

debt and then ripped through your savings for your children's college education and all of your checking account and said, "Yeah, just give me some more money and we'll solve the problem," would you do it? Absolutely not.

More than jobs, though, we're also working to save Medicare and Social Security, the commitments that we have made to the American people. So let's take a look here at the big picture. Here's a budget breakdown of where we're at right now. Look, your eyes will glaze over when we start talking about the trillions of dollars that we spend. But let's take a look at what you pay versus what you expect.

This blue part right here is on autopilot. No adults have come to the table to talk about where we're at today and how to actually save your Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid in this big blue part. We're doing that today, House Republicans, in balancing the budget. But this is what you expect from the Federal Government: your education, roads, bridges, a healthy environment, and what's mandated by the Constitution, our Armed Forces to protect us.

But this is where it gets really scary. All of this blue part here for Medicare and Social Security is what we take in. In other words, all of our cash on hand, if you will, the money that you pay the Federal Government every time you get a paycheck or pay your income taxes, this is all devoted to Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security. In other words, everything else—your education, the environment, our roads, bridges, ports, Armed Forces—all of that money to pay for that basically is borrowed. It's borrowed—or worse, just printed.

This is the sad reality that we're facing today. But with Republican House leadership and working with Democrats who are actually willing to come to the table and compromise—and not just work with us, work for you—we can save Social Security and Medicare.

And by the way, when you hear Democrats or you see the videos of them throwing your grandmother off a cliff or telling you that Republicans just want to cut, cut, cut, no; this is about save, save, save. And in the words of a hip-hop band from my generation, Public Enemy: don't believe the hype.

House Republicans are working today for you. We're working to save Social Security and Medicare. We're working to save this economy and, ultimately, this country for you.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

#### GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and commemorate the 192nd anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

Like the American revolutionaries who fought for independence and established this great Republic we call the land of the free and the home of the brave, Greek freedom fighters similarly began an arduous struggle to win independence for Greece and its people 192 years ago on March 25.

The Greeks faced four centuries of Ottoman oppression, a David versus Goliath situation, if you will. Beginning their revolution on March 25 was no coincidence. This was the holy day dedicated to the mother of God, Theotokos; and as such, they had their champion, their savior, and their protector by their side. As Archbishop Germanos of Patras raised the flag of revolution over the Monastery of Agia Lavra in the Peloponnese, "Eleftheria i Thanatos"—Liberty or Death—became their battle cry.

As is true in our own country, the price of freedom was great, with brave men and women fighting for God and country in the hope of a better world for future generations.

Our Greek brothers sacrificed much for their independence, and there are many stories which I could share to demonstrate the heroism they exhibited. Most Greeks will remember that of Athanasios Diakos, legendary hero, priest, patriot, and soldier who led 500 of his men in a notable stand against 8,000 Ottoman Turk soldiers. While Diakos' men were wiped out and he fell to enemy hands which tortured him before his death, he became the image for Greeks to give all for love of faith and homeland. May his memory be eternal, Mr. Speaker.

The revolution brought independence to Greece and emboldened those who still sought freedom across the world. It proved a united people, through sheer will and perseverance, can prevail against tyranny. And it is a sentiment which can still be found among Greeks today.

Greek soldiers served alongside Americans in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. They've always been our allies, Mr. Speaker, and continue to be today.

This week, the joint naval exercise Noble Dina is expected to conclude. And for the 3rd year, the navies representing the United States, Greece, and Israel have come together to engage in maritime evacuations and search and rescue drills, a symbol of the ongoing and growing friendships between the countries.

□ 1030

The lessons the Greeks taught us in 1821 continue to provide strength to victims of persecution throughout the world today. By honoring the Greek struggle for independence, we reaffirm the values and ideas that make America great.

Each time I perform my constitutional duties, I am doing so in the legacy of our American forefathers and the ancient Greeks. As Thomas Jeffer-

son once said, "To the ancient Greeks, we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves, American colonists, out of gothic darkness."

We celebrate Greek Independence Day to reaffirm the common democratic heritage we share. And, as Americans, we must continue to pursue this spirit of freedom and liberty, which characterizes both great nations.

Zito i Ellas. Long live Greece.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE SERVICE OF CAPTAIN ANDREW S. WHITSON

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

Mr. RIGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate an exceptional naval officer, Captain Andrew Shepard Whitson, at the completion of 30 years of distinguished naval service, culminating as the Director of the U.S. House of Representatives Liaison Office for the Department of the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs.

I'm honored to commend Captain Whitson's achievements and recognize his service and devotion to our great country.

A 1983 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, Captain Whitson earned his wings in 1985 and was designated a naval aviator. He sailed around the world, flying the F-14 Tomcat and F/A-18 Hornets. He's served in five fighter squadrons, participating in multiple combat operations during Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was also recognized as the "East Coast Fighter Pilot of the Year" in 1997.

Captain Whitson served as the executive officer and commanding officer of the Bounty Hunters of Fighter Squadron Two, leading them through two deployments aboard USS *Constellation* (CV-64), including the combat operations in Iraqi Freedom. In 2009 and 2010, he served as the commander of Carrier Air Wing 17.

Captain Whitson is retiring after 30 years of honorable service to this Nation. His professional success would not have been possible without the support of his wife, Tracy—I've had the privilege of getting to know Captain Whitson and his family—and his lovely daughter, Alexandra. Their shared sacrifice is a credit to their personal character.

