

WE NEED LEADERSHIP IN THE HOUSE

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

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, it's day number two of a government shutdown. The American public is watching, and they're not happy with what they're seeing.

Mr. Speaker, you are the leader of this body, the House of Representatives. You're the Speaker of the House. This is a House that's made up of both Democrats and Republicans. We need leadership at this juncture; and, Mr. Speaker, you are the one person who can bring it, but you're not showing that leadership. You need to take Democratic and Republican ideas and help us move forward.

I'm here to work. I'm a freshman, and I came here with the mandate to get Washington working again, to get people working again. That's what I intend to do. But, Mr. Speaker, you've got to reach out to Democrats and invite us in to bring our ideas forward. You are the one person who can do it.

I talk to my colleagues on the Republican side, and I'll talk to the Republicans right now. We want to get the country moving forward, but we can come up with the best ideas possible, and there's only one person who can bring that legislation to the floor. Mr. Speaker, that's you. We need leadership at this juncture, and the country is watching. Enough with the Washington politics.

We hear that you may shut the government down to play more Washington politics for 17 days to tie this to the faith and credit of the United States of America. You are the one person who's going to do that, Mr. Speaker. Don't take us down that path. Too many Americans are suffering.

We need leadership at this juncture, Mr. Speaker. There is a clean funding bill on your desk. Bring it to the floor. Bring it to the floor and let us have a chance to vote up or down. That's regular order. Give us a chance. It will keep government open for 6 or 10 weeks. But give us a chance to vote up or down on that. If the Republicans don't like it, fine. They're going to vote against it. But give us a chance to bring it to the floor. And it's not a bill that Democrats like, but we understand it'll keep the government open and it'll give us a chance to do what we were elected to do—pass a real budget, put a budget together.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough with the Washington politics. Now you're going to continue playing politics and bring little pieces of legislation here and there forward when what we need is a big plan and leadership. Bring the funding bill to the floor. Let's continue to pay our debt and let's keep moving forward, because people are hurting.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a doctor. The oath I took has two critical elements. One is to do good. Well, Mr. Speaker, right now you are not doing any good. You

are not doing the American public any good. And to do no harm—the failure of this body and you to bring this legislation to the floor for us to vote on is doing irreparable harm.

And as a doctor, do you know what's happening to the NIH? Do you know that they have to turn patients away—patients who have no place else to go? This is their last-ditch effort to get in there. That isn't what we do in America.

Mr. Speaker, you're the one person who can bring this legislation to the floor—and do it.

As a doctor, do you know what's happening in the CDC? We're about to enter flu season. God forbid we have an epidemic of anything. They're laying off almost 70 percent of their staff. This is putting America in harm's way.

Mr. Speaker, do what my oath says as a doctor: do good and do no harm. Right now, you are doing the exact opposite.

Let's get Washington working again, and let's put the American people first. We the people. This is the United States of America, united. That means we've got to come together as a country and put the people first.

Mr. Speaker, the American public is watching you.

THE SENATE MUST ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MICA). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this morning, one of my colleagues across the aisle said—very accurately—in quoting another elected official, that everything that gets done, gets done in the middle. I happen to believe that the only type of legislation that really passes and lasts is that which is done in a bipartisan way. That's why I commit in every bill that I author and I work on to reach across the aisle and find a friend to be the lead coauthor, and we build support on both sides of the aisle.

But, Mr. Speaker, based on the comments of my colleague and my own personal beliefs, I believe that's why this health care law is so flawed and has so many flaws in it, because it was not done in that spirit. It did not honor that principle. It was done unilaterally, in the most partisan way, and shoved upon the American people.

It is publicly acknowledged that it has flaws. The majority of Americans are demanding fixes of the publicly acknowledged flaws in the health care law—flaws that are acknowledged by Republicans and Democrats alike.

So instead of protecting perhaps the President's legacy, it's time to come together. Republicans are only seeking commonsense fixes to decrease costs and increase access, and fixes that are bipartisan and common sense.

