

Woolsey	Yoder	Young (FL)
Yarmuth	Young (AK)	Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—29

Ackerman	Griffin (AR)	Noem
Akin	Harris	Nunnelee
Bartlett	Higgins	Pence
Bono Mack	Holden	Pitts
Cole	Issa	Reyes
Costello	Johnson (IL)	Ros-Lehtinen
Dicks	LaTourette	Ross (FL)
Doggett	Leahy	Lewis (GA)
Gallegly	Mack	Sanchez, Loretta
Green, Gene	McCarthy (CA)	Stark

□ 1142

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall votes No. 624, on the motion to instruct conferees regarding H.R. 4310, No. 625, on the motion to permit closed conference meetings for H.R. 4310, and No. 626, on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 4053, I was unavoidably detained and unable to cast my votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on all three votes.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees:

From the Committee on Armed Services, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. MCKEON, BARTLETT, THORNBERRY, FORBES, MILLER of Florida, WILSON of South Carolina, LOBIONDO, TURNER of Ohio, KLINE, ROGERS of Alabama, SHUSTER, CONAWAY, WITTMAN, HUNTER, RIGELL, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. WEST, Mrs. ROBY, Messrs. SMITH of Washington, REYES, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Messrs. MCINTYRE, ANDREWS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Messrs. LANGEVIN, LARSEN of Washington, COOPER, Ms. BORDALLO, Messrs. COURTNEY, LOEBSACK, Ms. TSONGAS, and Ms. PINGREE of Maine.

From the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, for consideration of matters within the jurisdiction of that committee under clause 11 of rule X:

Messrs. ROGERS of Michigan, NUNES, and RUPPERSBERGER.

From the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for consideration of secs. 541 and 561 of the House bill and secs. 563 and 571-73 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Mr. PETRI, Mrs. NOEM, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

From the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for consideration of secs. 312, 601, 727, 3111, 3113, 3114, 3117, 3118, 3132, 3133, 3151, and 3202 of the House bill and secs. 736, 758, 914, 3118, 3122, 3152-54, 3156, and 5022 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. WALDEN, WHITFIELD, and WAXMAN. From the Committee on Financial Services, for consideration of sec. 661 of the House bill and secs. 651-55, subtitle E of title XII, and title L of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Mrs. CAPITO, Messrs. HUIZENGA of Michigan, and PERLMUTTER.

From the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for consideration of secs. 227, 230, 335, 355, 952, 1013, 1033, 1035, 1037, 1041, 1043, 1097, 1111, 1202, 1203, 1212, 1213, 1217, 1219, 1234, 1237, 1238, 1240, 1240A, 1240B, 1240C, 1243, 1245-47, 1301, 1303, 1531-33, title XVII, secs. 3120, 3121, and 3123 of the House bill and secs. 237, 342, 873, subtitle F of title VIII, secs. 1013, 1031, 1033, 1042, 1045, 1050, 1093, 1201-04, 1212-15, 1217, 1218, 1223, 1224, 1241, 1242, 1247, 1248, subtitle E of title XII, secs. 1301, 1531, 1532, 1534, 3114 and 5023 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Messrs. ROYCE, and BERMAN.

From the Committee on Homeland Security, for consideration of sec. 1111 of the House bill and sec. 1803 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. KING of New York, TURNER of New York, and THOMPSON of Mississippi.

From the Committee on the Judiciary, for consideration of secs. 564, 593, 599, 1033, 1084, 1088, 1099C, 1707, and 1709 of the House bill and secs. 653, 736, 844, 844A, 897, 899, 1033, 1092, 1096, 1099C, 5021, 5024, subtitle E of title XII, and title LI of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. SMITH of Texas, DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, and CONYERS.

From the Committee on Natural Resources, for consideration of secs. 316, 317, 601, 2841, 2846, and 2861 of the House bill and secs. 271, 312, 1091, 1433, title XIX, and sec. 2842 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. HASTINGS of Washington, BISHOP of Utah, and MARKEY.

From the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for consideration of secs. 313, 651, 663, 801, 812, 833, 952, 1101-04, 1111, 1616, 1683, 1702, 1704-06, and 2811 of the House bill and secs. 641, 822, 825, 844, 844A, 892, 894-96, 903, 1099A, 1101-04, and subtitle B of title LIII of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. ISSA, WALBERG, and CUMMINGS.

From the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for consideration of secs. 916, 1074, 1603, 1617, 1661, and 3158 of the House bill and secs. 271, 912, 1046, title XVIII, secs. 3153, 3159 and 3504 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Mr. HALL, Mrs. BIGGERT, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

From the Committee on Small Business, for consideration of secs. 1611, 1621-23, 1631, 1632, 1641, 1651-58, 1661, 1671-73, 1681-83, 1691, 1693a, 1695, and 1697 of the House bill and secs. 848, 888, 889E, 1090, and 1099E of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, and Ms. VELAZQUEZ.