I wish Captain Whitson continued success and fulfillment as he transitions to civilian life after three decades of exceptional service to our country. His loyal dedication to duty reflects the highest standards of naval service.

I hold him in high personal regard and consider it a privilege to call Captain Whitson my friend. And I'm delighted that he and his family call Virginia's Second Congressional District their home.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my fellow colleagues this morning join me, all

Members of the House, in saluting this outstanding naval officer and wishing him and his wonderful family fair winds and following seas.

#### HONORING THE ANNIVERSARY OF GREECE'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. As cochair and cofounder of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I rise today to celebrate the 192nd anniversary of Greece's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Against incredibly difficult odds, the Greeks defeated one of the most powerful empires in history to win their independence. Following 400 years of Ottoman rule, in March 1821, Bishop Germanos of Patras raised the traditional Greek flag at the monastery of Agia Lavras, inciting his countrymen to rise up against the Ottoman army.

The bishop timed this act of revolution to coincide with the Greek Orthodox holiday celebrating the Archangel Gabriel's announcement that the Virgin Mary was about to give birth with the divine child. Bishop Germanos' message to his people was clear: A new spirit was about to be born in Greece. The following year, the Treaty of Constantinople established full independence for Greece.

New York City is home to one of the largest Hellenic populations outside Greece and Cyprus. Astoria, Queens, which I have the honor of representing, is often called "Little Athens" because of the large Hellenic population in that neighborhood.

New Yorkers celebrate Greek Independence Day with a parade on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, which I have been honored to participate in year after year. Marching side-by-side with my Greek-American friends, I have always been overwhelmed by the warmth and enthusiasm which the community has brought to New York City. These events remind us of the Hellenic-American community's many contributions to our Nation's history and culture.

The friendship between America and Greece is based on mutual respect, a commitment to common goals, and a sharing of fundamental values, especially ensuring stability in southeastern Europe. I hope permanent solutions can be found for ending the divisions of Cyprus and finding a mutually agreeable name for the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia.

I know that the Greek independence movement was an inspiration to the American independence movement, and we have learned so much from our Greek friends.

I have introduced, in many Congresses, an important resolution with my caucus cochair, Representative GUS

BILIRAKIS. This resolution urges Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the ecumenical patriarch. It was my privilege to meet with the patriarch last year, and I know that he is negotiating with the Turkish government for the return to Halki, the Greek Orthodox seminary, of the right and independence to educate their priests and to restore their lands to them.

I want to say that I ask all of my colleagues to join me and Members of Congress in celebrating Greece's independence. It is also my sincere pleasure to pay tribute to New York's Hellenic-American community for its many contributions to our great country.

Zeto e eleftheria. Long live freedom.

#### YUCCA MOUNTAIN AND JOBS

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise once again today in support of Yucca Mountain in Nye County, Nevada, which, by law, is designated as the site for a permanent geological repository for our Nation's spent nuclear fuel.

Last year, the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future issued a report, but barred even evaluating the merits of Yucca Mountain, despite the fact that it has been approved on a bipartisan basis by Congress and signed into law by the President, and actually reaffirmed by signing the law in 2002. The initial law was passed in 1982, and the law was amended in 1987, which, in a bipartisan manner, passed through both Chambers, signed by different Presidents, established that Yucca Mountain would be the repository for our nuclear spent fuel.

What the Blue Ribbon Commission did say was any host community should expect incentives. That commitment is no different from Nevada when it comes to Yucca Mountain. And good news: the local county, Nye County, Nevada, is consenting and ready to negotiate with the Department of Energy.

In advance of Yucca Mountain even receiving its first delivery, we will work with the State, Nye County, and surrounding communities to provide incentives to benefit the people of Nevada and their communities. We will address infrastructure needs, provide additional ground water monitoring, and build rail spurs, providing benefits outside of the Yucca Mountain project.

As we look to make nuclear processing viable in the future, we can establish research dollars to universities in the State to be leaders in this field, and we will work to develop these and other ideas from State and local leaders to best fit their needs.

This will mean thousands of direct or indirect jobs across the State of Nevada. Before any of these incentives are even discussed, we know from DOE in the past that the project would yield

over 2,500 direct jobs on its own for more than 25 years under the current permit. Even after 50 years, as the project winds down, there would still be more than 500 direct jobs.

□ 1040

Construction of a rail spur could require an additional 1,000 workers and 300 permanent jobs for decades to come. All told, with indirect jobs and the project alone, conservative estimates project 7,000 new jobs in Nevada, not even counting those associated with other incentives we in Congress are prepared to work with the State and local communities to pursue.

Mr. Speaker, we need to move forward on finishing the licensing application on Yucca Mountain, as required by law. Let the science speak for itself that says Yucca Mountain meets a million-year safety standard so it can serve as a national asset that develops thousands of badly needed jobs in Nevada's struggling economy.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Monsignor Robert Kurwicki, Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Jefferson City, Missouri, offered the following prayer:

O gracious and merciful God, so great and everlasting, we come before You today with our hearts filled with sincere love and true devotion. Now grant us, in this, the people's House, a spirit of justice and goodwill in order that the important work of this day may be carried out in truth and charity.

We know that, by our own strength, we will falter and fail. Yet we have a hope that You will never leave us or forget us in Your great shepherd's care. We are serious as we recommit ourselves to You and to Your goals. Show us the way to perfection.

Bless these elected Members, their families, staffs, and constituents in a special way this day, in order that they may continue to reach for the highest, noblest, and greatest benefits for this Nation.

And the House says, Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.