

open for business, and 99.8 percent of the customers who walk into your store walk out again without buying your product. Do you think you have a problem? We can't pretend this isn't happening. Millions of Americans right now are losing their health plans and not finding affordable replacements. This matter must be resolved, and it must be resolved now.

This government only exists with the consent of the governed. When it deliberately goes out of its way to maximize the pain and suffering of the American people in this crisis, it jeopardizes that consent. This matter must be resolved, and it must be resolved now. And this government is simply not designed to function with one party refusing to talk to the other, with one House refusing to resolve the differences that divide it from the other. This simple failure is at the heart of our Nation's distress, and it, too, must be resolved, and it must be resolved now.

We are now 5 years into this administration. They have not been happy ones for our Nation. But now we have arrived at a crisis—or more precisely, at three crises: one that is costing millions of Americans the health plans they liked and were told they could keep, a second in the relationship of this government to the people, and a third in the basic function of our fundamental institutions.

Happily, the Constitution's Framers gave us all of the tools that are necessary to resolve these crises except for one, and that one is what Lincoln called the better angels of our nature. Only we can appeal to those angels, and we must do so before more harm befalls our country.

HOUSE GYM REMAINS OPEN FOR MEMBERS DURING SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today is the ninth day of the Republican shutdown, what started as a tantrum against the Affordable Care Act to defund it, then morphed into a demand to delay it for a year, but now is really an open assault on our system of government.

Unless a fanatic minority holding JOHN BOEHNER and the American people hostage get their way, they will continue to inflict unnecessary pain on hundreds of thousands of our employees and on the American public. Now they are poised to wreck the global economy by threatening that America will not pay its bills. If it works, they will do it all over again.

Make no mistake, this is an assault on our system of government unlike anything we have seen before. We must stop them now, united in the belief that there are some lines we are not going to cross. There will be no weapons on the floor of the House and no willful damage to the American people.

What if these fanatics had their tactics used against them? What if Democrats and Speaker PELOSI demanded that the disastrous war in Iraq stop and, if it didn't, we would wreck the American economy? That our deeply felt concerns about preparing for climate change and global warming were nonnegotiable? What if Senator CHRIS MURPHY, who had 26 innocent children and their teachers massacred in his district, what if he said, Enough. Unless we get background checks for purchasers of guns to make sure that unfit people can't get them, something that 90 percent of the American people agree with, unless I get that, I am going to shut down the government? Can you imagine the howls of outrage?

There is a tremendous disconnect here. One glaring symbol of the disconnect can be found in the sub-basement of the Rayburn office building, the House gym. Now, make no mistake, everywhere I have worked I have started fitness programs for our employees. They save money; they improve productivity; they can even save lives. I helped start a fitness program for our employees here on Capitol Hill. If anything, it may be more important for people in Congress who are leading a crazy, unhealthy lifestyle and can seldom get together and interact like human beings. For 17 years, this is where I have tried to start every single day, to exercise, to enjoy bipartisan camaraderie, an island in the storm of Capitol Hill. It is convenient to be able to shower there instead of at home. It is important. It is very important, but it is not essential.

I had somebody argue with me yesterday that it doesn't cost that much because we pay dues. We have an access key that lets us in and there aren't any staff members there now. Well, that is true. It doesn't cost very much, but it costs. The electricity, the hot water, the towels, they are not provided by gym fairies. They are provided by taxpayers. And the same is true for countless facilities across America, closed by the senseless Republican shutdown.

In fact, since we have decided that we are going to pay all the employees when it is over, we are paying them not to work. And it is costly not to collect fees. You can make a better argument for restoring those services than you can for the House gym. Some of the most fanatic about inflicting unnecessary pain on the American public are regulars, enjoying our House gym while the staff gym is closed.

Mr. Speaker, if you and the House Republicans are serious and not cynical about the shutdown, then shut down the House gym until this madness ends.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS PASSING BILLS TO REOPEN GOVERNMENT

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

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, like myself and many Americans, I am very frus-

trated over the inaction of Congress to get its work done; but let's look back at what has happened over the last week or so.

The House Republicans, we have sent bills over to the Democratically-controlled Senate to open the government, to run the government, to fund the government. We have sent, starting from delaying ObamaCare, which most Americans have serious problems with, to other bills, and I want to talk about the latter two that we sent.

One was to fund the government completely until December 15, but also with two exceptions. The one exception is that Members of Congress and the President would live by the same rules under ObamaCare that all Americans have to. The other exception is ObamaCare. We need to delay those rules, and let's move on.

The people that talk about the status quo in American history here, the status quo, if you vote for a clean CR, you want the status quo to remain the same. That means unemployment stays where it is, forcing Americans into part-time work. We need structural changes to the underlying problems. We need to address why our debt keeps going up.

The President, yesterday, in his news conference, talked about raising the debt ceiling doesn't increase the debt ceiling, doesn't increase spending. Well, I wish the President would answer to me: When he took office, the debt was \$10 trillion; now it is approaching \$17 trillion. How does raising the debt ceiling not increase the debt?

The President talks about it is unprecedented, talking about the debt ceiling and having negotiations would be unprecedented if we do that. Well, Ronald Reagan and Speaker Tip O'Neill did it. Bill Clinton did it. President Obama did it in 2011 under the Budget Control Act. It is not unprecedented. And, interestingly, the time the President has been forced to negotiate are times when we have had crises that we have had to address, and the President did that in 2011.

If ObamaCare is so good and it is the President's signature piece of legislation, he ought to be the first one to sign up for it. I believe the First Family ought to be the first in line to sign up for ObamaCare. But, you know what? The President of the United States is exempt from ObamaCare. It doesn't make sense. He ought to have to live by his own bills that he supported and pressed through.

We talk about compromise. I am sure the President doesn't watch FOX News, but I think Bill O'Reilly has a compromise that maybe makes some sense. The individual mandate—that was one of the things we put in there, in one of those bills—we said delay the individual mandate for 1 year. The President delayed the employer mandate for 1 year. It only makes sense, especially when you see so many people having trouble signing up, getting on and all the uncertainty. We are getting reports