From the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for consideration of secs. 334, 535, 601, 704, 1074, 1078, 2801, and 3509 of the House bill and secs. 521, 1803, 1804, 3503-05, 3508, and 3509 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. MICA, COBLE, and BISHOP of New York.

From the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for consideration of secs. 355, 564, 565, 664, and 728 of the House bill and secs. 642, 755, 756, 759-64, 1044, 1087, 1090, 1097, 1099B, and title L of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference:

Messrs. BILIRAKIS, LAMBORN, and MICHAUD.

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for the week to come. At this point in time, I yield to my friend, Mr. CANTOR, the majority leader, for that purpose.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman from Maryland, the Democratic whip, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday the House will meet at noon for morning-hour and 2:00 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, the House will meet at 10:00 a.m. for morning-hour and noon for legislative business. On Friday, the House will meet at 9:00 a.m. for legislative business.

Members are advised that, due to the ongoing negotiations regarding the fiscal cliff, a weekend session is possible and, therefore, last votes for the week are not yet known.

Mr. Speaker, the House will consider a number of bills under suspension of the rules, a complete list of which will be announced by the close of business Friday. Additionally, we expect to consider a conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act for the Fiscal Year 2013, and a number of other expiring provisions of law are also possible.

As was announced last week and the week before, the House will not adjourn the 112th Congress until action has been taken to avert the fiscal cliff. Members are advised to retain flexibility in their travel schedules through the end of the year to the maximum extent possible.

I thank the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

We had originally thought that we would not be meeting on Monday. I want to make it clear to Members that the majority leader has indicated that we will be meeting on Monday and coming in at 6:30, so they take note of that and their staffs take note of that as well.

Mr. Leader, can I ask you if you know or have some pretty good sense of, on Tuesday, do you know what we might be considering on Tuesday?

I say that because a number of Members who had scheduled things Tuesday during the day have asked me that question, and I'm wondering whether or not you have any thoughts on that. My presumption is the Defense bill conference probably won't be done by that time. I don't know whether that's your sense or not.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I'd say to the gentleman he is correct in assuming that the Defense bill will not be ready. We don't know for sure, but probably likely by Wednesday or after, so, without complete surety, I will say to the gentleman, likely a suspension debate on the floor on Tuesday.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information. The Members will find that helpful.

The majority leader mentioned last week and reiterated this week that we will not adjourn the 112th Congress until we've averted the fiscal cliff. I think the American people would share that view and would hope that was the case. I hope that's the case as well.

On the fiscal cliff, one of the things, of course, in the fiscal cliff, one of the items of concern—we had a debate on the floor today, and the majority leader and I have discussed it again last week and the week before that. Part of the negotiations are with respect to the 98 percent of Americans who fall in the category that we seem to have agreement on should not receive a tax increase.

There have been an increasing number of Republicans and Democrats who have urged us to take that issue on which we agree in the near term, and I again ask my colleague, the majority leader, whether or not there is any possibility that next week we might consider at least that segment.

And let me make perhaps a wrinkle of a suggestion to the majority leader, if I might. Obviously, we have a disagreement on that over 250. We could, Mr. Majority Leader, perhaps consider two bills—one for those under 250 or 200, the Senate bill, essentially, and another bill that you might bring to the floor which would involve extending the tax cuts on those over those limits—so that Members, even though there's a disagreement, could express themselves on both of those propositions.

□ 1200

I know the gentleman has made the point repeatedly that there are small businesses that would be hurt if we did not extend over the \$250,000 level. That would give Members an opportunity to express themselves on that point of view as well as expressing themselves on the under \$250,000 and under \$200,000 for individuals. My presumption is both of those bills would pass. And that would give the Senate two bills to consider and to send to the President to at least, to the extent we can reach agreement, have some certainty brought to some segment of the population.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

He is correct. We've had this discussion before at the end of each week, and I would say to the gentleman that suggestion that he has, has certainly been brought to me on several occasions this week.

I would say to the gentleman I know that he joins me in the desire to try and address all the aspects facing this country in terms of the fiscal cliff, namely, to try and actually put us on a path to managing down the deficit and the debt; and, as the gentleman knows, we are trying, in terms of negotiating with the White House. And the Speaker has been very earnest in his desire to want to address the spending problem, not just the revenue problem, and the gentleman's suggestion would not go to that.

