

with a bipartisan agreement in December of last year, they chose to walk away. Unfortunately, they appear ready to do so again. When it comes to extending tax cuts to the middle class, Democrats and Republicans agree; both believe we ought to do so. So we have agreement. That agreement has been reflected in a Senate-passed bill, Mr. Speaker, as you know.

So with millions faced with the uncertainty of whether their taxes will go up next year, why haven't we acted? This should be an easy vote for an overwhelming majority of Members to say, Let's extend these tax cuts we agree on, and then debate what we don't agree on. It should be easy. But the Republicans, Mr. Speaker, are continuing to do what they do so often, have done best this Congress—obstruct, delay, and walk away.

In December, by holding hostage an extension of the payroll tax cuts for 98 percent of our taxpayers, Republicans walked away from the middle class. They walked away from their responsibility to seek compromise on job creation and economic recovery. They walked away from negotiations over deficit reduction, setting up the dangerous sequester that now looms at the end of the year. The sequester exists because Republicans pursued a policy of placing the Nation's debt at risk.

Today, sadly, they are walking away from the middle class and working families once more, demanding their way or nothing on tax cuts. No tax cuts for the middle class, they insist, without an additional tax break for the upper 2 percent of income earners. In other words, we agree on 98 percent. We don't agree on 2 percent. Rather than doing that which we agree upon for 98 percent of the American taxpayers, we will hold them hostage until we get agreement on the 2 percent. Of course if we agree on the 2 percent, it will add a trillion dollars over 10 years, if followed for 10 years, to our deficit and debt.

Republicans' plan of tax cuts for the wealthy hasn't worked before, and it won't work now. Under President Reagan and both Presidents Bush, deficits climbed. Democrats want to return to the successful policies we had under President Clinton, when we had the most successful economy, 4 years of balanced budgets, and 4 years in which we did not increase the national debt.

I say to my friends on the Republican side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, we've had many opportunities to work together this year to address our challenges, but each time our Republican colleagues have walked away. In doing so, they broke a central promise in their pledge to America—that is, the promise to let the majority work its will.

We could have extended the payroll tax cuts without a fight. We could have found a big and balanced solution to deficits. And we could be voting today on a tax cut extension for 100 percent of Americans who make up to \$200,000.

Or, if they're a couple, \$250,000. But in each case, Mr. Speaker, Republicans moved not towards the center but to the right to placate the extreme wing within their party.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, Representative RICHARD HANNA of New York, a Republican, said this about his party in Congress:

I have to say that I am frustrated by how much we—I mean the Republican Party—are willing to give deferential treatment to our extremes in this moment of history.

The gentleman from New York went on to say:

We render ourselves incapable of governing when all we do is take severe sides. If all people do is go down there and join a team, and the team is invested in winning and you have something similar to the shirts and the skins, there's not a lot of value there.

Congressman HANNA in this instance is right. Republicans have been unable to govern. Again and again, this Republican House has received compromise bills from the Senate but has been incapable of agreeing to legislation or passing a version that could become law.

That was true on transportation. It's true on the farm bill, and it's true on Violence Against Women. And it's true on this tax bill. Examples include, as I've said, Violence Against Women and the farm bill, postal reform, the highway bill, FAA reauthorization, and many others. Instead of focusing on winning politically, they ought to be concerned about governing effectively.

They could learn much from our outstanding Olympic athletes. In team sports like soccer and basketball, athletes who normally compete against each other at home have come together as one team, Team USA. They've won gold; they've been successful. We could be as well if we came together as Team USA.

Those athletes may harbor rivalries most of the time. They may not be used to working together. And they all know that when the cauldron is extinguished, they'll once again wear different colors. But right now in London, they're all wearing red, white, and blue, and they've set their differences aside to achieve victory together. We ought to follow their example. Republicans ought to follow their example.

We have a chance today to be one team and make possible what we agree ought to happen. Again, we agree on 98 percent of the proposal. Let's agree on that, and agree to debate that on which we don't agree. So I say to my Republican friends, stop walking away from the middle class and start working with us to get things done on their behalf.

Let me quote someone I don't usually quote, Newt Gingrich, when he was Speaker of this House when we were considering a compromise that he and President Clinton had agreed to, and so many of his Republican colleagues, Mr. Speaker, as you may remember, opposed Newt Gingrich's efforts. He said:

I would say for just a minute, if I might, to my friends who were asking for a 'no' vote, the 'perfectionist caucus.'

He concluded his remarks in urging them to vote for a compromise agreement:

So the question is: Can we craft a bill which is a win for the American people because it is a win for the President and a win for the Congress? Because if we cannot find a way to have all three winning, we do not have a bill worthy of being passed.

The President has indicated he will not sign the Republican bill, and the Senate won't pass the Republican bill. But again, my friends, Mr. Speaker, as you know, we have agreement on 98 percent, and we are hung up because we don't have agreement on the other 2 percent.

Speaker Gingrich went on:

Now, my fine friends who are perfectionists, each in their own world where they are petty dictators, could write a perfect bill.

And he concluded:

In a free society, we have to have give and take. We have to be able to work.

Mr. Speaker, Americans must lament the fact that they see their Representatives agreeing on 98 percent of a proposition and will not pass it. They will not pass it because the perfectionist caucus has promised in many respects to one individual American we will not raise taxes ever. We won't pay for what we buy, even if we think it's important.

