

Prevention and Intervention Act of 2012 now.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Ms. HAHN. As we race toward this fiscal cliff, we are faced with a number of looming problems, not the least of which is the threat of a crushing middle class tax hike. If we fail to act, middle class Americans could see their next tax bills rise by more than \$3,000, and while there will be much to disagree on in the coming negotiations, no one wants this to happen. A tax hike of this size on the middle class would be a terrible burden on families who are just beginning to recover from this Great Recession.

With congressional approval at an all-time low, we cannot pass up this opportunity to prove to the American people that we can work together. President Obama's legislation to extend the middle class tax cuts has already been passed by the Senate, and it now depends on us. We should embrace this opportunity to vote on something we can agree on and bring this legislation to the floor.

I've already signed this petition. I urge all of my colleagues to come down to the House floor right now and sign this discharge petition. Bring this to the floor. Let's give the American people a real holiday present.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last month, the American people went to the polls and delivered Congress a resounding message—that Republicans and Democrats should be working together to solve our Nation's problems. Although our constituents have made it clear that the time for partisan games is over and despite overwhelming support for the idea, the House Republican leaders are refusing to hold a vote on extending tax cuts for middle class families. Instead, they plan to keep holding them hostage to tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

So, today, we have filed a discharge petition to force a vote on the Middle Class Tax Cut Act so that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses don't have to worry about their taxes going up at the end of this year. It will ensure that 100 percent of Americans will see a tax cut for the first \$250,000 of family income.

The Senate has already passed an equivalent bill, but today the House is still standing in the way of tax relief for middle class families. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the right thing for working families: force the House Republican leadership to hold a vote on the middle class tax

cut bill by signing this discharge petition and by forcing the bill to the floor so that we can do right by the American people.

TIME TO VOTE ON MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the fiscal cliff, Republicans and Democrats have one major thing in common—we both believe tax rates shouldn't go up on 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses. The difference is that Democrats won't use middle class families as a bargaining chip.

Today, House Republicans have a chance to show that they are more serious about making good policy than making political hostages of the middle class. We have filed a discharge petition to bring to the floor legislation that preserves tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses. It has already passed the Senate. The President says he will sign it immediately.

With our deadline less than a month away, the clock is ticking, and if House Republican leadership is wondering when in our pressing schedule we might be able to fully consider this legislation, they might rethink their astonishing decision to cancel House business on Thursday—one of the few days Congress has left in the current session.

Mr. Speaker, we know what we must do, and it might come as a surprise that we actually agree on a solution. All that's left is to vote. I urge my colleagues to sign the discharge petition and to vote immediately to keep middle class tax rates from going up.

THE POWER TO PULL AMERICA BACK FROM THE FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in the well of the House, a few feet away from me, we have the power as Members to actually pull this country back from a fiscal cliff which endangers an economic recovery and threatens middle class families all across the country.

The good news is there right now. Consumer confidence is up, car sales are up, even the housing market is making a recovery. If we do not, however, act to sign this discharge petition and to protect middle class families, we will go backwards as a Nation.

It will also solve three-quarters of the sequestration challenge that the Budget Control Act still has sitting out there for January 2. If we sign this discharge petition and get this bill passed, three-quarters of that problem will be solved: we will protect Medicare, we will protect our military, we will pro-

tect education, and it will reduce the size of the challenge to avoid sequestration.

All Members—Republicans and Democrats—should come together, sign this discharge petition, and help the American people get this economy back on its feet.

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MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, the American people have spoken. In this last election, they said to all of us: start to work together; have an agenda that serves the people of our country.

We've all heard the expression that time is fleeting. Never before has that expression been more important in my 14 years here in the House of Representatives. We have very few working days and even fewer days this week because of the House schedule put before us by the leadership of the House to actually work on the people's business and pass a middle class tax cut that will affect 98 percent of working Americans. Ninety-eight percent of working Americans will get a tax cut by passing the Senate bill that they passed already that is now at the desk here in the House of Representatives in the form of a discharge petition.

We're taking this action because we believe that time is running out. If we fail to pass this bill or something like it, the middle class in this country will see on average a \$2,000 increase in their taxes. I don't know about anyone here in this Chamber, but I know my constituency doesn't want to pay a \$2,000 tax.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUTS

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, for any negotiation to be successful, both parties involved must first identify things on which they can agree. Fortunately, we already have agreed: middle class tax cuts need to be protected. Sixty percent of Americans agree that extending the middle class tax cuts and letting those for the wealthiest expire is a good compromise and the right thing to do.

Some of our Republican colleagues agree, saying we ought to give 98 percent of all Americans an early Christmas present by extending the middle class tax cuts. Sadly, other Republicans do not share that holiday spirit. In their zeal to protect the tax breaks for the wealthiest 2 percent, they are willing to present themselves as the grinch that stole Christmas.

Let's not let another opportunity pass. Let's show that we were listening