And I would say to the gentleman his proposal would leave the issue of increased taxes on small businesses making over \$200,000 a year. And if the concern is to try and focus on generating more jobs and helping heal the economy, I'd ask the gentleman, in return, what is his suggestion about helping those businesses because, as we know, the preponderance of the jobs created come from those small businesses making \$200,000 and up.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Of course, we have this discussion on a regular basis. I'm sure everybody in America looks forward to this discussion.

Obviously, when the gentleman talks about small businesses, he is essentially talking about 3 percent of the small businesses in America, because 97 percent of the small businesses, those job creators of which the gentleman speaks, 97 percent of them make less and would be positively affected by the bill that affects those under \$200,000 individually and \$250,000 collectively. Of course, 100 percent of the small businesses would be assured—let's say they make \$350,000—would be assured that the first \$250,000 would not get a tax increase.

So I tell the gentleman I am concerned about those small businesses, and small businesses will be included in the under \$250,000 and under \$200,000 as well. One hundred percent of America, no matter how much they make, would have the assurance that the first \$250,000, or \$200,000 if they are individuals and not families, that they would not get any tax increase.

The gentleman, particularly in the election cycle of 2010, talked a lot about—and I agreed with him—about bringing confidence, certainty of what the tax structure and what the rules would be. I suggest to the gentleman small businesses, whether they be in the 97 percent or the 3 percent—the 97 percent being affected by the bill that I would like to see passed, that the Senate has passed, but the other 3 percent, as I say, would be positively affected, knowing full well that the first \$250,000 of income would not see any increase in their taxes. I think that would be a positive step for those small businesses and the small businesses above and below those figures.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman again.

I think, as the gentleman has heard me say before, the majority of business income comes from those small businesses with incomes over \$200,000; and the higher the percentage of income derived from a small business, the more jobs are created by that individual. And that is the point.

We also know, and the gentleman has heard me recite these figures before, there was a third-party outside study conducted which would indicate that if the gentleman's proposal is passed, that we are going to see the reduction of 700,000 jobs going forward. Again, if

the focus is on jobs, as it should be, it raises certain concerns.

I would also remind the gentleman, he and I both feel very strongly about trying to do something about the fiscal health of the Federal Government in attempts to try and heal the economy, and the fiscal health of the government has much more to do about getting control of the spending rather than bringing more revenue in. More revenue in can come if we grow the economy, but just by statically increasing tax rates without doing anything to try and address the spending problem will actually make the problem worse and will leave that mountain of debt untouched.

As the gentleman knows, our Speaker has tried and tried to get the White House engaged in actually discussing specifics the way those specifics were discussed a year-and-a-half ago. These kind of things that we all know need to be done on the entitlement programs, the White House needs to come forward and say that they'll join us in trying to fix the problem, and that is what we have not seen.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, Speaker BOEHNER go forward and put revenues on the table, and we asked the White House to join us in trying to fix the problem on spending. And that's where things have stopped, and hopefully we can resolve that. As the gentleman knows—and I'm committed—and as we have announced in the schedule, we will stay here until we can resolve the problem.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I agree with him, as he knows, to staying here until we get this problem solved. America expects it. America, more importantly, needs it.

The economy needs the confidence of a resolution of this stalemate, so I agree 100 percent with the gentleman. But let me say in terms of, again, one of the disquieting factors is we can't even act on that on which we agree.

Now, the gentleman and I disagree on a proposition, and that is the gentleman believes and cites a study, which we think is of questionable validity, that says we're going to lose jobs if we raise taxes on those above \$250,000. We don't share that view, and most economists that I talk to don't share that view. But there is a study that the gentleman refers to that says that. I understand that. And what I'm saying is we can vote on that and some of us will agree and some of us will disagree.

But if we can't vote on it—let me call the attention to somebody who's certainly not a Democratic spinmeister, but I think the perception will be that what we are doing is holding the better off, if we can't help them, we can't help those who are not making as much money. I'm sure you're aware of David Brooks' column in The New York Times. He's not a liberal Democrat—or not a Democrat. I don't think he's a Democrat or Republican, but a more

conservative columnist. He says this, and I quote from *The New York Times* just a few days ago:

Sometimes you have to walk through the desert to get to the Promised Land. A budget stalemate on these terms will confirm every bad Republican stereotype. Republicans will be raising middle class taxes in order to serve the rich—shafting Sam's Club to benefit the country club. If Republicans do this, they might as well get Mitt Romney's "47 percent" comments printed on T-shirts and wear them for the rest of their lives.

I use that quote not to criticize but to say that the perception, I think, is, if we do not act on something on which we agree, we are not doing so because we want to make sure that the best off, if they're not helped, nobody will be helped, and I think that's not good for the country. I think, frankly, it's not good for the Congress, not necessarily Republicans or Democrats. I think we're all perceived as either having the ability to act or not act. If we're going to get this fiscal cliff resolved, it will be because we agree on that which we can agree. Here, we do.

