

than it was at the height of the Vietnam War, when we faced down the Soviet Union and had 500,000 combat troops in the field? The sequester isn't stepping off a cliff; it is taking one step back from the cliff.

The tax increases, however, are a very different matter. Without intervention, the Federal tax burden will balloon 21 percent at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, taking somewhere between \$2,000 and \$3,000 from an average family. This summer, the House passed legislation to protect our Nation from such a calamity, but Mr. Obama vowed to veto it, and the Senate killed it. Instead, Mr. Obama tells us that he'll veto any plan that stops taxes from going up on all of those very wealthy folks making over \$200,000, who he says need to pay their fair share. I suppose fairness is in the eye of the beholder. The top 1 percent earns 17 percent of all income and pays 37 percent of all income taxes, but that's beside the point. The fine point of it is that a lot of these very wealthy folks making over \$200,000 aren't very wealthy, and they aren't even folks. They're 1.3 million struggling small businesses filing under subchapter S. Our small businesses produce two-thirds of the new jobs in our economy. So this battle is very much for the middle class.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that Mr. Obama's tax increase on the so-called "wealthy" will actually throw 200,000 middle and working class families into unemployment. That's 200,000 lost jobs. By the way, that is the optimistic estimate. An independent analysis by Ernst & Young puts that figure closer to 700,000 lost jobs. That's because the President's taxes would slam 84 percent of the net small business income in the country. That's precisely the income that is used to support and expand our labor force.

In their blind pursuit of an eat-the-rich ideology, Mr. Obama and his acolytes are imposing a policy that would utterly devastate hundreds of thousands of middle class families who depend upon the jobs that these small businesses provide. And for what? To wring enough money to fund Mr. Obama's spending spree for a grand total of 8 days. It's telling that three-fourths of the new taxes he's proposed would be used to finance the new spending that he's also proposed.

We Republicans don't want to see taxes go up on anyone, period. We don't want to see this government willfully throw hundreds of thousands of Americans out of work by this policy. The President obviously believes that in the eleventh hour Republicans will have no choice but ultimately to protect as many taxpayers as we possibly can since the only alternative would be tax increases on everyone, including those job creators. He may be right, but that would mean a bleak and bitter New Year for all of those families who will watch helplessly as their jobs

evaporate before their eyes. Let us pray that this President has a change of heart before setting this calamity in motion.

THE REAL VICTIMS OF SEQUESTRATION

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, we just heard a terrible cry on behalf of the wealthy in the United States, that top 2 percent. Tax them, and it will kill jobs, put people out of work.

If you want to know the real victims of sequestration, the real victims of the Republican fight to protect that 2 percent at all costs, it's the homeless, it's the poor, it's the lower income, and it's the vulnerable amongst us.

Most of the debate up until now about the fiscal cliff has focused on defense cuts and expiring tax cuts justifiably, but the ramifications for local safety nets are equally portentous. In my district, for example, Fairfax County recently kicked off its annual hypothermia prevention program. During my tenure on the county board, I worked with faith, business, and community leaders to open houses of worship and other places to offer shelter from the cold and a hot meal for the homeless, individuals, and families. It saves lives.

Last winter, the program served more than 1,000 clients in one of the wealthiest districts in the United States. Sequestration threatens support for this and other Federal homeless prevention efforts. The McKinney-Vento homeless prevention program would be cut by as much as \$156 million. You didn't hear anything about that just now.

□ 1020

You didn't hear anything about that just now, and it would leave more than 145,000 more people out in the cold and at risk of dying from hypothermia.

Similarly, families in every State rely on low-income heating assistance, which stands to lose as much as \$270 million in sequestration. That may not seem like much, but that program has already been cut by the Republicans by 30 percent. Millions of Americans in every State rely on this support, including 145,000 in my home State of Virginia.

The picture gets even worse when you look at the looming cuts to Federal housing assistance. Programs like the Community Development Block Grants, section 8 housing, and rental assistance for the needy and senior citizens already have sustained dramatic cuts over the last 2 years under Republican control. The HOME Investment Partnership Program, which supports homeownership and rental assistance, was cut by more than \$600 million, or 38 percent, last year alone. It faces another \$82 million cut in seques-

tration. Prince William County, in my district, was one of the hardest-hit by foreclosures, and it has an acute shortage of affordable housing right now. Cuts in Federal housing support would further exacerbate that situation just as the local housing market is beginning to recover.

