

mothers in jeopardy and individuals who are now unable to get the nutritional assistance that might otherwise be available. You have placed veterans in jeopardy, Mr. Speaker. The House majority has placed families in jeopardy—more than 800,000 hardworking civil servants cast out onto the streets, with the uncertainty to determine when they may be able to pay their bills. The House majority with this government shutdown has placed the economy of the American people in jeopardy.

Enough is enough.

I am trying to figure out who actually is in charge, Mr. Speaker. Are you in control of your conference on the other side of the aisle? Is it the Tea Party that is in control of the House of Representatives agenda? Is it outside agitators or the junior Senator from Texas who barks out orders on the other side of the aisle, and then they're executed in lockstep by the extremists here in the House of Representatives? Mr. Speaker, who is in charge? Who is responsible on your side of the aisle for marching us down this dangerous path?

I have also been struggling in trying to figure out why are you so angry about the Affordable Care Act. What is it that you are so upset about? Are you angry about the fact that tens of millions of previously uninsured Americans will have access to health care? Are you upset about the fact that the law will prevent discrimination against individuals, including children with preexisting conditions? Are you angry about the fact that the Medicare part D doughnut hole will be closed and that seniors all across America will have access to more robust prescription drug coverage? Are you angry about the fact that young people in a difficult economy can stay on their parents' health insurance plans until they are the age of 26? What exactly are you upset about? Are you angry about the fact that small businesses will have access to tax credits—as much as 35 percent—in order to insure their employees in a manner that will help these small businesses grow and prosper?

Enough already.

The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. It was passed by a duly elected Congress in 2010 with the great leadership of NANCY PELOSI and HARRY REID. You have lost legislatively, Mr. Speaker. The Affordable Care Act was determined to be constitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States of America in an opinion written by Chief Justice John Roberts, an individual nominated by George W. Bush. You've lost legally. Then the President of the United States of America was reelected last November in an electoral college landslide. You have lost politically, Mr. Speaker.

Enough already.

Why are we in this situation? I would simply ask that we pass a clean CR and get back to doing the business of the American people.

A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. PITTENGER. We were elected to be Representatives—to represent our districts, to represent our constituents, to listen, and to respond.

Mr. Speaker, I have been listening. I have been listening to phone calls. I have been reading emails. I have been hearing what my constituents have to say, and I can tell you that they are deeply concerned. They are concerned with the direction of our country. Yes, they are concerned with a body that can't seem to come together, that can't seem to listen to each other. One of them wrote me just today.

He said:

I have watched with great interest the ongoing debate between the House and the Senate regarding the new Federal health care law. Quite frankly, I was of the opinion that an absolute stand by House Republicans to defund ObamaCare was an inappropriate step as compared to less drastic measures . . . However, in the mail today, we received a 92 percent proposed increase from Blue Cross-Blue Shield for our current plan in 2014. The explanation of the increase all boiled down to the changes in the insurance market required as a result of the full implementation of ObamaCare. You can easily understand why we are astounded that this is the best health care direction that our country can embark upon.

I encourage you to take whatever opportunities come your way to stop this disaster that is looming. The financial impact on people who are not a drain on the government will be immense.

Here is another one, Mr. Speaker:

I just received a letter from Blue Cross informing me that my current coverage has been outlawed by ObamaCare and that the premium for my family will increase by 400 percent if I switch to a legal coverage option. This increase is over \$9,000 a year . . . I don't care if you have to risk shutting down the government or defaulting on the debt. It is just postponing the inevitable default if ObamaCare is allowed to exist.

Mr. Speaker, we are not here because we want to shut down the government. We have made every effort possible. We have gone to great lengths—the extra mile—to the other side to present to them alternatives, to present to them ways that we could come together and agree. We had three proposals there on the table. Now we have offered to go and sit down and talk. That's what our body does. When we have disagreements between the House and the Senate, our formal agreement is to meet and we confer. We bring in negotiators. We talk, and we try to reason this out. We do this in our families, don't we? That's what is done in this body in the normal course of business.

However, in our efforts of trying to bring resolution and sound reasoning to this process, we can't get a response. They say, No, we don't want to talk to you. We don't want to reason with you. We don't want to hear what your constituents are saying. We don't want to hear the problems. We just want to ram this through.

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 take politics out of 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 our hope is.

We invite, still today, the leadership of the Senate to come and sit down and to conference 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 gentlewoman 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 disappointed, 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 Republicans' 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.

□ 1130

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 redebate again and again the Affordable Care Act.

People say that House Democrats, the Senate, and the President should