We have 167 CEOs who have written to us saying that the Business Roundtable agrees that we ought to move in this direction. Senator CORKER said that just the other day. Others have said that as well. And I really don't think it's either a political "gotcha" or political advantage. I just think it will do what the gentleman talked about. It will give confidence to 98 percent of the American people who pay taxes that they don't have to worry on January 1 about their taxes going up. It seems to me that's a positive for our economy because it will give them confidence that they're going to have resources to do some of the things that will help our economy grow.

I understand the gentleman's position is that there will be 2 percent who won't have that confidence and 3 percent of small businesses who, as the gentleman points out, those 3 percent are relatively large businesses in the sense that that 3 percent gets 53 percent of the business income. He's correct. Those are large small businesses or, in many cases, individuals who just make a lot of money, and that's fine, but they're not the majority. I think job creators, in terms of the numbers of small businesses, are those who add one or two or three people to their rolls.

□ 1210

We can get off this, but I certainly will yield to the gentleman and hope that we can do that.

The reason you've gotten the suggestion of the two-bill strategy, or two-bill scenario, is because that gives everybody in the House of Representatives—and you talked about this particularly in 2010, but you've talked about it since then of giving the House of Representatives the opportunity to work its will. Two bills, if you move them forward, one which the President says he will sign, one which the President says he will veto—and after all,

he's going to be our President for the next 50 months—we can get something done. At the same time, all 435 Members—or 433, I think we have presently—can express their views on those issues on which we have agreement and those issues on which we have a disagreement.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. I'd say to the gentleman, on issues that we have agreement on, I think the gentleman and I both have agreement on many of the spending issues. I think the gentleman has been outspoken in his commitment to say, hey, we've got to modernize, if you will, the age eligibility of some of our entitlement programs. I think the gentleman, if I'm correct, has said that he is in support of adjusting the age eligibility for Medicare.

Mr. HOYER. If the gentleman will yield, what I have said is everything needs to be on the table, not that I agreed with everything that would be on the table. I have some very substantial reservations about age increase. Particularly—it was in the Ryan bill—it doesn't get you any money in the next 10 years so it will not help us get to that fiscal crisis.

What I have said, and I'll repeat, is you have the right to put everything on the table; we have a right to put everything on the table. If you're going to have an honest negotiation, we ought to consider everybody's point of view. That's what I've said.

Mr. CANTOR. I'd say to the gentleman this is exactly the kind of conversation that we should be having about fixing the problem rather than just kicking the can.

Again, the gentleman has been very upfront about, I think, his commitment to do some of those more difficult political things that I agree with him on. But, unfortunately, we're not having those conversations. We're not having those conversations because I believe there are others in his party in the House and elsewhere—certainly in the White House—that refuse to engage in the specifics about how we address the mountain of debt and the continuing spiraling upwards of spending. That is what we've got to do.

I think the gentleman would say, with running the risk of putting words in his mouth, that many folks out there who are wealthy would say, sure, I'll pay more taxes. But I would say back to those individuals: I believe that you say that because you would trust that your money is being spent to pay down the debt and the deficit. That's what we're trying to get to.

None of us on this side of the aisle believe raising taxes is good in this economy or it's something that we should do by feeding more money into the Federal Government, and certainly if the Federal Government is not fixing the problem. That's what we're trying to do, Mr. Speaker. I know the gentleman understands my point of view on this, and we've had this discussion continuously.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

It is a discussion the country is having. It's a discussion we need to have, and we need to have it honestly with one another.

The gentleman knows my position: it's not taxes or spending; it's if you buy something, pay for it. We haven't done that. That's what creates debt. Taxing doesn't create debt; spending doesn't create debt if you pay for it. Spending creates debt only if you don't pay for it. The revenues—taxes—are what you pay for things that you buy. We are buying things and we're not paying for them, and your children and mine are being put in debt as a result.

So this debate is really about: What are we going to pay for? How much do we want to do? And if we want to do it, we need to pay for it.

The gentleman knows my side very much believes that we had two tax cuts in '01 and '03; we didn't pay for it. We had two wars, both of which I supported, as the gentleman knows; we didn't pay for it. We passed a prescription drug bill; we didn't pay for it. We are hopefully going to pass a disaster relief bill that hopefully we're not going to pay for in the short term, but that we will pay for and have a scenario to pay for in the longer term because we know owe that to our children and to our grandchildren.

I'll just make a point. The gentleman always talks about tax and spending is the problem. The problem is we vote to buy things—whatever those things are—and we haven't voted to pay for them. The discipline in any system—in the family's budget, in the country's budget—should be, if you want to buy it, have the discipline to pay for it, or at least to amortize it to pay for it over a series of years that you've planned for. We haven't done that. We're in a debate about this fiscal cliff of how to do that.