There is an old proverb about someone always getting "left out in the cold," but in this case, people literally will be left out in the cold if we allow sequestration to go forward.

Mr. Speaker, the cuts in housing assistance are just one piece of the local safety net threatened by sequestration. I recently met with the disability community in my district, and they, too, are anxious about losing the vital support that allows disabled loved ones to live independently. One local organization, for example, is providing work opportunities and rehabilitative services to more than 650 disabled adults in our community. Whether it's performing custodial services, packing medical kits for our troops, working in food services or other duties, these Ability One workers are making a positive difference in providing autonomy for individuals in our community. I and many of my colleagues here in the House, both Democrats and Republicans, are Ability One champions, and we know firsthand the positive effect this program has had, not only on the individuals, but on their families and their friends.

Employment opportunities for the disabled and revenue from their work reached an all-time high last year, but that momentum is at risk because of looming cuts through sequestration. Community service boards, for example, could lose as much as \$52 million, which would reduce services for more than 1.5 million people in America. You heard my colleague talk about maybe a few hundred thousand jobs being at risk if we cut taxes for the rich. What about these people? What about the real cuts and real effects on real people in America?

What has been troubling to the residents of my district is the fact that, up until now, the Republican alternative to these cuts has been to shift even more of the burden, not less, onto the social safety net programs. The sequestration replacement bill, which was pushed through earlier by House Republicans, cuts \$261 billion from safety net programs. It eliminates social service block grants, which support Meals on Wheels for 1.7 million seniors. Where is the concern for that? It also provides child care assistance for low-income parents who are returning to work. That plan cut \$36 billion in nutrition assistance for at-risk families. In my district, the demand for nutrition assistance has jumped by 135 percent since the recession, and it has gone up by 73 percent in the Commonwealth of Virginia during that same time period.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to turn our backs on these families. Sequestration is a real threat. We need to

have a compromise and a deal now to help these families.

REVEREND JEROME R. MILTON

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Today, when the House opens for regular session, we will be led by visiting chaplain Reverend Jerome R. Milton. This extraordinary man is a friend, and he is an inspiration to me.

To borrow from a testimonial sermon of his, Reverend Milton, as a very small child, was left to die with his brother and sister in a rundown California motel. The San Diego County welfare department found them and placed them in a horrific orphanage, called the Hillcrest Orphanage, where abuse of all kinds imaginable and unimaginable were inflicted upon them. Many of the children in such terrible conditions committed suicide, which included his brother and sister. After the horrors of this orphanage, he was placed in 13 different foster homes, where he suffered more unfathomable abuse and inhuman treatment.

Finally, as Jerome says, "God heard the cry of the lamb," and he was placed in his 14th home, that of Dadie Florence Johnson Brown. She could not read or write, but she was a good woman with a big heart and a stronger will. She took Jerome, and she said she could not imagine all the abuse he had been through, that it just sounded too unbelievable, but she looked him in the eye and said, Don't let your abuse be your excuse. She said, Someday, you can be a great juvenile judge or a case worker or something special.

But there was a lot of rebellion and anger in the young man. He hated lots of people and things, and especially God. Ms. Brown would not heed Jerome's pleas to leave him alone. She kept praying for him every single day by name. She said she knew there was good in him, but prayed that God would not let him end up in jail or in prison, because she knew God could do something very special with him.

He eventually tried the praying thing himself, but he was very cynical. He wanted to go to college, he wanted to be a coach, but he knew no one who had money. Then he found out he could run really fast, and he could play football really well. Though his teacher told him he was too black and too stupid to ever amount to anything, he proved her wrong when, just 4½ years later, he taught in a classroom right next to hers.

As Reverend Milton says, God moved him from foster care to people care. This angry, black, abused, hopeless shell of a downtrodden young boy had God-given potential. This is what Dadie Brown saw in him. Before she died, she told Jerome, All you can do for me is, if you can do for a group of children what I've done for you, then my living will not have been in vain.