Mr. Speaker, both parties have an opportunity today to stand up and reflect agreement and do something positive for the American people, do something positive for the American economy, do something positive to grow jobs in America. Do something that will give certainty and confidence to the overwhelming majority of Americans, who will say that Congress can work.

□ 1110

It can, as families understand they must do every day, reach compromise, come together, reason with one another and give and take, as Speaker Gingrich said.

Let us hope, Mr. Speaker, that we reflect the best in us today, not the worst, not the confrontational inclination, but the inclination to come together, to make America better and to make sure that the American people, who are working hard every day, don't see a tax increase on January 1 as a result of a "perfectionist caucus" unwilling to compromise, unwilling to pass an already-passed Senate bill that will give 98 percent of Americans confidence that they will not receive any tax increase on January 1.

What a good thing that would be for America, for the American people, and for the American economy. Let's work together. America expects us to do that, and that's what we ought to do.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 11 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

Reverend Michael Catt, Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, I give thanks to live in a free land, blessed by You. Since the days of the Pilgrims who sought freedom from religious and political tyranny, You have blessed this land. You have guided us through wars, recession, and prosperity. We owe our existence to Your sovereign hand.

May those elected to represent the people follow the teachings of Your Word. We pray for all in authority that we may live in peace. Please guide the Congress, regardless of political persuasion, to follow the words of Micah 6:

He has told you, O man, what is good. What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly before your God? The voice of the Lord will call to the city. It is sound wisdom to fear Your name.

In the name of my Lord Jesus, I pray. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PERLMUTTER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### WELCOMING REVEREND MICHAEL CATT

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

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize today's guest chaplain, Dr. Michael Catt. Dr. Catt is the senior pastor at Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia. I'm honored to welcome Dr. Catt, his wife, Terri, and his daughter, Hayley, to the U.S. House of Representatives today.

Dr. Catt has served as senior pastor at Sherwood Baptist Church since 1989. The church has 3,000 members and has averaged 100 baptisms each year. Thousands have joined the church from Albany and 29 surrounding communities. The church has evolved from a neighborhood church to a regional, multi-ethnic congregation with members from 11 nations.

Most notably, under Dr. Catt's leadership, Sherwood Baptist developed an out-of-the-box church outreach. Dr. Catt's goal is to change the world from Albany, Georgia. While this may sound and seem like a radical or even ridiculous statement from a pastor in southwest Georgia, it has, in fact, become a reality through Sherwood Pictures. Dr. Catt has served as executive producer of "Flywheel," "Facing the Giants," "Fireproof," and "Courageous." Each of these major motion pictures serves to influence the world for Christ.

I am honored to call Dr. Catt a friend, and I look forward to how God continues to use Dr. Catt in the future. I ask my colleagues to welcome Dr. Catt and his family as he leads us today in opening prayer.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches from both sides of the aisle.

#### THE POWER TO TAX IS THE POWER TO DESTROY

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, "The last thing you want to do is to raise taxes in the middle of a recession because that would take more demand out of the economy and put business in a further hole."

That's what the President said in 2009, but that was then and this is now. If Congress doesn't act, Americans will face higher taxes when the clock strikes midnight on December 31 of this year. The President's solution is to raise taxes on some. That would eliminate 700,000 jobs in our country; 60,000 of those would be lost in my home State of Texas. The tax increase will cost the average American a year's worth of groceries—\$4,000.

Madam Speaker, almost half of Americans pay no Federal income tax at all. What we need are more taxpayers, not more taxes. We need to renew the so-called "Kennedy-Reagan-Bush tax cuts." No tax increases on Americans. Because the power to tax is the power to destroy, and the last thing we should do is raise taxes in a recession.

And that's just the way it is.

#### DON'T FORGET THE LITTLE PEOPLE

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

Ms. HOCHUL. Madam Speaker, "Don't forget the little people." That's what a gentleman said as he grabbed my hand and looked into my eyes at the Sanborn Farm Museum French toast breakfast on Saturday morning. "Don't forget the little people."

Who are these little people? I'll tell you right now, these are millions of moms and dads sitting at their dinner table tonight trying to cover their worried expression from their kids as they look over their family finances, wondering whether Congress is going to step up to the plate and give them the tax break they so desperately deserve.

Only in Washington will people tell you you need to address our growing out-of-control deficit by spending a trillion dollars on tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. And not just that. That puts us into further debt with the Chinese. I've got a problem with that.

It seems simple to me. If we want to cut our deficit, we cut spending, and we also ask those who benefited from tax breaks for the last decade to pay their fair share.

Like many of us, I'm with the little people and I'm with the middle people. Let's vote for a middle class tax cut today.

#### STOP THE TAX HIKES

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, let the countdown begin. Come January 1, the President and the Democrats plan to raise taxes on hard-working families and small business.

That's right. Instead of reining in their out-of-control spending, the President wants all Americans to hand over even more of their hard-earned money to the Federal Government. It's not smart to raise taxes ever, and certainly not in a struggling economy.

With 3 years of sky-high unemployment across the country, record-breaking deficits, and countless new rules and mandates coming from the White House, the solution is simple: Stop these job-killing tax hikes.

It's time to rewrite the Tax Code, work on pro-growth tax reform, and get this economy working again. Stop the Democrats' massive tax hikes to pay for their Big Government agenda. The American people want, need, and deserve better.

□ 1210

#### DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE POSTAL SERVICE

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