Where is that in a representative government? Where is that in being responsive to the American people?

Mr. Speaker, if we really want good policy—and I have to believe that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle truly want good policy—then we need to approach this. We need to take self-service out of this. We need to come together like adults and sit down and talk this through and come up with a reasonable solution that would bring the best outcome for the American people. That’s what we need to do.

We invite, still today, the leadership of the Senate to come and sit down and to confer with us—to negotiate with us, to lay out their concerns and their thoughts. Let’s be adults. Let’s do the right thing for the American people.

POLITICAL BRINKMANSHIP OVER RESPONSIBLE COMPROMISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I take to the floor with a heavy heart, a heavy heart that is dis-appointed, frustrated, and, frankly, outraged by our government shutdown.

Once again, we have put partisan politics ahead of the needs of the American people; and as I stand before you this morning, millions of Americans are already suffering the consequences at the hands of a dysfunctional Congress. The legislative process that has resulted in this shutdown reflects a neglect of the responsibilities that we were sent here to meet.

The House majority had a chance to avert the government shutdown, but chose political brinkmanship over responsible compromise. In order to avoid the shutdown earlier this week, the Senate sent the House a bill, a compromise spending bill, which accepted the Republican lower funding levels. Instead of allowing a clean funding bill to come to this floor, the House majority, once again, attached unreasonable amendments which had no hope of gaining bipartisan support.

Now House Republicans want to partially open the Federal Government, cherry-picking winners and losers. This is no way to run a government. Think about it: if we and all of the small businesses and big businesses out there would run their institutions the way we run this Congress, our economy would be in shambles.

I hate to play the blame game, Mr. Speaker, but this government shutdown is solely the responsibility and the creation of House Republicans. We have tried to compromise, but Republicans time and time again have been using America’s tax-paying money to re-run their own agenda and again the Affordable Care Act.

People say that House Democrats, the Senate, and the President should
compromise on this. How do you ex-
tend a hand to a clenched fist? You
cannot compromise when the other
side is not willing to accept the fact
that the Affordable Care Act is the
law of the land. It has been debated. It
has been voted on. It has been found to be
constituted. Let's do what's best with
the American people's business.

I think that if we all ran our house-
holds and our businesses the way this
Congress is now functioning, simply
put, it would be unacceptable. We know
collectively now that it's irresponsible
and reckless to make the American
people pay when we don't get our way.
We were sent to Congress to represent
something bigger than ourselves. We
were sent to represent the American
people, all of the people, all Americans,
not just the privileged few.

We represent every military family
and every veteran, from the homeless
veteran in Birmingham, Alabama, to
those serving overseas right now. We
represent every child in this great
country of ours, from the child who
will eat free lunch today because of the
SNAP program, to the child here in
D.C. who is enrolled in the Head Start
program. All Americans. We were
elected to be representatives. We need
to start earning the title of being a
representative by representing all of
the people. It's unacceptable that we
are in this Chamber while the rest of
government is shut down. It is unac-
cetable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that you bring to
this House floor a clean funding bill
unencumbered by unreasonable amend-
ments. Bring a clean funding bill
to this floor, and I guarantee you that
both Republicans and Democrats would
pass that bill and we would open back
up the Federal Government.

It's important that we put our par-
tisan politics aside and truly start rep-
resenting the American people that
sent us here. Let's be representative of
all the people.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN
The SPEAKER pro tempore. The
Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from
Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) for 5 min-
utes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I
appreciate the opportunity to address
my colleagues today. Indeed, being in
the middle of a government shutdown
is something we did not want, and my
colleagues and I on our side of the aisle
continue to invite the Senate col-
leagues and their conferees to sit at
the table with us and negotiate. We
want to make it clear that we will work
out the issues of our Nation's fiscal health.

We have to remember currently we're
borrowing $2 billion, $3 billion a day to
keep the doors open. This is something
we cannot do. It is not fair. It is not fair
to future generations. It is not fair to our
children, our grandchildren. It is not
fair to the small business people who
have dreams of building a busi-
ness, watching that business grow,
watching those dreams come true. It is
not fair to the future of their families.
To our Senate colleagues, we do con-
clude to ask them to join us and to ne-
gotiate these issues.

There's a lot that's been said about
ObamaCare, and some say, Well, it
doesn't have anything to do with the
budget. You know what, Mr. Speaker?
It has everything to do with the budget
because of the amount of growth that
is taking place in this program. I think
we all remember that originally
ObamaCare will lead to a health insur-
ance access program. Let's give a path-
way for uninsured Americans to have
access to health insurance, a laudable
goal, something that there was agree-
ment on. Where it ran off the rails, if
you will, was in the projections of the
cost—far exceeding what anybody
thought it would be—when it began to
make $600 billion worth of cuts in
Medicare, taking money out of Medi-
care, money that the Federal Govern-
ment has put in. This is money that
nurses, doctors, and people like me
can't touch. It is not fair to them.

When it comes to Medicaid, a key
piece of the Affordable Care Act,
lowest-income people, including those
who are not eligible for the Affordable
Care Act and are currently uninsured,
cannot compromise when the other
side is not willing to accept the fact
that the Affordable Care Act is the
law of the land. It has been debated.
It has been voted on. It has been found
to be constitutional. Let's do what's
best with the American people's busi-
ness.

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