We planned this fiscal cliff. This is not a happenstance. We planned. I didn't vote for the tax bills, but they sunsetted. They sunsetted this December 31. That was planned. It was planned because of a scoring issue—not because I think your side really believes they ought to sunset, but because of a scoring issue.

The fact of the matter is the sequester was put in place as a fail-safe to make the supercommittee work. It didn't work, so on January 2 the sequester takes place. I don't think any of us believe a sequester ought to take place in the way that it's planned to do so.

So what I'm saying to the gentleman is everything that's going to happen on December 31 we've planned, we've put in place, we've sunsetted. It is our responsibility to meet that. And, yes, taxes is the way we pay for things that we buy because if we pay for them, we don't create debt.

I would be glad to yield.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, along those lines, the gentleman talked

about the '01, '03 tax cuts. He is talking about mostly the 98 percent that he refers to that continue to need that tax cut. I'd ask the gentleman, is he now saying we need to pay for that tax cut?

Mr. HOYER. I absolutely believe that we need to pay for that tax cut over the 10-year plan that we try to come up with to get us to a place that we can agree on being the objective in 2022 or 2023 as to where we want to be as a country in terms of fiscal sustainability, a credible plan that will get us from here to there, including taking cognizance of the cost of that tax cut. Yes, I am saying that over the longer term we ought to pay for it. Right now the economy is struggling. The reason I think none of us want to raise taxes on the average working men and women in this country is because the economy is still struggling.

We're going to have that issue in terms of the payroll tax. We did the payroll tax deduction, which is controversial and there hasn't been a lot of the discussion, in order to get some additional revenues, 2 percent cut in the FICA tax—actually, a third of the cut, a third of the FICA tax so that we can get additional moneys into the pockets of the consumers so they can continue to buy. The economy has been better than it certainly was. We have grown, but not to the extent that we need to. That is why our view is that for those working Americans we ought to continue that level, but not because we think that we ought to just put that on the credit card and forget about it. It's got to be part of these fiscal cliff negotiations. And your point is making sure we pay for things.

Mr. CANTOR. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd say to the gentleman I know the gentleman understands that my view is you don't have to pay for giving people back the money that they earned, but the gentleman takes that view; but that's exactly the point of these discussions. Where is the discussion about the specifics on where we are paying for things in terms of reducing spending? That's exactly the point.

If the gentleman would be so kind as to go to the White House and engage the President to say, hey, give us some specifics, because the President so desperately wants to raise those taxes and to grant the 98 percent the tax relief. If the gentleman's contention is the President's, where are the specifics on the other side of the ledger? That's exactly what we're saying, Mr. Speaker. We need to solve this problem.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, we had that discussion in terms of specifics. I pointed out to the gentleman last week, and I'll point out to him again today, the President has in his budget 23 pages of cuts, including, very frankly, with respect to Medicare, in which he cuts more—specifically identified—than PAUL RYAN's budget that passed this House reduced Medicare expenditures.

□ 1220

So I will say to my friend, I have given him this little list—he can't see it. You have five items on your proposal in the letter that you sent, five items. They're over here on the right, five line items, all conclusionary, no specifics. For instance, the gentleman refers to 800 billion—not the gentleman, but in the Republican offer—refers to \$800 billion in revenues. Now, the President has been very specific as to what he thinks we ought to do in revenues. We ought to go to the Clinton rates on those over 200,000 individually and over 250,000 family—very specific. And he has made other specific proposals that get him to his revenue number.

Frankly, your revenue number is posited on the fact that we're going to reduce, as I understand it, preference items to attain an additional 800 billion in revenue without increasing rates. I understand that general proposition.

Would the gentleman tell me which preference items he would reduce to get to 800? Now, that's a little rhetorical because I don't want to put you on the spot on that, but it is to the extent I don't think you have been specific in terms of your offer at all while I do believe the President has put forward, both on the tax side and the spending side, some very specific proposals of how to get to his numbers.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker.

I will say this, again, the gentleman has been very good, not in the negotiations with the Speaker and the President, but somehow knowing the state of affairs. Because this is the problem: if the gentleman says that we ought to look to the President's budget proposals as our guide as to what he would accept and propose on the specifics, just yesterday, I think, the news came that the administration has now decided not to uphold its commitment on the Medicaid reduction in spending.

So what are we to believe as far as the President's proposals in his budget from months and months ago and how that applies to the discussions and negotiations around the fiscal cliff? Which is exactly why we need the specifics now. I understand and take the gentleman's point as far as the 800 billion, but we have not dealt at all with the spending side of the ledger. And the commitment should be balanced. As the President always says, we need a balanced approach. Yet we don't have any discussion on the spending side of the ledger other than to reference a prior proposal by the administration which has now said, no, we are not sticking to that on the Medicaid piece.

