

table to work out immigration reform as soon as possible.

I have suggested that President Obama set up that big table at Camp David and invite leaders from both parties to discuss how we forge the coalition to pass comprehensive immigration reform. I think after the Election Day wake-up call, there are more and more of us willing to come to that table and negotiate, including friends in the Republican Party.

We have heard from Republican leaders who want to be at that table. I know some Republicans want to come to the table because they want the immigration issue off the table. They want it off the table because they are worried about Democrats running the table in statewide and national elections for the foreseeable future.

But listen, whatever your reason for coming to the table, please come. Together, we can fight for justice for immigrants. Together, we can reestablish the rule of law. Together, we can make immigration one of the greatest and most defining aspects of American society instead of something that divides us. Together, we can make Americans see that we can work together—Republicans and Democrats—as Americans first. So, please, join us and do what's right for this great Nation of ours.

THANKSGIVING

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

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, in just about a week or so, we're going to be sitting down at tables celebrating Thanksgiving and eating turkey and getting a little sleepy maybe afterwards. But as we think about Thanksgiving and we think about the holiday of Thanksgiving Day, it may be interesting and it may add a little richness to that holiday if we remember how it came about and what we have to be thankful for.

There were originally a group of people that came to this country on the Mayflower, and a number of them onboard had the dream of building a new kind of country, something that Europe had never seen before. They believed that they would take principles that they found in the Bible and that they would apply them in a new way and create a new structure of what a country could look like.

So they came to America. And after landing, within the first 4 months, half of them had died. And you would think they would pretty much give up on a dream at that point. The Mayflower had stayed to give them some protection and shelter, so it was in the early springtime that this group of the people that were left—about 55 of the Pilgrims—had to make a decision. You could think of it as actually voting, only voting with their feet.

They were approached by the captain of the Mayflower, and the captain of the Mayflower said, Things aren't going so well. I've lost half my crew,

and half of you are dead, and we are going to be heading back to England. And I recommend that you get on the Mayflower because you don't have adequate supplies, and you don't have really a knowledge of how you're going to be able to deal with the wilderness that you are living in.

So it was that the Mayflower's captain gave the commands, the old seaweed-covered anchor cable was hauled onboard, the yardarms were trimmed to the wind, and first large and then small, the Mayflower disappears over the horizon. The wind is blowing through the trees, and 55 courageous men, women, and children stood on the beach.

Why did they stay? They stayed because they believed in the dream that they had in their hearts, of making a new nation. And by staying, they gave us some things that we should be thankful for, not just the Thanksgiving turkey.

First of all, they came with the idea that civil government and church government were separate types of governments, and the civil government shouldn't run the church or the other way around.

□ 1020

So they were what was called in those days "separatists" because they wanted to separate from the King of England who was running the Church.

So the first thing they gave us was the concept of separating civil and church governments. But the second thing that happened was, when they arrived in Massachusetts, they were blown off course by the storms; and so they had no government. So a group of free people, under God, wrote a document called the Mayflower Compact. It starts: "In the name of God," and it goes on to say to frame just and equal laws.

So what happened was a group of free people, under God, created a civil government, and that of course was the foundation of our Declaration of Independence. And all of American civil government we can trace back to these courageous 55 people who stayed on the beach.

So as you're having your turkey, think about how they gave us the idea of separating civil and church governments, and also how it was that they gave us the idea that our Creator gives us life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Have a great Thanksgiving. God bless you.

OLD REPUBLICAN REFRAIN

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the Republican refrain is quite familiar: these tax increases will cause economic devastation, a recession, millions of lost jobs. Is that today's fiscal cliff? No. Actually, that's the Republicans in oppos-

ing the Clinton-era tax increases, 1993, opposed by every Republican.

Did their predicted doom and gloom come true? Well, kind of not, actually. We balanced the budget, we paid down debt, and we had 3.8 percent unemployment while the millionaires and billionaires were paying a slightly higher rate of taxes.

Fast forward to today's debate: restore the Clinton-era tax rates to millionaires and billionaires. Republicans have dusted off the nineties rhetoric—economic collapse, devastation, at least 700,000 jobs. The job-creator millionaires and billionaires, they're living on the edge. They have no discretionary income. Any modest increase in taxes to them will stop them from making productive, job-creating investments, like the hundreds of millions of dollars they spent on super PACs in the last election to try and elect a President and a Congress that will bend to their will and lower their taxes even further while cutting middle-income families' programs that are essential, like Social Security and student financial aid.

Now, after their impassioned defense of tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, Republicans do have a second priority—they're not a one-note party, so you've got to give them credit for that—and that is to somehow kill Social Security, which they've never supported. They think it makes people lazy. Well, there are millionaires and billionaires that don't ever expect they will need it, so they don't care.

And under the guise of deficit reduction, the Republicans are saying, well, we've either got to privatize Social Security, got to increase the retirement age, or we've got to reduce the already inadequate COLA that seniors get. Let's chain the CPI. That's their refrain: we must cut entitlements. Well, guess what, Social Security has never contributed one penny to the deficit or the debt of the United States of America. It is a program which pays for itself.

So why this single-minded focus on cutting Social Security? Yeah, it does have a projected problem of about 23 percent to pay full benefits starting in 2036. So, yeah, there's a long-term problem; but, actually, that's quite easily fixed. All we have to do is close the tax loophole. And maybe we agree there.

Here's a loophole I'd like to close: Why does a millionaire pay one-tenth the rate of taxes to Social Security of a cop on the beat, or a soldier in the field, or a teacher in the classroom? I don't know. That's what the law says. Well, how about we lift the cap and have the millionaires and billionaires pay the same percent of their income to Social Security as cops and teachers and soldiers in the military. Seems fair to me. There's a loophole we could close. And that would give Social Security assets adequate to pay 100 percent of benefits for at least 75 years into the future, as far as the actuaries will