

ISN'T IT TIME TO END THE
REPUBLICAN SHUTDOWN?

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this is day two of the Republican shutdown, holding America hostage. The stated objective of their fury is what they feel to be the "unconstitutional" Affordable Care Act that will wreck the economy and destroy health care in America.

They harbor these feelings and will not relent until the law is defunded, even if it means shutting down the government, denying people essential services, furloughing Federal employees, and raising the specter of default on our national debt. This is despite the fact that the health care bill passed 3 years ago. It was declared constitutional by the United States Supreme Court and was argued extensively in the 2012 elections, which the Republicans lost.

We've now seen the first day of the Affordable Care Act, already about 10 million visits to the Web site, phone lines jammed, hundreds of thousands of Americans—doctors, nurses, people in hospitals, insurance companies—involved in making the biggest advance in health care since Medicare 50 years ago.

Are the Republicans afraid that the program will succeed, that Americans will see that this effort to help 40 to 50 million Americans with low income or people with preexisting conditions will actually get help?

Republicans, in any event, should not pull the rug out from underneath the people who could benefit from the law or the hundreds of thousands of people who have made significant investments and are working to improve the delivery of health care in America at great effort and expense for themselves.

According to the independent Congressional Budget Office, this is going to provide more access at less cost and lead to a deficit reduction on the order of \$1 trillion over the next 20 years. In fact, the Republicans in the House of Representatives have taken \$500 billion of these savings from the Affordable Care Act and stuffed it in their budget to make it appear that it's more affordable.

If they were serious and not cynical, they would remove the money from their budget that's attributed to the bill they're working so hard to defund. While they're at it, if they're serious and not cynical, they would have a conference committee on the budget.

Wasn't it interesting, the 11th hour Hail Mary proposal late Saturday night to have a conference committee on the continuing resolution despite the fact that there was nothing to conference—it was defund ObamaCare or nothing.

But if House Republicans really think conference committees are such a good idea, why don't we have a conference committee on the budget? The

Senate has been waiting for the House Republican leadership for 6 months to approve conferees so we can see if we can reconcile some of these differences.

If my friends were serious and not cynical about saving money, they would bring their own spending bills to the floor. Remember, it's been over 2 months since they abruptly stopped the appropriations process with the Treasury-HUD bill still in limbo, just walked off the floor halfway through the debate. The remaining eight spending bills appear to be so bad under the Ryan budget, which uses those evil ObamaCare savings, that their own Members don't even seem to want to vote for them.

Finally, if they are serious and not cynical, they should absolutely take the debt ceiling blackmail off the table. There's no reason to threaten to destabilize not just our economy, but the global economy, by pretending for 1 minute that America won't pay its bills. We will. But to threaten we would do otherwise invites chaos.

This is day two of the Affordable Care Act. The sun came up in the East. No one was forced to go to the post office for their prostate exam. No women had to go to the airport screeners for a mammogram. No doctors have been arrested or hospitals shut down. What did happen is people are getting better insurance with more choices at more affordable rates. I even bet that the sun sets in the West tonight.

Isn't it time to end the Republican shutdown?

VA FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) for 1 minute.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, last night House Republicans once again showed up and took action to stop the bleeding of HARRY REID's government shutdown. President Obama has already bullied the House by threatening to veto these important bills to protect our Nation's veterans, keep D.C. schools and services open, and preserve and reopen our national parks.

By voting against these bills, House Democrats turned their backs on the Nation's veterans. It's reprehensible to sit back and watch our veterans suffer. The Honoring Our Promise to America's Veterans Act would ensure vital funding for disability compensation, pensions, the GI Bill, and other critical benefits that are threatened by HARRY REID's shutdown.

Today we will give the Democrats another chance to vote in favor of veterans. This is not a partisan issue, it's an American issue, and we must pass this legislation today. House Republicans are here. We're ready to negotiate. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the President should cancel his trip to Asia and come negotiate with us.

Simply put, in God we trust.

BIPARTISAN IMMIGRATION
REFORM

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, we've all heard that later today an immigration bill will be introduced in the House of Representatives in order to keep the issue moving forward.

I plan to sign on to that bill. As I understand it, it will combine elements of the Senate's bipartisan compromise bill with a bipartisan House border security bill. I am going to sign on because I want to stand with 200 of my Democratic colleagues and assert that the Democratic Party is ready to move forward on immigration reform. The bill that Democrats will put forward is not a perfect bill. It is the product of negotiations, compromise, and bipartisanship.

Having spent many long hours working with Ted Kennedy, JOHN MCCAIN, Jim Kolbe, and JEFF FLAKE on bipartisan bills in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007, I know that you never get everything you want when you engage in genuine bipartisan efforts; but these days, with our sharply divided politics, bipartisanship is the only way you get anything done. The American people are sick of the U.S. Congress because we are totally divided and can't seem to come together, even to keep our government open.

Yesterday, Puerto Rican Korea war veterans and Mississippi and Iowa veterans of World War II had to break down barricades to visit the monuments on The National Mall that celebrate their sacrifice and honor. It should have never had to come to this.

And on immigration, I still think we have a chance to work together and get something done. It's really rare that the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce agree on anything. But you know what? They came to agreement to move immigration reform forward. The largest growers actually worked out an agreement to move forward on immigration reform with the union founded by Cesar Chavez that's been fighting for them for 40 years.

The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal editorial pages represent different ends of the political spectrum, but their editorials calling for Congress to address immigration reform are so similar, they could practically be accused of plagiarism.

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And I've talked with many of my Republican colleagues. They too understand that our current legal immigration system is broken. Many of them understand that creating ways for people to come legally is necessary to spark our economy, reunite families and maintain our values in the United States.

They understand that the path to law and order is to have a functioning, legal immigration system that allows people to come with a visa and not a