

Alzheimer's disease. These are only a handful of the unintended consequences of blind sequestration required cuts.

HOUSING

When it comes to housing—according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, these cuts come at a time when the number of low-income families in need of housing assistance has been rising substantially. Currently, there are long waiting lists for vouchers in almost every community, and homelessness remains a persistent problem.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that about 125,000 individuals and families, including elderly and disabled individuals, may lose assistance and be at risk of becoming homeless. These effects, while not immediate, would be devastating to the millions of low-income families who depend on these federal programs for shelter, a basic life necessity.

Sequestration cuts would also result in more than 100,000 formerly homeless people, including veterans, being removed from their current housing or emergency shelter programs, putting them at substantial risk of becoming homeless.

WIC AND HEAD START

The sequester could also have a negative impact on federally funded programs that provide services to women and children. Essential programs like Head Start and Early Head Start may have to turn away up to 70,000 children and families. These families rely on their services for quality childcare and parenting education initiatives.

Even Women, Infants and Children, WIC, that provides nutritious food, counseling on healthy eating, and health care referrals to low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under age 5 who are at nutritional risk faces cut. Secretary Tom Vilsack at the U.S. Department of Agriculture warned back in February that as a result of the sequester WIC will only be able to provide services for 600,000 of the 9 million low-income families currently served.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, sequestration has already taken a toll on families, businesses, and communities across the country. At a time when we are working to rebuild our economy, sequestration will cost American workers millions of dollars in lost wages and businesses billions of dollars in lost revenue.

Sequestration will have impacts that we might not consider here today. It will impact our national security efforts. It will impact our air travel and it will even impact the food we eat. We must work to avert these thoughtless cuts.

It is time for Republicans to stop refusing to move forward in our work to pass a budget that reflects our nation's values. It is time to do the right thing for the American people and lift the sequester.

SEQUESTER AND THE BUDGET

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the number of times that Congress has dropped the ball when it comes to our budget. But I'm also here to say that we can fix it.

Last year, Congress passed the only law I have ever seen that was designed to never be enforced. It's called sequestration.

Sequestration was actually designed to cut spending across the board in a way that was so offensive and so illogical that it could never survive as a law. It was a law that was meant to unify both sides of the aisle in an effort to develop a comprehensive deal to fix the economy and our deficit.

A responsible Congress could have stopped those ridiculous cuts. In fact, I agree with Senator MARK WARNER, who happens to be a former Governor, who had to balance his State of Virginia's budget, and I quote, he called this "stupid."

Mr. VAN HOLLEN, whom I work with on the Budget Committee, introduced commonsense legislation that would have responsibly reduced our deficit and ended the sequester. Unfortunately, the Republican majority refused to allow an up-or-down vote on this floor for that straightforward legislation. They doubled down on irresponsible policies based on an economic math that we now know is completely flawed.

It reminded me of a story. Two guys are in a lifeboat, and the one holding the oars says, "This is a bad situation, and one of us ain't gonna make it." It doesn't take a genius to figure out who the guy with the oars is talking about.

All of us are in this lifeboat together, and we know where the majority stands. They're not rowing for the middle class. They're just fighting to protect millionaires and make sure their special interests keep their tax breaks.

We know families, businesses, and communities continue to be hurt by what we do or don't do here in Washington. You've all seen it. FAA furloughs are causing flight delays, just one example of how we're continuing to hurt our economy.

We can do better. We can write a legitimate, measured budget for this country.

Mr. Speaker, return this House to regular order. Our House has a budget. The Senate has a budget. Let's go to conference and start negotiating a real American budget. The American people deserve some certainty, and they certainly deserve to know what priorities are important to their elected representatives.

For those watching at home, why is a conference committee so important? Because there are vast differences between the budgets currently on the table. A conference committee negotiates, in full view of the public, on principles and priorities that set funding for the next fiscal year.

Let's talk about this like my Republican colleagues' favorite thing to talk about. Let's talk about it like people do at the kitchen table.

If paychecks are cut or an unforeseen emergency happens in a family, families don't just pay 10 percent less on their mortgage or require 10 percent

less of the medications they depend on. Instead, we make smart cuts. We stop buying the things we don't need, but we don't stop educating our children. At least in my house, my wife and I don't decide what's important to us and ignore everyone else.

□ 1100

That doesn't work in families, and it doesn't work in Washington. We sit down like adults—at least we should in Congress—around some kitchen table and figure out what we can buy and what we can't. We work through today's needs and plan for our future. We don't stop investing in our families. Like Senator WARNER said, that would be stupid.

The House and the Senate need to get around the table—any table. If you can't find a table here in the Capitol, come to my kitchen table. We must create an American budget that invests in job growth and educating our future workforce. We can make cuts—but cuts that make sense. Let's root out the waste, fraud, and abuse and cut tax loopholes to make sure everyone pays their fair share.

The American people have shown us what to do. Let's get around a table. Let's name conferees and show the people who sent us here that we can be responsible and keep the promise of the American Dream a reality.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have been honored to be elected at the State legislative level in California, I have been honored to be a council member, and now, since January of this year, I have been a Member of this body. And I'm very, very disappointed. In business, at home, and in elected office, I've never seen a situation so stagnant, so stale and damaging to the people who sent us here to represent them.

HONORING NAZARINE J. BELLARDINI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a constituent and World War II veteran, Nazarine J. Bellardini of Norwood, New York.

Mr. Bellardini served the Nation in the Air Force during World War II. After he was honorably discharged in 1948, he returned home to upstate New York and married his wife, Caroline, in 1950.

Like so many World War II veterans, Mr. Bellardini helped build the modern middle class. After the war, Mr. Bellardini worked at the 7UP Bottling Company in Utica, New York. In 1957, he was initially employed at the State University of New York at Potsdam in the mailroom.

Mr. Bellardini retired from Potsdam as the plant superintendent for heating, ventilation, and refrigeration. His behind-the-scenes work was vital to the success of the thousands of students who attended SUNY Potsdam during his tenure.