So what are we to believe? Which is exactly the point. We need real specificity in terms of the spending. And I take the gentleman's point on the 800 billion. Yes, but it takes two sides, and this White House and President have refused on the spending side.

Mr. HOYER. Well, of course, again, we have a disagreement. And this list—I can't read it either, so you couldn't read it from there.

Mr. CANTOR. If the gentleman would yield, we have just seen the administration backtrack on its commitment on that list.

Mr. HOYER. I don't think he backtracked. What he said was, and what we have said continually is, on the revenue side, if you're going to have a balanced package on the revenue side—this is his specific proposal: he's made a number of proposals on the spending-cut side already, as I said in Medicare more than the Ryan budget had in his budget. The fact is, I will tell the gentleman, you have no specificity on balance. Nor do you have any specificity, frankly, on cuts. There is no specificity on your spending cuts here. They're conclusions. So I'm not sure how you think one side ought to be specific, i.e., the President, which I think he has been specific, and the other side comes with five lines of dollars that add up to \$2.2 trillion, none of which have any specificity. As you see, there are no individual items below those five lines saying where you want to cut or raise revenues.

Therefore, we need to get to an agreement, and this argument is not very helpful, I think. We need to get to an agreement; both sides need to get to agreement. But the reason we get into this conversation is we have agreement on a part of that, which will help give confidence to our people, and that is on the middle class taxes not going up.

I would again urge, and then perhaps we can get off this subject because I don't think we're really enlightening our public very much other than the fact there are obviously disagreements; but they expect us to, and we need to bridge these disagreements. I think the President has shown—you and I participated in discussions with the President of the United States. I've been here 31 years. No President in the 31 years that I've been here has spent as much time sitting in the Oval Office discussing with you and me and others, Mr. BOEHNER, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, and others, sitting in the office trying to get to specific agreements.

This President is willing to do that, and he has done it. He has shown that he's willing to do it in 2011, and you and I were in the room watching it happen. Now, did it result in what we wanted and that was an agreement? It did not. That's unfortunate. But this President is willing to do it. Hopefully, both sides are willing to do both sides of the ledger, which the gentleman points out are revenues and spending, a balanced package getting us to where we need to be.

Now I will move on to another subject unless the gentleman wants to make another point.

Debt ceiling. I'm very worried about the debt ceiling, Mr. Leader. I think the debt ceiling is something that you

and I have expressed publicly and privately ought not to be something that really we put at risk. I frankly think all the leaders I've talked to on the Republican side and on the Democratic side think that when you incur debts as the United States of America, the most creditworthy Nation on the face of the Earth, that you have every intention of paying those debts.

The debt ceiling theoretically says that you can't pay over a certain number, you can't go into debt anymore. You and I both know that sometime in February, maybe later, that debt ceiling will be reached.

Very frankly, both parties have played a game on the debt ceiling. When you were in charge, we played the fact that the debt was your problem because you had cut taxes and didn't pay for that. On your side, you said we spent too much money and we didn't pay for that. And so you voted against the debt ceiling when we were in charge. Neither one of us has, I think, covered ourselves with a great deal of glory on that issue.

The debt ceiling has to be raised because America will pay its bills. America will be creditworthy. And we saw the last time we had this political, I call it a charade or dance, the last time, for the first time in history, first time since you and I have served here—history is a lot longer than that—the credit of the United States of America was downgraded by one of the rating agencies, Standard & Poor's.

I would hope that the debt ceiling would not be a subject of disagreement. The President has proposed Senator MCCONNELL's proposal so that the party in charge can take responsibility for it. The McConnell proposal said that the President of the United States would say, look, in order to pay our bills, we have to raise our debt ceiling. Most countries don't have a debt ceiling, of course, and most families don't have a debt ceiling. They incur debt and they expect to pay it. I would hope that this would not be a subject of political leveraging or political disagreement.

We know as an economic fact of life that we're going to have to increase the debt limit, and I would ask the gentleman if he has any thoughts on that and when we might act on that. I yield to my friend. I don't think I finished what, for the public, for anybody who happens to be watching us who is not bored stiff by this point in time, the McConnell proposal, as the gentleman knows, was that the President would propose a level, and then if that were not rejected by two-thirds of each House, that it then would go into effect, which would mean that the President of the United States, Republican or Democrat, would take the responsibility for making that judgment on behalf of managing the finances of our country.

