out of money on June 1, guess whose benefits are on the chopping block?

Veterans.

It is all because Republicans decided to play with fire without stopping to think who might get burned. Our servicemembers and their families deserve so much better. We all do.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

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

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I know I am new here, but I came here to work—to work across the aisle and to actually get things done. But here we are on the eve of our country's default, and my Republican colleagues aren't even here to work with.

This isn't difficult. The United States Government contracted for and received goods and services. Now it must pay for them. We must pay our bills.

Default would be catastrophic for the people in Louisville, Kentucky. New car loans would go up by \$800. Mortgages for new homes would increase by \$38,000. There are 317,000 families, seniors, and veterans who are at risk of losing their benefits, not to mention the long-term damage to our currency and reputation around the world.

The alternative proposed by extreme Republicans is that we slash benefits to

our veterans and to needy kids instead of closing tax loopholes for billionaires and megacorporations. This is fiscally irresponsible, and it is morally wrong.

Do better. Sign the discharge petition and get this done to save our economy.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

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

Mr. CASAR. Mr. Speaker, I am GREG CASAR. I am a brand new Member of Congress representing Texas, and I am standing over here on the Republican side of the aisle; not because I am a Republican, I am a Democrat. I want the American people to see that there aren't any Republicans in the seats here behind me on the eve of our default.

Where are the Republicans?

This is not a simple political disagreement. This is a dire crisis being imposed on the working people of America.

The American people could lose millions of jobs. You could lose your house. Your kids could lose their jobs. People could lose their savings. They aren't even here.

They want to burn the House down and blame the firefighters for the flames. They are listening to Donald Trump who is saying: Do a default. That is shameful. It is dangerous. There is no patriotism in this. There is no morality in this.

We just need five Republicans to sign the discharge petition with us to save the American people. We need the American people to speak up about why the Republicans are not in these empty chairs.

The American people can save us. The Democrats are aligned and ready to avoid a default and make sure that billionaires pay their fair share and folks aren't kicked off their healthcare or deprived of food.

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DEBT CEILING CRISIS

(Ms. TLAIB asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, where are our Republican colleagues? They are in charge in this Chamber. They manufactured this crisis. If any of my neighbors left work before noon, they would be fired.

The country is on a deadline, and the Republicans that are in charge in this Chamber just simply left. The real mind-boggling part is that these same MAGA Republicans that manufactured this crisis voted not once, not twice, but three times under the previously forever-impeached President with no issues.

Republicans love to talk about fiscal this, spending that, but not when it

comes to tax cuts to mega-billionaires or when it comes to funding bombs and wars that our country and our world doesn't need.

They are so completely disconnected with the American people and what the lives of the American people are like. A delay in Social Security checks would hurt our seniors. Creating instability of whether or not they are going to have healthcare coverage next week is just simply wrong.

A default on our debt for the first time in our history would be devastating for the American people, and they just left.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

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

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because the Republicans have skipped town. They are leaving behind a ransom note on the full faith and credit of the United States. One Republican Congressman said: "My conservative colleagues don't feel like we should negotiate with our hostage," but the real hostages are American seniors, veterans, and working families.

Donald Trump said: "If they don't give you massive cuts, you are going to have to do a default," but that is not what he said back in 2019. Back then, he said the debt ceiling was, "a very sacred thing in our country that we can never play with."

He was right then.

Instead of cutting costs on the backs of working people, we should require billionaires and corporations to pay their fair share, but Republicans in Congress would rather put veterans' healthcare on the chopping block. Most Americans, most Republicans, don't support that. Let's get serious and get back to work.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

(Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the children in Georgia's Fighting 5th Congressional District at risk of going hungry in the face of this cruel Republican default.

Extreme MAGA Republicans are proposing cuts to 200,000 Head Start slots and 180,000 childcare slots nationwide. You all, that is more than 300,000 families who will be thrown into a devastating bind.

When families don't have access to care, they can't get to work, making it harder to put food on the table every day. This is a real-life dilemma facing parents like Chelsea and Dorian in Clayton County, Georgia, two mamas who are looking for jobs, but facing one major roadblock: Childcare.

Now, extreme MAGA Republicans are threatening to make their childcare

search even harder. That, or risk a disastrous default on our debt. Republicans are headed home for barbecues and hanging out with their families making their priorities clear.

A great speaker once said: "Sometimes you have to take a punch and give a punch for the children." You all, I am ready to fight for a solution on behalf of our children, and I am waiting for my Republican colleagues who are brave enough to fight alongside me for the children putting people over politics.

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

(Ms. STRICKLAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to fight for our Nation's servicemembers and push back against the extreme MAGA agenda wish list that will yank the rug out from under American families, small businesses, and our enlisted military members.

Pay for our soldiers, benefits for our veterans, military readiness, and more are in serious jeopardy. We risk America's health and safety, and we risk hurting America's middle class all because the MAGA wing continues to control the GOP.

This manufactured crisis jeopardizes national security and will ruin our economy. My colleagues across the aisle, who clearly aren't here right now, must choose. Will they crash the economy on purpose? Will they destroy jobs and American livelihoods, or will they stand up for our troops, veterans, families, and seniors? There is a word for people who take hostages, "terrorists."

DEBT CEILING CRISIS

(Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the Republican plan to destroy our Nation's economy. Right now hundreds of Republican Members of Congress have rushed out of town to go on vacation with their friends and family. Democrats are here ready to work.

Americans are facing the reality of losing their retirement savings, jobs, and healthcare. Here are just some of the extreme demands that House Republicans have made: They want to cut 100,000 jobs for teachers; they want to put health insurance at risk for 21 million Americans; they want to put food assistance at risk for 1 million Americans.

This is cruel and shameful.

Let's be clear: House Republicans want to tank the economy and they want to give tax cuts to billionaires and large corporations. We have a default on our debt coming because House Republicans would rather be on vacation than get to work.