She said, I don't have \$1 million, but I hope I made a \$1 million difference. When she died, she had raised 44 children, giving hope to each one.

Jerome says she led him to Jesus and that Jesus opened his heart. He providentially met and married Charlene Olgis, and together, they have nine children. Six of them were adopted through the foster care program. Tyler, Texas, is where two Heisman Trophy winners grew up, Earl Campbell and Johnny Manziel, but it is also the mission field of Reverend Jerome R. Milton and his wife, Charlene, and that's where they've invested their lives.

He is the senior pastor of the Greater New Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Tyler. He has been there for 25 years. He established the Dadie Florence Brown children's home for homeless mothers and abused children. He has been the head track and field coach at Bishop Gorman Catholic High School for 24 years, leading his team to 10 State track and field championships, and he has helped 150 athletes earn scholarships. He has also been the Tyler Citizen of the Year, winning the T.B. Butler Award. His work toward spanning race and religion and all types of barriers is boundless, and his list of accomplishments would take all day long to read.

He has blessed our town, our district, our State, and our country. It is an honor and an inspiration to know him and to count him as a friend. I so look forward to having my friend as a visiting chaplain today at noon eastern time when he opens the official part of this session in Congress.

God bless America, and God bless Jerome Milton.

THE WIND INDUSTRY AND OUR VETERANS

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. This morning, I rise to talk about two issues I care very passionately about: wind energy and veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I spent more than 20 years in the wind industry as a technology development engineer. In those early days, we saw some spectacular failures and dramatic failures, but every year, we put more into the technology development. We put a little bit this year in the gear box, in the foundations. Every year, we put a little increment of improvement in the control systems, in the field testing, in the power electronics so that we understood what was going on.

□ 1030

Today we have an industry that is a spectacular industry. The wind turbines now are hundreds of feet tall. They are extremely reliable. They produce power for 4 to 5 cents a kilowatt hour, depending on the resource. It's been a very successful business.

In the early days, the United States of America dominated that business because of consistent policies, consistent tax policies. We could rely on the policies being there year after year. Investors came in; engineers came in. But in the early 1980s, those policies began to change, and the technology began to leave our country.

We've seen, I've seen in my career, the incentives come and go over the years. I can tell you, it's devastating to the industry. It takes years to develop the infrastructure to produce wind turbines. The bearings are 20 feet in diameter. It takes expertise. In order to get a project in, you need to get a power purchase agreement. You need to get permits. You need to get investments, and then you need to order products. The products have a 1- to 2-year lead time they're so large. We're putting a lot at risk by ending the production tax credit.

And not only that, we'll see at least 40,000 jobs lost when the production tax credit expires at the end of this year. A lot of those jobs go to United States veterans, veterans of our armed services. And I can tell you what, when soldiers are trained, they're trained on large equipment. They're trained on big projects. They're well disciplined. They're reliable. They work in very adverse conditions. And that's exactly the kind of training you need to be a windsmith and a wind turbine installer, so it's been a very good fit.

There's one company in particular, Airstreams. They train wind turbine windsmiths, and 80 percent of their graduates are veterans. They get good jobs in this country. And when the production tax credit goes away, that removes the hope of many of our veterans.

Now, the veterans of our country were soldiers and sailors. They volunteered their time for our country. They put themselves in grave danger, and they came home and found a very bad employment situation. The wind energy has been a tremendous opportunity for them, and to take this hope away from our veterans is a travesty. Eliminating those jobs for veterans is absolutely unacceptable.

Now, the production tax credit, itself, is a very effective way to produce energy. You get paid for when you deliver energy in the production tax credit. In the early days, the credits went to investments, and a lot of investments were not so good. But today, the motive is to have a very reliable, a very productive set of equipment, and that's what happens when the production tax credit is extended. It creates jobs. It helps develop the manufacturing base in this country. And I can tell you, if you want to be a great country, you have to have a big manufacturing base. Of those things that are at risk of going overseas, our manufacturing base, our engineering expertise, jobs, investment, this will be a real loss for our country. It will hurt our veterans. And the last thing it will hurt is our climate.