

to Medicare. I implore our leadership in this House, bring a bold and balanced approach to solve our fiscal cliff crisis here today.

DROPPING THE BALL

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Madam Speaker, tonight in Times Square hundreds of thousands of people will be there at midnight to watch that ball drop, but here in Congress, we've also dropped the ball.

We're in the final days of the 112th Congress. No one expected us to be here on the House floor on New Year's Eve, but here we are racing towards that fiscal cliff—towards higher taxes on the middle class and slashed investment for the American people, including nutrition for mothers and infants, education for our children, and our infrastructure.

What part of the cliff sounds like a good plan? I know I'm not the only one who has spent time with families that it will hurt. I know I'm not the only one who has visited the businesses that are worried that our country could have another recession. We should not be playing this game of chicken.

There's too much at stake to have politics as usual. We have an opportunity to prevent the fiscal cliff, but in order to do so we must act as a unified Congress.

So I say to all my friends and colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, let's get this thing done. Tonight, when that ball drops, let's make sure that we haven't also dropped the ball.

□ 1020

PASS THE SENATE SUPPLEMENTAL

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, it has now been 9 weeks since Superstorm Sandy swept across the east coast. Twenty-four U.S. States were in some way affected by Sandy. The storm killed at least 131 people in eight States. Hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed. The unprecedented disaster caused billions of dollars in loss and economic disruption.

Just 2 weeks after Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast, this Congress approved more than \$62 billion in Federal aid to help the devastated area get back on its feet. After Hurricanes Ike and Gustav hit in 2008, a supplemental appropriations bill passed this Congress overwhelmingly. All of these aid packages were approved by strong bipartisan majorities in both Chambers.

The needs were obvious and the speed imperative. We need to pass the Senate supplemental. Nothing has changed. That is what we did for others. That's what we need to do to help this devastated area.

HELP FOR HOMEOWNERS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, my hope is that tonight we will do what is right for the Republic and pass a responsible measure dealing with spending and our debt. But there's another cliff tonight at midnight that should concern the millions of homeowners who have forgone their mortgage foreclosure reviews. They have a deadline of midnight tonight as reported by USA Today yesterday on the front page of the business section. It's important to millions of Americans who literally could receive up to \$100,000 in compensation because of mistakes that were made by servicers in the processing of those loans.

So, I would like to tell people who might have had foreclosures facing their families in 2009 and 2010, they can call 888-952-9105 or go to the Web site IndependentForeclosureReview.com.

The Office of Comptroller of the Currency will help them review those mortgage foreclosures. Far too many Americans, millions, 4 million to be exact, have received these notices, but only a little over 300,000 have replied. Millions of people could have those mortgages reviewed and perhaps receive compensation and hang onto their houses.

Again, that phone number is 888-952-9105. Let's help the millions of Americans who have been harmed with their mortgages by irresponsible servicers.

FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, the start of a new year is supposed to be a joyous occasion. It is time to reflect on the past year, to take pride in our accomplishments and learn from our stumbles. There's a novel thought.

Similarly, the start of a new Congress offers us an opportunity to look forward with hope and aspiration for the opportunity to work together—again, a novel thought—to deliver on behalf of those who have put their trust in us.

Let's not pull the rug out from underneath both of those things before they've even had a chance to begin. The start of the new year and the new Congress do not have to be colored by the partisanship that's characterized the past year. There is a last-minute absolutism to be had if we can seize the spirit of the season and do that which we have done all too little of this past year: compromise, come together.

Let's ring in the new year with a fix, albeit a modest one, of the fiscal cliff and start off our new year and new Congress with a proper welcome for our constituents and our colleagues.

FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, many years ago our friends on the conservative side of the political aisle told us that if we cut taxes for the wealthiest among us, what would happen is that they would get more money which they would use to invest in plant and equipment, and then all the rest of us working class and middle class folks would benefit by rich people having more money because then they would hire us and we'd have a stronger economy. They put this plan into implementation in 2001 and into 2003, and what followed was the most anemic decade of job growth that we have seen in many, many, many decades. If you can contrast it with the 1990s when the tax rates were actually higher, we had a much more robust economy. In fact, when President Clinton handed President Bush the reins to the government, he handed him, also, a surplus.

The fact is the conservative experiment based on the ideas of a guy named Arthur Laffer and others has failed. They don't work. They're wrong for this country. It's time for us to have some balance and to pay the bills of this country, and that means taxes.

CONGRESS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO AVOID FALLING OFF THE FISCAL CLIFF

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

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, if we fail to act on the remaining day of the 112th Congress, this Congress will be remembered as one which ignored the will of the people. If we fail to act, a typical middle class family of four would see its taxes rise by \$2,200 starting in 2013. This means less money to buy groceries, gas and pay the bills.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, going over the cliff would raise the unemployment rate from 7.9 percent to 9.1 percent in 2013. Losing that many jobs would plunge our Nation back into a recession and put an economic recovery even further out of reach. We would be putting jobs on the altar for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans who have already seen their tax rate plummet to historic lows.

It's time that we put an end to the era of trying to balance budgets on the backs of the middle class, and it's time that we take steps to avoid setting our economic recovery up for failure. We all want a better resolution than simply jumping off the fiscal cliff.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings