

Instead of focusing on the issues that matter—creating jobs, raising the minimum wage, fixing our broken immigration system—they are planning to reintroduce partisan messaging bills the House has already passed.

So we are repeating what we have already done, as little as that may be.

□ 1015

Mr. Speaker, it appears as if the Republican House majority in the 113th Congress will go out much as it came in: fixated on a single goal. The Republican chairman of the Rules Committee, PETE SESSIONS, summed up that goal late last year when he said—and I quote Congressman SESSIONS, Republican chairman of the Rules Committee: “Everything we do in this body should be about messaging to win back the Senate.” Not about creating jobs, not about making America more secure, not about energy, not about the minimum wage, not about immigration reform, not about making sure that women get equal pay for equal work, not about any of those things. The chairman of the Rules Committee that controls how we consider legislation on this floor said it is about messaging so we can take back the Senate.

All of us should remember that when Senator MCCONNELL was asked a few years ago in the first term of the President of the United States, Barack Obama, he said, when asked, What is your major objective? his response was, To ensure that President Obama is a one-term President. Again, not about jobs, not about the economy, not about growing the middle class, not about making sure voting rights were secured, but making sure that President Obama only served one term. He failed in that objective, but the fact of the matter is they have stayed on that messaging and objective.

Central to achieving that goal Republicans believe is to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act. And it comes without a shock to anyone that this month will also feature—as a matter of fact, this week—the 53rd vote to do just that.

However, Mr. Speaker, the American people are obviously tired of partisan gridlock. All of us hear that and all of us on both sides of the aisle say we don't want partisan gridlock, but we have seen wasted opportunities in this House over and over again for Congress to make headway on the challenges that we face as a nation.

Many are asking what happened to the promise Republicans made in 2010 when, in their pledge to America, they wrote—and again I quote—in their pledge to America: a plan to create jobs, end economic uncertainty—by the way, they are the ones who threatened to default on the debt twice and who shut down the greatest government on the face of the Earth and the greatest country on the face of the Earth, shut down its government for 16 days at a cost of \$24 billion. A plan, they said, to create jobs and economic certainty—it

was uncertainty they created—and make America more competitive. They said that must be the first and most urgent domestic priority of our government.

That is what they said in the pledge, but Chairman SESSIONS said, of course, messaging to take back the Senate was their major objective; therefore, that was a promise forgotten.

Throughout September, House Democrats will be outlining how Republicans have failed to focus on the issues Americans care about and what Congress should be doing instead. House Democrats are ready to jump-start the middle class. That is not just a phrase.

We know the middle class is shrinking, and we know to the extent the middle class is shrinking, America will not be doing as well. We need to expand the middle class, giving opportunities for those who are not in the middle class to climb ladders of opportunity to get into the middle class. We need to move our economy beyond recovery and into prosperity. We are for raising the minimum wage and ensuring equal pay for equal work. The overwhelming majority of Americans are for that.

Poll after poll after poll shows that over 70 percent of America is for those two propositions. In my opinion, both have majority votes on this House floor. But Americans must be surprised that those two issues are not brought to this floor for action so that the people's House can speak.

Now, there may be differences of opinion. Many Republicans may want to vote against the minimum wage, but America deserves to have a vote on that issue, and it has a right to have a vote on making sure that women get paid equally to what men get paid for the same job. They do that in the House of Representatives. Women are paid exactly what men are paid. That is right. That is what ought to happen.

We need to fix our broken immigration system. My friend, Mr. Cantor, who is no longer with us, and I had colloquies, week after week after week, in which Mr. Cantor said, We understand the immigration system is broken. I said, We agree, it is broken. And we have done nothing to fix it.

The Republicans have passed some five or six bills to fix it. They haven't brought their own bills to the floor so that the House could work its will. I don't believe that is the kind of Congress, Mr. Speaker, that America wants. We need to fix that system in a way that secures our border and brings millions out of the shadows.

Mr. Speaker, we need to bring to the floor bipartisan Make It In America jobs bills designed to grow our manufacturing base, help our businesses to compete, and attract jobs that pay well and open doors of opportunity to workers and their families.

The Republican-led committee passed out a bill sponsored by Mr. LIPINSKI almost unanimously—I think it was on a voice vote—a bill that passed in the last Congress with over

300 votes. I have been asking for the last 10 months that that bill be brought to the floor. All it says is America needs to have a playbook, a plan, a strategy, if you will, to grow our manufacturing sector, create more middle class jobs and compete with the rest of the world. We cannot get that bill to the floor. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that is the kind of Congress America wants.

These are the issues that the American people want Congress to focus on, not undoing the patient protections and cost savings that health care reform has brought, not rebranding an antiregulatory and antiworker platform as a jobs package that would add—Mr. Speaker, Americans are going to be astounded, legislation we are going to consider this week will add \$560 billion to the debt. Now, we passed most of those bills and created a larger debt by more than that \$560 billion already, but we are going to do it again—not wasting taxpayers' money and time on partisan lawsuits and investigations, not giving the American people the least productive, and least open Congress in modern history.

The pledge to America talked about transparency. We have had more closed rules in this Congress than any Congress in which I have served.

Mr. Speaker, Americans want leaders who are on their side, not ones who have broken their promises. They need and deserve a people's House that is truly on their side.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, this September 29 marks the 115th birthday of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is a day that will be celebrated at VFW posts and in communities around the country, and it is a day that deserves our recognition here in Congress as well.

As a member of our local VFW Ladies Auxiliary and the proud wife of a Vietnam veteran and a VFW member, I have seen firsthand how our VFW makes good on its promise every day to honor the dead by helping the living.

Each year, the nearly 2 million VFW and Auxiliary members contribute more than 8.6 million hours of volunteerism in their communities. These are men and women who have already sacrificed for their country by traveling into harm's way to defend our freedoms or waiting anxiously for our loved ones to return home from combat, yet they continue to serve wherever they see a need.

At our VFW post in Hendersonville, for example, members maintain a food pantry for disadvantaged veterans, and they started an Operation Spearhead to specifically serve the families of those called to serve in the war on terror.

Perhaps most importantly, the VFW has always risen above partisanship

and politics to maintain a strong, steady voice on behalf of our heroes since its founding in 1899.

On this upcoming Veterans of Foreign Wars Day, may we pause to honor the many contributions of this organization and be reminded to pray for those who continue serving around the world.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, many of us are disappointed that sometime on the floor today we will spend precious time that could be utilized for our focus on ISIS, focus on increasing the minimum wage and addressing social issues across America on condemning the President for authority that he had and for, in essence, rescuing Sergeant Bergdahl. But that is, unfortunately, where we find ourselves. I am here to indicate that the President has enormous responsibilities and has been thoughtful but forceful on behalf of the American people.

As they indicated, there are many issues that we have great concern with, and last evening colleagues of mine in the Congressional Black Caucus stood on the floor of the House to address the heinous killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

First, let me thank Congressman LACY CLAY and Congressman CLEAVER for their leadership. They had to be on the front lines embracing the family members and community. But those of us in distance want to extend our deepest sympathy to the family of Michael Brown and indicate that we have had great police-community relations through many of our districts overcoming some very serious obstacles, as we did in Houston, Texas. We started community-oriented policing at the leadership of former Mayor Lee P. Brown. It can be done.

On the Judiciary Committee, I have worked with funding for community-oriented policing, and, therefore, I don't take a backseat to my support of law enforcement across this Nation. The actions that were played out by the media in video, to me, took the life of a boy who had a life in front of him.

So it is crucial that this body does not leave for its recess again and not address, in some direct way, the killing of Michael Brown, hearings regarding the militarization of our police, adding more funding back to community-oriented policing, and, yes, asking the question of the utilization of firepower against an unarmed Black boy.

The epidemic of the killing of Black men is real; you can see the numbers. Those of us who are mothers who have to tell our sons how they ought to respond when they are on the street—educated, military personnel, high school graduates or not—this is something that all of America should be concerned about because we are Amer-

ica. I hope to be part of the solution and not the problem.

