

Members of Congress who actually sat in the Supreme Court and listened to five Justices debate and say that they believed that the President's health tax was constitutional, and I watched them debate the four Justices who believed it was not constitutional.

Because one more Justice believed it was constitutional than the four that believed it was not constitutional, our friends on the other side of the aisle believe that we should now step back and do nothing and just allow this health tax to be imposed on the American people.

Well, we reject that suggestion, and the reason we do is because today the number one issue in the American people's minds is the economy, and the number one concern we have about the economy is the loss of their jobs. Yet we have watched as this administration has had 41 straight months of unemployment in excess of 8 percent.

We have watched as their policies have delivered us a net loss of 473,000 jobs, and we are about to unleash three enormous job killers on the American public. In just a few months, we will increase taxes on the American people if we refuse to extend the Bush tax cuts, which will cost thousands of jobs. Yet our friends on the other side of the aisle say we should step back and do nothing, and we reject that notion.

In just a few months, based on legislation this President approved and signed into law, we will have massive defense cuts that his own Secretary of Defense says will cost us 1.5 million jobs, and our friends on the other side of the aisle say we should do nothing and just let that come on the American people. We reject that notion.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as this health tax gets ready to be imposed on the American people, based on the Congressional Budget Office, it will cost 800,000 jobs. Yet our friends on the other side of the aisle say we should take no action and just let it happen. We reject that notion.

The reason we reject it is because the American people realize that as we take an action to repeal this health tax, we are setting a new course for health care in America. As we set a new course for health care in America, we begin to do what the American people want us to do and set a new course and a new direction for America.

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AMERICANS NEED REAL SOLUTIONS TO REAL PROBLEMS

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Boy, my friend from Virginia could not be more wrong.

What exactly are the House Republicans trying to accomplish with today's 31st repeal vote of health care? One of the first votes Republicans brought to the floor when they became

the majority in January of 2011 was to repeal the health care insurance reform law in its entirety. That bill passed out of the House on a virtual party-line vote, so you'd think Republicans would move on to the real challenges facing our economy like unemployment and the expiration of individual and business tax cuts.

In the face of the Supreme Court ruling declaring important health insurance protections in the Affordable Care Act constitutional, House Republicans are not repealing that earlier vote but instead setting up a repeat of it. They have become so ideologically immovable that they can think of no more constructive solution than to simply replay this bit of political theater. Meanwhile, 56 percent of Americans say it's time to move on to the true pressing challenges facing our Nation, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation poll. A quick review of those challenges shows that this Republican House majority has not even tried to address them.

Let's start with the very real threat of expiring tax cuts creating a drag on our economy. There are a number of already expired and expiring tax cuts, including the alternative minimum tax patch, which could affect 34 million Americans. Then there's the payroll tax cut affecting 160 million Americans and numerous businesses, including the Bush tax cuts, which expire later this year. All combined, the expiration of those tax cuts could add up to a \$4,000 per household bill on Americans. So far, House Republicans haven't felt the urgency to hold a single vote to extend any of those tax cuts.

How about the Medicare doc fix? If Congress doesn't extend the sustainable growth rate patch, Medicare and TRICARE doctors will see more than a 27 percent cut in their reimbursements, causing many of them to stop seeing patients. Millions of seniors and military members and retirees could lose access to their doctors. But not a single vote has been proposed by the Republicans to stop that from happening.

Then there's the debt ceiling. Without action, the Nation will once again risk breaching its statutory limit, triggering a historic default. Last summer, we achieved a bipartisan agreement to raise that ceiling and lower the deficit at the same time, warding off the cataclysmic effects of default, but not before House Republicans pushed us to the brink, resulting in the first time ever a downgrading of U.S. credit. The American people don't want a repeat of that sad chapter in our history, and our economy certainly cannot afford it. Ronald Reagan knew the value of ensuring America fulfilled its commitments. He raised the debt ceiling 18 times with no conditionality.

What about a comprehensive jobs bill? After 27 straight months of private sector job growth, cleaning up the mess President Obama inherited, the base of U.S. job creation has begun to slow in the wake of instability in Euro-

pean markets. Before the July 4 holiday, we achieved a rare feat for this Congress in passing a bipartisan reauthorization of the transportation bill, giving a much-needed jolt to the construction sector. But we can and should do more to spur hiring in the alternative energy sector, manufacturing, health care, and more. But instead of focusing on jobs, which they claimed in the last election was their focus, Republicans are creating a sense of *deja vu* all over again on the floor by staging a repeat of the health care reform.

Lost in this political pandering is the fact that the Affordable Care Act is actually working. Seniors who fall in the prescription drug doughnut hole are saving an average of \$651 this year alone. Almost 13 million Americans are eligible for rebates averaging \$151 from their insurance companies, thanks to new requirements in the bill. Premiums for Medicare Advantage are down 7 percent for the first time ever and benefits are up and enrollment is up 10 percent. Medicare is on track to save \$200 billion by 2016, pursuant to the act, without one benefit being cut—in fact, benefits improving.

Mr. Speaker, the House majority is selectively ignoring those improvements to justify this repeat of its repeal vote. With so much to do—with American businesses and families waiting for tax predictability, with the economy bracing for the impending fiscal cliff, with almost 4 million people still searching for employment—House Republicans are still offering more of the same. And sadly, it's not enough. Americans need real solutions to real problems. Let's get on with them.

HIGH-LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I come back on the floor as I have almost weekly throughout this entire Congress for 2 years to talk about the issue of high-level nuclear waste and what are we to do about it. And I really applaud my colleagues who joined me on June 6, 2012, on an amendment to a spending bill. It was a bipartisan vote; 326 Members of Congress supported finishing the scientific study on Yucca Mountain. That's the money that we had appropriated and that Senator REID and President Obama did not spend for the scientific study. Then, in the last two cycles, Senator REID has been blocking additional money for finishing the scientific study. So 226 Republicans and 98 Democrats joined me to really stress the point that we've got to finish this.

Yucca Mountain started in 1982 with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. It was the defined location—it is the defined location—under current law under the amendments passed in 1987. To not fulfill and not to move forward is, in my estimation, breaking the law of the