I'll yield to my friend.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I believe

that, in all fairness, looking at the credit-rating agencies and their view towards debt ceiling increase discussions, some of that certainly has to do with the continuing increasing of debt and its burden on this country, our citizens, and its economy. And if the gentleman recalls a year and a half ago when we were engaged in the discussions around the increase in the debt ceiling, we established a proposition which said that if we're going to increase the debt ceiling, we ought to be decreasing the spending in a commensurate amount.

□ 1230

That's very simply put. The difficulty was we could not get the gentleman's party and/or the White House to go along with us in terms of agreement of those spending reductions. It's an echo of the original discussion the gentleman and I just had as far as the fiscal cliff is concerned.

Our commitment is to try to reduce the mountain of debt that is strangling this country and try to stop the spending that continues to spiral out of control. So any discussion of the increase of debt for us has to be accompanied with a real commitment to the reduction in spending, otherwise those credit rating agencies are going to continue to do what they did.

In order to engender confidence in those agencies and the markets and throughout the American economy and the public, we have got to gain some credibility on the spending issue and stop the spending. That is our position. The gentleman knows that. Yes, we all agree, America is a country that pays its bills. We need to stop racking up so many of them because we've gotten to a situation where we are generating a trillion dollars of additional annual debt. We can't do that. That is why we take the position we do, to try and arrest that, to get our economy back on an even keel so we can heal that economy.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman.

I don't think he answered my question about the debt limit, therefore, my presumption is unfortunately it will continue to be an item used as leverage, holding hostage the creditworthiness of the United States to this debate.

Mr. CANTOR. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I will be glad to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CANTOR. That is a mischaracterization of my remarks, Mr. Speaker. All I said was we feel this White House has a tin ear in terms of the spending problem. What we're saying is we need some balance. Just as the rhetoric comes from the White House that we need a balanced approach, we need a balanced approach on both sides, spending and revenue. That's what the whole discussion is about on the debt ceiling issue because it is accessing additional funds for the Federal Government, but instead of

through taxation, borrowing. Equally, if we are going to increase that, we better be decreasing the other side of the ledger so we don't continue to increase and mount that debt.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I hear the gentleman, and the gentleman says spending is the problem.

If spending is the problem and spending obviously is one of the challenges we confront, as is revenues, if that is the case, then let me remind the gentleman that during the time that his party was totally in charge of spending, spending increased very substantially, otherwise known as an 86 percent increase from 2001 to 2008 in the national debt, an 86 percent increase. Under Ronald Reagan, it increased 189 percent. Under this President, it has increased 41 percent, and he confronted the deepest recession as a result of the economic policies in part pursued in the last administration, which I did not support and which my party did not support.

I hear this about spending all the time. We had a pay-as-you-go bipartisan process put in place by the first George Bush and Democrats in 1990. In 1993, that pay-as-you-go was continued. In 1997, a deal between Mr. Gingrich and Mr. Clinton continued that pay-as-you-go process. And for the last 4 years in a row of the Clinton administration, we didn't borrow a single additional nickel to raise the debt limit. We didn't have to. Why? Because we were paying for what we bought.

Republicans were in charge of the House and the Senate for part of that time, so they deserve some of the responsibility for that. The President was in charge of signing bills and making sure that we made investments. He made sure we did that, and the economy exploded. Those three factors obviously resulted in the only President in the lifetime of either the majority leader and myself who ended up with a net surplus in his term. We don't need to be lectured about spending. As I said, spending does not cause debt. What causes debt is not paying for the spending you make, and that's exactly what happened.

I tell my friend his party was in charge from 2001 to 2006, totally and essentially until 2008, because we didn't change any economic policies and President Bush had to sign any bill that was passed here. So this circuitous discussion we have about, simply, spending is the problem—yes, you're right. But the problem is ultimately if we want to buy things—and what we do now, as the gentleman knows, is we are producing a product that costs \$23 to produce, and we're asking people to pay \$15 for it. Talk about small businesses; any small business that does that goes out of business pretty quickly. That's what we are doing, and we have to stop it.

The debt ceiling, however, as the gentleman knows, is about that which we've already done and whether we are going to pay those bills. All I'm saying

is we ought not to make that a part of the leveraging between our two parties.

Let me go quickly to the farm bill, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Sandy supplemental. Can the gentleman tell me which of those three, if any, might we see next week?

With that, I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CANTOR. As the gentleman knows, on the farm bill we are committed to trying to address the issue of the farm bill prior to leaving for the year.

As far as the Violence Against Women Act, as the gentleman knows, I'm in discussions with the Vice President. I know it is of particular interest to him. There are many Members on our side whom I've met with today, as well as Members of the other body, who are interested too. We have met, and we are trying to work out the differences. I'm committed to do all I can, as the gentleman knows, to bring this to a conclusion so we can see its passage.

