

The effects of the sequester extend beyond the gates of our installations and affect entire communities with local businesses standing to lose as a result of belt tightening by families experiencing furloughs.

At the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Indian Head, also in Maryland's Fifth Congressional District, 97 percent of civilian personnel will be furloughed. That's more than 1,870 people.

Mr. Speaker, there's no reason why our civilian defense workers should be kept from doing their job just because Congress hasn't done its job. As long as the sequester remains in effect, and as long as Republicans refuse to compromise on a balanced approach to deficits that can end it, I'll keep coming to this floor and remind them exactly what is at stake. And I continue to call on Speaker BOEHNER to end the unnecessary delay in appointing budget conferees, which would be a significant step toward beginning negotiations in earnest that could lead to a big and balanced compromise on deficits.

We need to bring deficits down. We need to get our country on a fiscally sustainable path, but we need to do so in a rational way which does not undermine our national security, does not undermine the services being rendered to the people who are relying on them, and that does not send a message to our employees and those whom we need to recruit in the future that we are a good employer, we're a caring employer, we're an effective employer, and you ought to work for us, you ought to work for your country, for your fellow citizens.

Mr. Speaker, we need to go to conference. We need to get rid of the sequester. We need to put America on a rational path to fiscal responsibility and effectiveness.

BENGHAZI MATTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, Benghazi matters, and the American people deserve answers.

On the evening of September 11, 2012, terrorist factions successfully attacked America in Benghazi, Libya, when they torched our consulate and killed four Americans. Early in the morning the following day, they attacked our annex.

Secretary Clinton's response to the American people was that these attacks were in response to a video posted on the Internet. The following Sunday, on September 16, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice repeated Secretary Clinton's assertion on five separate television talk shows.

Today is July 10, 2013, and we now know that without question these attacks were strategically planned and had no relation to Secretary Clinton or Ambassador Rice's initial assertions. The investigation into our failure to

protect those four Americans who were killed, our consulate, our annex, and the administration's abysmal explanation for informing the American public must continue.

Mr. Speaker, Secretary Clinton appeared before a Senate hearing and was asked about certain facts surrounding the attack. She replied: What difference does it make?

I suggest that Secretary Clinton may want to consult with the survivors of the four Americans who were slain and ask them what difference does it make. I take umbrage with her response, and I think it was done in a rather uncaring and very impersonal way.

Investigating this scandal is our duty and obligation as representatives of the American people and protectors of the public trust. To date, congressional hearings have raised far more questions than answers. We have to look no further than the testimony of Mr. Gregory Hicks before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Mr. Hicks is the former Deputy Chief of Mission in Libya, and his testimony is replete with contradictions from what Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Rice and others have told the American public. The matter, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, smacks of a coverup. We must continue to pursue and develop answers and explanations as to what happened so we will ultimately know what really did occur on that fateful night and ensuing days.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, Benghazi matters, and we must continue thoroughly to examine this until the truth ultimately surfaces. It matters, and the American public, Americans taxpayers, here, there, and yonder, deserve a final resolution to this episode. I suggest that we continue to keep our eye on the ball, otherwise this is going to disappear into the wind and that would be inexcusable.

CALL TO ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, President Obama's call to action on climate change is another reminder of the large and growing threat posed by the warming of our atmosphere. Yet instead of taking a leading role to address the problem, Congress has been held hostage by those who would deny the science altogether. Every day that we delay, we are losing ground in the race to develop new sources of energy that can protect the planet and break the grip of our dependence on fossil fuels.

This past year was one of the most extreme years for our Nation's weather. It was the warmest year on record for the U.S.; and droughts, wildfires, and floods were far more frequent and far more intense. In fact, nine of the 10 hottest years since 1880 have been in the past decade.

In 2012, 9.3 million acres of land across the country burned in wildfires,

more than double the annual average, and the second highest ever. Rainfall was far below the average, and it was one of the driest years in memory. Droughts, heat waves, and wildfires are now the norm rather than the exception.

The extreme weather was also a significant drag on our economy: Superstorm Sandy cost \$65 billion; western wildfires cost over \$1 billion; and losses from drought cost \$30 billion. Greenhouse gases emitted as a result of human activity are the biggest drivers of climate change. That is a fact that is accepted by virtually every scientist around the world.

We're only beginning to understand the impact of a global temperature rise on a nation's long-term environmental health and the health of the world; but with each new report by NASA, by the U.N., by universities here and overseas, we see that the threat grows and the possibility that we can avoid catastrophe and catastrophic consequences in the future recedes.

Some in this body have questioned the science, noting that droughts, floods, and climatic variations have been observed for centuries, often recalling Noah and his ark; but the speed and magnitude of the changes we are witnessing are consistent with scientific modeling of the effects of human activity on the climate. We must act now.

First, we have to diversify our energy sources. Instead of tax breaks for Big Oil, we should be investing in the development of new and renewable energy sources.

Second, we must work to reduce our emissions. Power plants are the single largest source of emissions in the U.S., accounting for roughly 40 percent of all domestic greenhouse gases, and the EPA must put in place Federal standards that will regulate both new and existing power plants.

Third, we must build a 21st-century transportation infrastructure and system that will support a growing economy and population. This means we need to invest in mass transit systems, and car makers must continue to improve fuel economy standards.

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And fourth, we need to work with the international community, not against it, as many in this body have tried to do. America must take a leadership role. We need the cooperation of China and India, but we should not let their foot-dragging prevent us from taking actions that will protect our future.

President Obama took an important step in exerting American leadership on climate change when he called for action at the Federal level to curb carbon pollution, just as we limit our toxic chemicals, like mercury, sulfur, and arsenic. The President also wants to allow wind and solar energy companies to use government-owned land to generate more power.

These are good ideas, but a major effort on climate change depends on congressional action, and so far we have