Last night, I was very disappointed on this House floor. I voted to protect our veterans and to protect the citizens

of the District of Columbia. Last night, we had a bill that would just allow them to use their own money—money that they pay in taxes to the municipality that they contribute through the parking meters and the fines and the fees that they pay and just be able to use their own money, and also be able to open our monuments and our parks to the American tourists. And our American heroes, our honor flights, are coming in each and every day, World War II, part of that Greatest Generation.

And yet it was defeated by votes from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for political purposes; and I know politics within the Beltway, but those were bipartisan solutions to help key individuals.

Mr. Speaker, it's troubling that the Senate leader has prevented consideration of even the most commonsense changes to the President's health care law, including one that has bipartisan support and previously passed his own Chamber. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle—in both parties—already have overwhelmingly rejected the medical device tax.

Last year, 37 House Democrats voted with all Republicans to repeal the tax, with a large bipartisan majority of 270–146. In March, the Democratic-led Senate voted 79–20 to repeal the tax.

The Senators from my own home State of Pennsylvania—one Democrat, Senator BOB CASEY, and one Republican, Senator PAT TOOMEY—supported the bill. In fact, Senator CASEY was its chief author and sponsor.

The medical device tax repeal was part of the House continuing resolution. It was blocked was consideration by Leader REID. For the past 2 weeks, the House has worked to fund the government, prevent a shutdown, and protect the American people from the President's health care law. The Senate has decided to drag its feet and reject these reasonable proposals.

There is an appropriate way to conduct budget negotiations, and that is through the normal procedure of appointing a conference committee—that's appointing negotiators, Republicans and Democrats alike, from both the House and the Senate—to get to the table and sit down and work out our differences. That is elementary civics. Unfortunately, the Senate leader has prevented regular order from proceeding.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected to represent my constituents and reform government, and I will continue fighting on their behalf. Congress must act now to end this shutdown and get to work on the many challenges facing this great Nation.

DAY TWO OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today is day two of the Republican government shutdown. It is day two of the Republicans throwing a temper tantrum because they don't have the votes to overturn the Affordable Care Act. They have chosen to hold the Federal Government hostage in order to placate a small, reckless, extreme faction of their conference. It's shameful and it needs to stop.

Already, National Parks are closed, Head Start facilities are beginning to close, and paychecks to Federal employees could be delayed. And if closing Head Start facilities wasn't bad enough, shutting the government down could cause great harm to pregnant women, infants, and children.

That's right, Mr. Speaker. Pregnant women, infants, and children will begin feeling the impacts of this Republican shutdown as funding for the WIC program begins to lapse. There are nearly 9 million pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, and children on WIC. Nine million low-income people receive healthy food and nutrition education from this important and vital program.

WIC is a critical program that provides food and nutrition counseling for low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as newborns and infants. It is a key program that helps pregnant and breastfeeding women stay healthy through proper nutrition and actually helps prevent many health issues associated with nonnutritious meals.

In about a week, funding for WIC will dry up. Funding for food and nutrition education for low-income women and their children will be eliminated. Some States will see their funds dry up right away; and some, like Massachusetts, have budgeted in a way that will allow them to patch funds together to prevent major shortfalls only for a couple of weeks.

I come to this floor week after week to talk about how we can end hunger now. A few weeks ago, this House of Representatives cut SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, by \$39 billion. Year after year, Budget Committee Chairman PAUL RYAN tries to block grant SNAP, a \$130 billion cut in the program. And a few years ago, the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired then by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON), attempted to cut WIC by hundreds of millions of dollars.

There's a pattern here of trying to balance the budget on the backs of the poor, on the backs of the hungry. There's a pattern here of saying to people who are struggling to make ends meet that they just don't matter.

The Republicans, who are forcing this government shutdown—those Republicans who are cheering on a government shutdown like cheerleaders at a pep rally—are inflicting real damage on real Americans. And those on the front lines are, unfortunately, poor women and their children.

We're not going to end hunger now by painting a target on their backs and

using them to balance our budgets. Income disparity is currently at its greatest gap since the Great Depression. Hunger is not getting any better in this country. Yet the Republicans in the House think it's okay to take food away from hungry people, including veterans and kids, just because they don't like those programs.

