

thousands of defense contractors and their employees.

Never mind that, in doing so, the Obama administration violated the Pay Our Military Act that President Obama, himself, signed—an act that fully funds all defense workers and contractors who “are providing support to members of the Armed Forces,” which, by the way, is all of them.

Yesterday, America woke up to yet another political manipulation by the Obama administration. America’s Commander in Chief denied death gratuities to the families of four soldiers and a marine who were killed in Afghanistan. Adding insult to injury, America’s Commander in Chief refuses to pay the cost of the burial expenses of our men and women in uniform who have given their lives for their country.

Mr. Speaker, this is an outrage. It must not stand.

The Obama administration claims:

As a result of the shutdown, we do not have the legal authority to make death gratuity payments at this time.

I respectfully disagree.

The Pay Our Military Act expressly states:

There are hereby appropriated sums for fiscal year 2014, such sums as are necessary to provide pay and allowances to members of the Armed Forces.

Death benefits and burial expenses are part of our military’s compensation package, a part of the “pay and allowances” the Pay Our Military Act says the Obama administration must pay. Congress should not have to pass yet another bill today to force the President to do what the law already says he should do.

Instead of punishing America’s military by illegally furloughing defense workers and contractors, instead of dishonoring our World War II veterans, our Korean war veterans, our Vietnam veterans by spending taxpayer money to barricade their memorials and by denying them access to their memorials, I yearn for a Commander in Chief who supports our veterans and our men and women in uniform rather than using them as pawns to be sacrificed in partisan, political games. I cannot help but think of the contrast between our current Commander in Chief and our first one.

During the Revolutionary War, George Washington lived with his troops, fought with his troops, and sacrificed for his troops. When the Continental Army was faced with hardship, inadequate food and clothing, George Washington reached into his own pocket and sacrificed his wealth to help the men who fought under his command.

Mr. Speaker, I pray our current Commander in Chief will study and understand the graciousness, the leadership, and the sacrifices of George Washington as he makes decisions on whether to treat our veterans, our troops, and our defense workers with the respect they have earned and deserve.

DENYING MILITARY DEATH BENEFITS

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the legislation that will be considered on the floor of the House today, legislation that would address the unacceptable wrong of denying death benefits to the families of fallen soldiers during the budget impasse.

While I, no doubt, expect our Chamber to pass this critical funding bill that the American people have a right to expect—I hope it’s passed not just in a bipartisan fashion, but I hope it’s passed unanimously in the House—we must consider what has led us to even have to legislatively fix such an obvious injustice.

The Department of Defense, even during the current impasse, is spending sums in the billions of dollars.

How is the debt payment for members of the military not considered essential, Mr. President? What was the decision-making process to deem the death benefits nonessential, Mr. President? Who made the final call in this decision, and why are you not firing that person?

This follows the same pattern that we saw earlier this year when the President cut military tuition assistance. We were able to restore those needless cuts and have introduced a bill to ensure the President does not continue to play games with the tuition assistance as early reports indicate that military tuition is again being held back from families. Simply put, we made promises to our fighting men and women and their families.

Mr. Speaker, the House is ready to keep those promises, but the President is demonstrating, at best, a failure to lead and, at worst, bare knuckle partisanship.

AN ADULT CONVERSATION ABOUT FIXING OUR ECONOMY

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

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, the President and his allies claim that the shutdown of government is about one thing—a Republican obsession with ObamaCare.

Mr. Speaker, they are missing the point completely.

For the past 3 years, the House has been working to improve our economy, to create private sector jobs, and to address barriers that inhibit economic growth. ObamaCare, unfortunately, has emerged as one of the largest challenges standing in the way of job creation: workers are having their hours cut; families and businesses are facing higher premiums; employers aren’t expanding because of the uncertainty.

Fixing the health care law would have the quickest impact on the economy; but, in fairness, we can’t do that unless the other side sits down and talks to us. Thus far, the Senate and the President have rejected all efforts of the House and refuse to negotiate.

Mr. Speaker, this debate should be about caring for the American people, their futures, and the liberties we share in America. We want to reopen the government and help families find jobs, but that requires that the House and the Senate and the President sit down together and have an adult conversation about fixing our economy.

TIME TO PAY THE PIPER

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

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, as the clock ticks, the country gets closer to a time when it will run out of money.

People probably couldn’t understand all of the debate leading up to the implementation of ObamaCare just a few days ago, and some of the questions and debate became blurred. That was one of the biggest government programs—largest spending programs—probably in the history of our Nation; but it did have consequences, because you are spending more trillions of dollars, and if we are going to provide health care, we want it right. There are many Americans who don’t have health care, and we should assist them in a responsible fashion. The roll-out has been a disaster. We are holding a hearing on that in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

All that being said, it’s about time to pay the piper here. I think the American people will understand, and can understand, that the country is close to default. The country is close to default because we have incurred an indebtedness that will soon exceed \$17 trillion, an indebtedness which, again, will reach the current limit next week. They are asking for another \$1 trillion or \$900 billion to get us one more year. We are going to have to pay the piper.

When you spend \$1.5 trillion more a year in the first year with the Obama administration and, in each succeeding year, over \$1 trillion more than you took in, you acquire an indebtedness. It was \$9 trillion when President Bush left office, and it will soon be \$18 trillion in some 6 years, the most indebtedness of any nation. We can’t become a Greece. This is not that difficult to understand.

When the government can’t pay its bills, if folks think there is a temporary shutdown now, think of going to the bank and not being able to withdraw money or, as you’ve heard, not being able to obtain a mortgage. The full faith and credit of the United States of America will collapse. Just like when an individual spends more than he earns, he must pay the piper.