We will be looking to introduce legislation that addresses the question of how we utilize equipment that was given for natural disasters and fighting terrorism, not to go against unarmed civilians. That is, I believe, a charge for this body.

Let me also indicate that, as a member of the Homeland Security Committee, having just come from the Midwest, I know that ISIS is real, and I believe that the President had a strategy. It was a deliberative strategy. It was one that was not to be spoken of precipitously or to announce what you are going to do next. But as he engages in consultation with our leadership, it is crucial that he engages in consultation with Members of Congress. I know that that is the President's effort. He has done so in the past.

We have willing allies in the Mideast who are willing to stand up with United States leadership on strategy where they are in the front. We must define what boots on the ground means, what does the 1,000 individuals who are there now who are military personnel. We must find a way to address Syria without collaborating with President Assad. And we must be reminded that the religious minorities in Iraq are still under siege and attack, and there are, in the wake of those attacks, often children that we must address.

□ 1030

We must be able to provide international resources for the children who are left after the bloody siege of ISIS. And then we must explain to the American people that we have their national security in our hands, that we realize that the rising numbers wanting to attack Syria and wanting to continue to attack Iraq in those areas where ISIS is because of the fear of the homeland.

As I indicated, as the senior member on Homeland Security, we get that. We will be holding a hearing in the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, where I serve as ranking member, along with my chairwoman, Congresswoman MILLER. I have introduced legislation as an aside to declare the Russian rebels as terrorists. I look forward to looking at this question, as Congressman WOLF has, this issue of those with U.S. passports and this question of how do we keep them from flying, adding them to the no-fly list. We are looking at ways of getting our walls around those individuals being able to attack the homeland.

Again, we have many issues to come together on as a body. We must address the crisis of the killing of Michael Brown. But we also have to say that we can do it together. We must address this crisis of dealing with ISIS. It is real, it can be assessed, and it can be handled. Collaborate with our Western allies and our friends in the Mideast. It is our duty, and we must do it now.

HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

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

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, "cowardly," "a heathen," "selfish"—those are the words some used to describe Robin Williams' suicide. These underscore that there is a great deal of ignorance and misunderstanding about suicide.

Myths surrounding suicide are pervasive and persistent. Given that September is National Suicide Prevention Month, we have an opportunity to dispel these common misconceptions, such as "suicide is not that common." This year, 9.3 million adults will have serious thoughts of suicide, 2.7 million will make suicide plans, 1.3 million will attempt suicide, and nearly 40,000 will die by suicide. One suicide occurs every 16 minutes, and one veteran commits suicide every hour. More will die by suicide this year than in car accidents.

Here is another misconception: "Those who die by suicide should just have sucked it up." But the vast majority of individuals who have died by suicide had a diagnosable mental illness. Mental illness is a contributing factor in 90 percent of suicides, and the risk of suicide increases more than 50 percent in individuals experiencing depression.

Consider this mistaken belief: "Suicide is well planned and a thoughtful act." Twenty-five percent of people who attempt suicide do so within 5 minutes of their initial decision, and 75 percent do so within the first hour.

Although there is a lot we know about suicide, these myths continue to perpetuate because we don't understand enough why certain populations are at higher risk and what is happening in the brain at the time of suicide.

A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that in the last decade, here is what happened with suicide rates:

The rate for those 35 to 64 years of age increased 28 percent; for women, it increased 31 percent; for white Americans, it increased 40 percent; for American Indian and Alaska Natives, it increased 65 percent; and the use of suffocation or hanging increased 81 percent. And despite a continued focus on youth suicide, it remains either the second- or third-leading cause of death for those between the ages 10 and 25. Rates have also increased dramatically among elderly White men.

The report goes on to note that "additional research is needed to understand the cause of the increase and why the extent of the increase varies."

Suicide is a public health crisis demanding a policy response that, to date, has been tepid at best. The impulsive nature and correlation with mental illness requires us to treat suicide as a mental health crisis. To this end, I have introduced the Helping Families