

head—afflict us in this country and around the world.

By injecting additional partisanship in this way, Republicans would be taking a further step away from compromise. We need compromise. Each of us in this body understands we represent a certain segment of society, but not everybody agrees with everything we believe. Therefore, if we are to act on behalf of the country in a responsible, effective fashion, it's necessary to compromise.

Mr. Speaker, the sequester is real and is rapidly approaching. It is not a rational approach to deficit reduction. Even Republican Leader CANTOR, as I said, admitted on "Meet the Press" on Sunday about the sequester, and I quote the Republican leader:

I don't want to live with the sequester.

Let me repeat that.

I do not want to live with the sequester. I want reductions in spending that make sense.

These indiscriminate reductions don't make sense. That's what Mr. POMPEO was welcoming: indiscriminate cuts that do not make sense. We need serious action in Congress to deal with the sequester, and that action cannot wait. But there's been nothing on the floor in this Congress to deal with that sequester—nothing. Not a single piece of legislation has been brought forth by the majority.

I used to be the majority leader, Mr. Speaker, and I had the power to bring legislation forward, and I would do it. I'm no longer the majority leader. The majority leader, notwithstanding this quote that these indiscriminate reductions don't make sense, has not brought an alternative to this floor.

Democrats are ready to make tough choices, and we're ready to work with Republicans to do what is necessary to solve this problem of our deficits in a balanced way. We must reduce spending, but we also need to raise revenues. Every bipartisan commission, everyone has said the only way you're going to solve the arithmetic is to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to yield back the balance of my time so that my colleagues have an opportunity to say their piece, but I lament the fact that we're going home next week. We ought to be here working to avoid what the majority leader says are indiscriminate cuts that are not the way to do business. Yet, we rush headlong to do that.

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I hope the Senate acts. I hope the Senate passes a bill that will be rational, will get us out of this conundrum of a sequester that nobody should want, and that when it does, Majority Leader CANTOR and Speaker BOEHNER will bring it to the floor and let us vote. And if you don't like it, vote against it. But let the American people know where we stand.

Let us avoid the sequester. Let us get ourselves on a fiscally balanced path, but let us do so responsibly.

NATIONAL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as cochair of the bipartisan House Career and Technical Education Caucus in order to recognize February as National Career and Technical Education Month. Career and technical education programs continue to evolve in order to ensure that workers are prepared to hold jobs in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career fields like engineering, information technology, health care, and advanced manufacturing for the 21st century.

During this time of record-high unemployment, career and technical education programs provide a lifeline for the underemployed who look to begin new careers alongside young adults just starting out of high school in the rapidly evolving job market.

Career and technical education, while historically undervalued, helps tackle critical workforce shortages and provides an opportunity for America to remain globally competitive while also engaging students in practical, real-world applications of academics coupled with hands-on work experience.

Now, as we move toward fiscal year 2014, I join with a bipartisan group of my colleagues in not only recognizing the importance of maintaining these Federal investments for our country's future but also in saying thank you to the countless men and women who make these programs possible—the faculty, the teachers and the instructors within our career and technical education schools throughout this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Career and Technical Education Month, I encourage my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join me and my good friend, Representative LANGEVIN from Rhode Island, the cochair of the House Career and Technical Education Caucus, as we continue our work together of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus.

The goals of this caucus are to provide promising futures for individuals who are seeking opportunities for work within this great Nation, and for employers, many of whom are in situations, despite record high unemployment for the longest sustained time since the Great Depression, of having great-paying jobs that are sitting open and available where they can't find a qualified, trained workforce and, quite frankly, for America, whose competitiveness into the future will depend on how well we make these investments.

THE SEQUESTER AND AN OLIVE BRANCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. We had a historic occasion last evening, but I rise to comment on a number of issues. I first want to acknowledge and pay tribute to a Texan who was buried yesterday in a tragic incident, Chris Kyle, a Navy SEAL who had served this country, loved this country, and came back to his family and children and took as his cause to help serve troubled veterans. As he was doing so, along with his friend, Chad, one of those troubled veterans shot both him and his friend.

What a tragedy. I think it is important to note the thousands who mourned him and the procession that took him to his burial ground yesterday and to say thank you for not only serving this Nation, but coming home to care about those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

That leads me to bring up this whole question of sequester. In my own city of Houston, I was able to, some 4 years ago, establish the first post-traumatic stress disorder center in a hospital that was not a veterans hospital. The Riverside General Hospital for a period of years continued serving our post-traumatic stress disorder veterans in a small, attentive setting where they could sit with others who were troubled as well. I've become a champion of the needs and the purpose of post-traumatic stress disorder medical services and beg and cry to the Department of Veterans Affairs and to the Pentagon from where this grant came. We cannot abandon our soldiers who have served us well. And I would hope that the grant for this hospital will be continued because Texas has been known to have the largest number of returning Iraq and Afghanistan troops.

Mr. Speaker, that speaks loudly to the question of sequester. I'm delighted that the President last evening could not have offered more olive branches on economic reform and tax reform. His idea is that we can do this budget together, not a sequester and not a self-inflicted wound, which is what we did to ourselves, but, more importantly, to talk about innovation and growth. This is something that I've spoken about over and over again as a member formerly of the Science Committee and now Homeland Security.

Where is America's genius? Right outside the beltway. Why are we dividing ourselves along Democrats and Republicans, refusing to put revenue alongside of cuts? Mr. Speaker, we're at the bone, almost, and sequester that is across-the-board cuts will literally destroy us and put us in a recession. All the talking heads that are suggesting that the President was not bipartisan and how there was nothing that they heard, well, Mr. Speaker, may I ask them to take some cotton out of their ears. Because in actuality, the President extended his hand of friendship.

We want to get down to work. We can pass comprehensive immigration reform. We can pass in tribute and recognition of Sandy Hook, Hadiya, and