As far as the supplemental bill, I know that the White House—and the gentleman has heard me say this before—has submitted its request. Our Appropriations Committee is doing its review of the request to see that that supplemental aid gets to the victims that need it, to the localities and the States that need it, and is money that will be spent directly as a result of the very catastrophic storm of Sandy, and we hope to be able to resolve that as well.

We are operating in an environment of the post-Budget Control Act where we have put in place budget mechanisms for disasters. As the gentleman knows, FEMA has indicated it has the money it needs to operate for at least a little while, but we're committed to making sure that adequate funding does get to the victims of that very catastrophic storm.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his intent there.

I would simply observe that the gentleman observed and he was correct, obviously, that FEMA indicated it has some resources to go through the beginning of the year. There are, as the gentleman well knows, a myriad of agencies that will be involved in helping the victims of Sandy that do not have those resources and need them. I appreciate, therefore, the gentleman's focusing on this and trying to bring this forth as quickly as possible.

Last, the miscellaneous tariff bill. That expires, as you know, on December 31, as well. Can the gentleman give me a view as to where that stands?

And I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. CANTOR. I think the gentleman is aware, Mr. Speaker, that the chairman of the committee, Chairman CAMP, is speaking with the ranking member to try and see what it is that we can do to go forward on that issue as well.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1240

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY,
DECEMBER 17, 2012

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday next for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRAWFORD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN
LEONARD BOSWELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials for the RECORD on the topic of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, those of us from Iowa and elsewhere would like to recognize today the service of my fellow Iowan, Congressman LEONARD BOSWELL, who will be leaving the House at the adjournment of this Congress.

I first want to thank him for his 20 years of service to our great Nation in the U.S. Army. No one has done more to secure our freedom and the promise of a bright future than our veterans and military personnel. I know that LEONARD counts his efforts to secure additional support for military families and veterans among his most meaningful achievements. I also want to recognize the gentleman from Iowa for his time in public service as a legislator. His distinguished career traces back to the Iowa State Senate, where he once served as president of that body.

Although we haven't always agreed on the issues before us, LEONARD's relationships with his fellow Members have enabled him to work with colleagues of all political stripes. His work on behalf of his constituents has exemplified what Iowans expect of their Representatives in Congress—those who are approachable, thoughtful, and hard-working.

I appreciate the many years of service LEONARD BOSWELL has provided to our home State of Iowa and its people. I know that he will continue to serve his fellow Iowans faithfully beyond the conclusion of this Congress—and in that, I truly wish him and his family the very, very best.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to my remarks today, I asked Iowans to pay tribute to LEONARD by providing their comments for submission into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We do not have the luxury of time to read the numerous notes and well-wishes that came in, but I would like to highlight a few of those at this time.

Iowa Governor Terry Branstad sent the following:

I commend Congressman Leonard Boswell for his longtime dedication to public service. His selfless service to others has been demonstrated in many ways—as an officer in the United States Army, as president of the Iowa Senate, and as a Congressman from Iowa. Congressman Boswell should be proud of his public service accomplishments and for his personal achievements as a husband, father, and grandfather. I am heartened by Iowans like Congressman Boswell who have spent a lifetime serving the State of Iowa. We thank him for his service.

Iowa Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY wrote:

Representative Boswell has worked hard to represent his constituents. He did his job very well. While we disagreed politically, we never had a personal disagreement. We found plenty of common ground. I'll miss his camaraderie around Congress, but I have no doubt we'll run across each other because Representative Boswell is unlikely to avoid public service, which has been his calling for so long.

Thank you for your service, Representative Boswell.

Nancy Williams, president of AIB College of Business in Des Moines, wrote:

I wish to recognize and thank Congressman Boswell for his dedication to our country, to Iowa, and to his constituents. He has changed our world, our country, and our State with his personal service for so many years. Every life has a great purpose, and Congressman Boswell has had a wonderful calling for his. I will wait in anticipation to see what he chooses to do next. I just cannot thank him enough.

Ken Sagar, president of the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, wrote:

Congressman Boswell was a Representative who would take the time to listen to Iowans. He paid special care and attention to all veterans. He was a friend of working people. When home visiting, he would make an effort to meet with the labor leaders in the State. He spent time listening to their concerns and would give honest answers on his positions, not always to the liking of the unions, but always honest and up front.

Then Jon Murphy, director of government affairs at PolicyWorks, sums up the assurances we all have that Leonard will continue to serve his State and Nation:

I would like to thank Congressman Boswell not only for his support of me, personally, but also for his service to our country. As a soldier and statesman, there are few people who have given more of themselves to our Nation. I wish him and Dody well as they move forward to their next adventure in life. I would ask them to take some time and get some rest, but I know that won't happen. That's not the Boswell way.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would like to recognize the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK).

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you, my colleague TOM LATHAM from Iowa.