

We had an opportunity last week to have more investment in solar—less in fossil fuels—solar green jobs that are innovative, create more jobs and protect us in the future so we don't have to spend money on defense to protect those lines that bring us oil from the Middle East, yet we didn't do it.

We need to invest in education, and the Democrats have tried to do that. But the Republicans want to cut Pell Grants and cut workforce investment opportunities. We need to have an educated workforce, and we need to have creative ways to create jobs and not just be slaving to Big Oil and Wall Street.

Jobs is our most important business here. And while I speak of jobs, we have one job the American public wants us to do, and that is prevent a default on our debt and embarrass the United States and wreck the world's economy. That's more important than any pledge, Mr. Speaker, that anybody has taken. Don't default.

CALL FOR SENATE ACTION

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House passed the cut, cap, and balance plan to control government spending and raise the debt limit. Now we need the Senate to act and put their plan on the table.

While it was good to hear yesterday that at least six Senators have reached agreement on a plan to control our debt, what we really need is the other Chamber to bring a plan to the floor and pass it out of the Senate. We have passed a clear plan, one that can be scored by the CBO, a plan that calls for a long-term solution to keep Congress responsible, the balanced budget amendment.

It is clear that we need to act on the debt ceiling soon. Our credit rating is certainly at risk. However, we cannot forget that what is truly at risk is the long-term solvency of our Nation. If we continue on the current path, we will end up being controlled by our creditors, just like Greece, Portugal, and Ireland. Our very independence is at stake here.

By acting responsibly now, we avoid greater pain later. Kicking the can down the road is only kicking our Nation's future.

DEBT LIMIT

(Ms. TSONGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, unless this Congress takes action on August 2, our Nation will stop paying our bills because we refuse to come together and take shared responsibility. These bills pay for policies already purchased, such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the 2003 prescription drug benefit,

tax cuts, and emergency measures to save our economy.

Yesterday, House Republicans passed a bill that asked for sacrifices from seniors, veterans, and children but exempted corporations from giving up even their most egregious tax loopholes, like those that encourage shipping jobs overseas. That bill also all but guarantees a default by requiring a two-thirds vote from both Chambers before we can pay our bills. To return to the balanced budgets of the 1990s will require a long-term commitment from the entire country, a commitment that will only come if everyone contributes.

We do not need to end Social Security and Medicare, as some would do. We can and must reduce the deficit in a balanced way that ensures the well-being of every American.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we need bipartisan efforts that focus on fiscal responsibility while maintaining important investments in our communities that will create jobs and grow the economy.

Even now, I am trying to be confident that the best interests of the American people will prevail, but it is terribly disappointing that ending Medicare for seniors is so important to Republicans that they continue to pursue this agenda at all costs and willingly put our national economy in peril.

Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives has been under the control of the Republicans for nearly 200 days, and they have yet to bring a single job-creating bill to the floor. This is an issue that should always be above partisan politics. It seems that they would rather see the United States default on its existing debt for the first time in history, watch our economy lose hundreds of thousands of jobs, and cause interest rates and consumer goods to skyrocket in the process.

We must do something about it.

DON'T DEFAULT

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I look across my congressional district and across this country where people have lost their homes, they have lost their jobs, and they have sacrificed their retirement accounts because our fiscal house hasn't been in order, and here today we sit awaiting the opportunity to do for the American people what we ought to, which is to prevent a default, to prevent a default that would result in further sacrificing of retirement savings and jobs and homes across this country. They're really depending on us.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to say that we have an important responsibility to our seniors to protect their Medicare and their Social Security benefits, to make sure that we're creating opportunities for education for their children, to make sure that we're creating jobs, rebuilding our infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, our highways, our rail systems, and we haven't done our job.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say it's time for us to stop the silliness, to prevent the default, and to get on with the Nation's business.

STOP PLAYING GAMES, DON'T DEFAULT

(Mr. WALZ of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say what my colleagues and I'm sure many Americans across the country are saying: Stop playing the games and get the work done.

I understand we all come here with values, ideas, and principles that we hold dear, but when the facts dispute our ideology, we don't get the choice to change the facts; you change your ideology.

Failure to pay our bills will be catastrophic to our economy; it's that simple. This isn't a question of enabling future deficits. The Federal Government needs to cover promises it made to our soldiers, to our veterans, to our seniors, and to our creditors.

Responsible people in countries pay their bills. Our 40th President knew this. In a radio address he delivered in 1987, Ronald Reagan admonished Congress for bringing the government to the edge of default and urged them to face their responsibility.

Here's what President Reagan said: "Interest rates will skyrocket, instability will occur in the financial markets, and the Federal deficit will soar."

We cannot ignore the facts, and allowing our Nation to default no way fixes our budget problems.

Stop playing the games; get the work done; move the country forward.

EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

(Mr. LUJÁN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of important conversations that are taking place today, but it's important that we talk about what has happened in New Mexico recently.

New Mexico has been hit by a series of wildfires during this extremely dry fire season. Many communities have been threatened by fires as families have lost their homes and livestock and tribal lands have been damaged.

At a time when many counties are struggling with a drought, the fire