

severe asthma. But we have our vision, we want to get to the same goal.

So to my friends on the Democrat side, particularly over in the Senate, 2 years ago you lit up my phones in my office demanding that we talk and negotiate on other issues. So that rhetoric was acceptable in the summer of 2011, but today it is not? How about just a little bit of intellectual consistency from the left?

SETTING ASIDE POLITICS AND PUTTING NEEDS OF CONSTITUENTS FIRST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, it is day four and I am just amazed that this government shutdown has been allowed to continue even though we have the votes to end it right now. A bipartisan majority of this House supports the Senate-passed so-called "clean continuing resolution," but for some reason Speaker BOEHNER won't allow a vote. People back home in Oregon and across the United States don't understand this. The majority of the House, a majority of the Senate, and the President agree on a deal that would reopen the government, but it is not going to happen because the Speaker won't allow a vote.

This is hurting our constituents. One of mine wrote about her family's effort to save enough money for a house, but she is on indefinite furlough, unpaid time that she didn't ask for, didn't deserve and can't afford. Another had planned a trip to visit the Grand Canyon; but after making reservations and buying tickets, the park won't be open and her family's trip will be ruined. Someone else wrote about her pregnant daughter who relies on WIC and won't receive the nutrition assistance she needs.

Yesterday, a volunteer at the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge said that years of conservation and restoration work could be set back because there will be no staff on duty to manage the water levels. Researchers at our State's universities, like Oregon State University, had to put projects on hold. They have been unable to collaborate with Federal agencies, important deadlines are being missed, new grant applications aren't being processed.

These are just a few of the stories I am hearing. The shutdown hasn't just affected one agency or one constituency. It has affected everyone who relies on a functioning Federal Government. And, Mr. Speaker, it is chipping away at what is left of the respect for this institution. We can't afford to use any more precious time on piecemeal bills that we know won't go anywhere. It is time to set aside the politics and put the needs of our constituents first.

Mr. Speaker, I understand, as does America, that you and some of your Members do not support the Affordable

Care Act. We understand that. We got that message. But it passed both Chambers, was signed into law, and was upheld by the Supreme Court.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't like the across-the-board cuts caused by sequestration. They are harming my district and this country, and I will continue to fight them. Yet I am ready now to vote for the clean continuing resolution that contains those cuts. Why? Because it is critical to get the government open now. And every indication is that a majority of this Chamber will do the same.

Mr. Speaker, let us reopen the Federal Government. We can do it today. Mr. Speaker, please let us vote.

MAKING WASHINGTON, D.C., LESS IMPORTANT AND LESS POWERFUL IN THE LIVES OF AMERICANS

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

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, this is a frustrating time in Washington. For the first time in 17 years, our government has been shut down. I believe the political gridlock is at a discouraging high mark. I empathize with those who are feeling its devastating effects, especially those hardworking people who have been affected by furloughs, including some members of my own family.

So I rise today in defense of the American people and I ask one simple question: Why won't the President and HARRY REID sit down and talk to us? The American people are hurting. They want to see progress. They want to see us work and fix this in a bipartisan way. So why won't the President and the Senate leader sit down and engage us in a simple conversation? What are they afraid of?

The President of the United States is the President of all of the people. He is not just the President of the Democratic Party. He is not just the President of those States in which he won. He is the President of the United States. He is the President of everyone. He owes it to the American people to listen to their voices. So let me ask again, what is he afraid of? Why won't he sit down and talk with us?

I represent more than 700,000 people in my home State of Utah. They want the government to stay open, but they do not want ObamaCare. They know what a horrible piece of legislation it is. They know and they already see that it is destroying jobs. They know it is hurting working families. They know that it is driving up costs. They want the President to know this. They want HARRY REID to listen to their concerns, but both of them refuse to talk to us.

So let me ask again, what are they afraid of? Are they afraid that they might be actually convinced that we are right? Are they afraid that they might have to compromise just a lit-

tle? I am the father of six children. I know what it is like to have teenagers in the house. I know what happens when they get angry because they don't get their way. They run to their bedroom, they slam the door, and they refuse to come out and talk.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for our President to take out his ear buds, to open the door, to come out and talk to us. He has canceled his trip to Asia. But I ask why, for what purpose, if he still refuses to come out and talk to us.

My goal throughout the last several weeks has been to find a way to fund the government operations, other than ObamaCare, and to avoid a government shutdown. But once again, unfortunately, President Obama and Senator REID have expressed no willingness, no willingness at all to compromise.

We have to understand that we are engaged in a generational fight over our debt and spending as it goes far beyond ObamaCare. Our current national debt is approaching \$17 trillion, and it is growing every moment. During this administration, we will more than double our national debt; but it doesn't just end there. This is about the reach of government into our lives, with ObamaCare just being one example of how our government has grown too large and too powerful. In addition, this law will come with something like a \$1.3 trillion price tag. That is something that we simply can't afford.

It is critical that we work together now to reduce the size and the power of government in our lives. House Republicans have repeatedly come to the table to negotiate over the past several weeks. So once again I ask, what are they afraid of? Why won't they sit down and talk to us? As a former President, one of my heroes, John F. Kennedy said, let us never fear to negotiate.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to do everything in my power along with my other colleagues to find a solution to reopen the government while fighting to make Washington, D.C., less important and less powerful in the lives of American citizens.

PUTTING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES BACK TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, we are in day four of the Republican shutdown, an irresponsible and manufactured crisis designed to promote ideology at the expense of the American people.

Let's be clear about why House Republicans have so knowingly, carelessly, and recklessly shut down our government. We have heard it on this floor today, Mr. Speaker. It is because they continue to be obsessed with eliminating the Affordable Care Act, the law of the land that is being implemented right now. It has become apparent that they are willing to sacrifice the basic functions of the U.S.