

refused to accept their own suggestion. So I come, once again, to the floor to propose to the Speaker and our Republican colleagues an explicit offer to help get the votes for their number, 986. I think it's a number that's too low, but I do think with the 6 weeks that are built into it for us to come to the table to discuss a budget that reduces the deficit, that creates jobs, that puts people to work, that we can make progress.

Once again, an explicit offer to help you, Mr. Speaker, get those votes, because this shutdown, while it might be a joy to all of you who are opposed to government, is a luxury our country cannot afford.

Senator REID, leader of the Senate, has three times, at least three times, accepted your offer of 986. Once again, he will send it back to us so that we can take "yes" for an answer to a number that the Republicans have put forth, which the Democrats don't like because we already agreed with the Republicans on a number, a compromise number, 1,058, but are willing, in the interest of the American people, to accept that number as the basis for discussion and go to conference, really go to conference.

Well, I won't even go into my view of what happened last night. I will say, and remind, that 5 years and a couple of weeks ago, we had terrible news brought to us that said that our financial institutions were in meltdown.

House Democrats rallied to support President Bush to stop that meltdown from happening, even when Republicans rejected the proposal of their own President.

Bipartisan cooperation is what the American people expect; and when it is a question of a meltdown of a financial institution, the shutdown of our government, we have no choice but to cooperate with each other.

So in that spirit, I offer a hand of friendship to the Speaker, to our Republican colleagues, accepting their number as the basis for us to go forward to truly go to the table, as was suggested 6 months ago and many, many times in the time since then.

So I hope that, again, in the interest of the American people, the Republicans will take "yes" for an answer to their own proposal, and let us sit down and get to work for the American people.

Shutting down government should not be an option that is taken lightly by any of us here. Let's get it open. Let's get to work.

□ 1230

FAIRNESS FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, the House continues to send the Senate options to end the current government

shutdown, but they refuse to appoint conferees. Every American family has to live within its means and overcome differences. Congress must do the same. I implore the Senate to take the very basic step of agreeing to a conference with the House to resolve our differences.

House Republicans remain committed to ending this government shutdown. It is unfair for the administration to grant a delay for big businesses, but not to individuals. It is unfair for the administration and Congress to exempt themselves from ObamaCare and to grant hundreds of other special waivers, but not allow a delay of the individual mandate for every ordinary American.

We must all live under the laws that we enact and provide fairness for the American people.

TAKE THE RESPONSIBLE COURSE

(Ms. KUSTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, last night, as we were preparing to vote at an ungodly hour, I was receiving messages from friends from home who were concerned about the irresponsible nature of the leadership in this House in taking actions that would lead to the shutdown of our government.

One of the messages that was particularly important to me was from a dear friend who was waiting for midnight so that she could sign up for health care for her child. My friend Ellie's husband died at a very young age, unexpectedly, and left her alone with a young child. Her child has developmental issues and challenges, but he's done very, very well with a great deal of help, and he's gone off to college. She couldn't be more proud of him.

But the truth of the matter is she can't afford health insurance for her family. It's over a thousand dollars a month. She wrote to me:

I cannot wait until I can sign my family up for health care.

That's what today is about. We need to get the country back to work, open the government, and take the responsible course.

TIME FOR THE SENATE TO RESPOND

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

Mr. STUTZMAN. Mr. Speaker, it seems that only the American people can drag HARRY REID to the negotiating table. Back home, Hoosiers already know that Washington is fiscally broke; but today, after the Senate pushed this country into a shutdown, they also know that Congress is broken.

The House has sent HARRY REID and Senate Democrats four separate proposals to keep the government open, yet Senate Democrats have rejected each one of them without offering a single counterproposal. It's clear that President Obama and HARRY REID would rather shut the government down than even discuss the real-world consequences of ObamaCare.

The American people don't want the government to shut down and they don't want Washington to saddle them with ObamaCare's tax hikes, job losses, and higher premiums. My colleagues in the House have listened and acted. It's time for the Senate to respond.

I'm hopeful that the American people will continue to make their voices heard in Washington. It's time for Senate Democrats to end their politically motivated obstructionism. It's time for Senator REID and President Obama to come to the table and talk.

HARDER YET MAY BE THE FIGHT

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of talk about fairness. Let me tell you what's not fair.

It's not fair for a working mother with one child who works full-time at \$7.25 an hour and makes \$15,080 a year. That working mother works full-time and lives below the poverty line. The poverty line is \$15,180 a year. It is not fair for that working mother not to be able to afford health care for herself and for her child. This is the fairness that we are addressing.

This fight is all about working-class people, not about those who make millions and billions. One person in this country made \$3 billion. That's \$400 a second. It's not about this person who, by the way, paid 15 percent taxes. It's not about 1 percent raking in all of the wealth. It's about working-class people who can't get health care.

We cannot allow health care to become wealth care in the richest country in the world. One out of every 60 persons in this country is a millionaire. One out of every 11 households is worth more than a million dollars.

This is about working-class people. Harder yet may be the fight.

NO SPECIAL DEALS

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my constituents' frustration with Washington, D.C. After a long career in the private sector, I share their frustration. I have negotiated many contracts where I used to work. To negotiate a contract, you need two parties to come to the table.

Last night, the House sent a reasonable compromise to the Senate that