The cut in food stamps that we debated and voted on a couple of weeks ago would throw 170,000 of our veterans off the program—men and women who have served our country in battle. They'll be cut from the program.

What they are doing is wrong. It takes my breath away, Mr. Speaker.

Ending hunger requires real leadership and not letting some right-wing zealots eviscerate the Federal budget so that the hungry in America don't have the ability to put food on their tables. What is happening here is cold. It is heartless. It is unconscionable.

We should be working to end hunger now instead of shutting down the Federal Government. The low-income women, infants, and children of this country deserve a hell of a lot better than they're getting from this Republican-led House of Representatives.

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AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, the health care marketplaces are finally open. The only complaint is that people are so eager to learn more about their options and to sign up that too many people logged on yesterday.

Now, to hear my colleagues from across the aisle describe this day, you might expect to look out the window and witness the beginning of, as "Ghostbusters" once put it, 40 years of darkness—earthquakes, volcanos, the dead rising from the grave, dogs and cats living together, mass hysteria. Perhaps these warnings were overblown.

The start of the Affordable Care Act resulted in exactly zero people locked out of their offices with their paychecks on hold. By contrast, the Republican shutdown has furloughed 800,000 Federal employees.

Exactly zero people yesterday were deprived of their annual flu shots because of the Affordable Care Act. In fact, ObamaCare has made preventive care for things like vaccines free, without copay, to insured patients nationwide. By contrast, the Republican shutdown has forced the CDC to halt its annual seasonal influenza program, just as flu season is getting underway.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, exactly zero infants yesterday were deprived of healthy food and nutrition information. By contrast, the Republican shutdown has put at risk the entire Women, Infants, and Children program,

which provides some 9 million Americans with the support they need to feed their children.

The Republican shutdown has also brought to a standstill critical life-saving biomedical research being conducted at the NIH and NSF. Exactly zero people yesterday went untreated because of the ACA for foodborne illnesses. By contrast, the Republican shutdown has forced the FDA to cease many of its food safety operations.

The Affordable Care Act has not ushered in an era of doom and gloom that the Republicans promised. Instead, it has offered hope and opportunity for good health care coverage.

Here is the reality: The ACA is helping my constituents who previously found health insurance out of reach. The access provided by ACA is long overdue. Rather than seek delay, we should be embracing it.

For years I've been hearing from people like Nicole, from Lawrence, who writes not about the fear of the ACA but, rather, "the fear that the health care of your family will bankrupt you and that your lack of resources will leave you and your loved ones vulnerable to sickness and death."

Now, I also hear optimism—optimism—that comes from the options that can now be found in the new marketplace. Just ask Mary, from Princeton, who wrote me earlier this week:

Please do not allow the implementation of ObamaCare to be delayed. I've been waiting and waiting for a time when my adult children would be able to afford health insurance.

She goes on to say that the health care marketplace has given her "the opportunity to review plans with them and to assist them to choose the best plan."

There is the single mother from Scotch Plains who wrote me:

I am a registered Republican, and I am embarrassed by all that has been happening for the last few days. The Tea Party and some Republicans keep yelling that they're speaking for the people. Well, they're not speaking for me or anyone I know.

ObamaCare must be given a chance. I have been without coverage since my COBRA ended 2 years ago. I was unable to get reasonable coverage at a reasonable rate. I don't want charity; I'm not looking for a handout. I want affordable health care. I've been praying I stay healthy. I'm patiently waiting for the affordable care exchanges so that I can finally try my luck there. Please, please don't let the Tea Party take this away from me and so many others who need it.

Now, I wish my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would accept this as the good news that it is. I wish they would accept that their stories of doom and gloom for ObamaCare were wrong. But instead, we're learning that the dire stories were not a prediction, they were a threat.

The Tea Party, confronted with the prospect of a duly passed law that has been upheld by the Supreme Court, have thrown a temper tantrum. They have taken hostage the entire Federal Government, and they have sabotaged the process of self-government—all to