

The House has passed legislation that would provide veterans disability, pension and other benefits if the shutdown is prolonged. But the White House has urged lawmakers not to take a piecemeal approach to continuing government services.

Shinseki made that case as well, saying it's not the best solution for veterans. He noted that even if the VA were fully funded, some services to veterans would suffer.

He said the Labor Department has largely shut down its VETS program, which provides employment and counseling services to veterans. The Small Business Administration has closed 10 centers focused on helping veterans create and operate businesses. And the Housing and Urban Development Department is not issuing vouchers to newly homeless vets, though those already receiving the housing aid will still get it.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said Wednesday that veterans had done their job and that it was time for Congress to do its job.

Mitch McConnell's spokesman, Don Stewart, noted that the senator pushed for a vote on House-passed legislation that would protect disability benefits, but Majority Leader Harry Reid objected.

"Maybe Carney should give him a call," Stewart said.

The shutdown has disrupted the generally bipartisan workings of the veterans committees in both chambers.

"Do you think Senator Reid doesn't like our veterans or the VA in particular?" Rep. Tim Huelskamp, R-Kan., asked Wednesday.

"Personally, I think he very highly values veterans," responded Shinseki, the only Cabinet member to testify before a congressional committee since the partial shutdown began. "As to why we are unable, Congress is unable to do its business, I will leave to the members to discuss."

Meanwhile, some Democrats said a GOP bill passed last week that would continue to fund disability payments didn't include money for such things as medical or prosthetic research and no money to maintain national cemeteries or various construction projects.

"I keep hearing the Senate, the Senate. I put the responsibility directly in the House. We could pass a clean (continuing resolution) and you wouldn't be sitting here," said Rep. Corrine Brown, D-Fla. "I don't blame the Senate. I thank God for the Senate."

Miller said there was bipartisan support in the House for legislation that would fund the entire Department of Veterans Affairs a full year in advance so it—so it would not be subject to end-of-the-year brinkmanship. The VA had so far not endorsed the effort.

#### OBAMACARE AND OUR NATIONAL DEBT

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

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, in the context of the debate that is going on in the country right now about how we get our national finances in order, I think it is very important to remember that it would be unfair for future generations of Americans—for our kids and our grandkids—if we raise the debt ceiling without making the reforms necessary to get government spending under control. No one wants to default on our national debt, but no one should want to leave mountains of debt to our future children and grandchildren.

Congress must continue to focus on reforming government to avert a national debt crisis. The President says ObamaCare shouldn't be part of the discussion related to funding the government or to raising the debt limit, but ObamaCare is fundamentally connected to spending and debt. The President's signature health care law, after all, was passed through the reconciliation process, which is reserved exclusively for budget-related bills.

For those who use this special budget process to now say that it is not budget-related is very cynical. ObamaCare's projected cost has more than doubled since the President originally claimed it would reduce the deficit. It will cost this country \$2 trillion over the next 10 years. I urge everyone to remember that ObamaCare is part of the discussion about how we reduce our national debt.

#### IN MEMORY OF NEVADA ASSEMBLYWOMAN PEGGY PIERCE

(Mr. HORSFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today saddened by the news that Nevada Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce has passed away.

She was the staunch liberal conscience of the Nevada State Legislature, but she commanded respect from both sides of the aisle because of her steadfast belief in her principles, because she was a hard worker and because she cared so deeply about the well-being of her constituents and the people of Nevada.

I first met Peggy before her time in the assembly, when she was a fellow organizer, helping to coordinate rapid response for displaced workers in Las Vegas after the tragic events of September 11. She was as committed to helping others then as she was in her tenure in the Nevada State Legislature.

She succumbed to cancer, but she did not lose the fight. She put her constituents before herself, and in that sense, she had always been a true public servant.

My thoughts and prayers are with her family.

You will truly be missed, my friend.

#### GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IN THE GOLDEN STATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, today, I will be hosting a number of Members from my home State of California, a State in which the population is so diverse and in which the culture is so rich that it is often described as a microcosm of America.

Every language, every nationality, every ethnicity is represented in the

Golden State—a State that is the 12th-largest economy in the world. California's economy is so big that its GDP rivals that of some full-blown, industrialized nations, including those of Australia, Spain, Mexico, and South Korea. The economy in California is crucial to the national economy.

I am here tonight with my colleagues to speak against the government shutdown that has been manufactured and orchestrated by the House Republicans—a shutdown that is harming the national economy, a shutdown that is harming the California economy and a shutdown that is harming the very communities that we represent.

In my district, the 41st District, which represents Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris, the largest employer is March Air Reserve Base, with 8,500 people working at the base in some capacity. When the shutdown hit, 500 of these workers were affected by the furloughs. While Congress passed legislation allowing these employees to go back to work, roughly 1,000 National Guardsmen at the base still will not be able to drill this month and will not receive pay.

It is not just our servicemembers who are hurt by this reckless shutdown. Low-income children in my district are suffering, too. The Riverside County Office of Education receives Federal funding through the Head Start program in order to provide childhood development services and to promote school readiness for children under the age of 5. Because of this shutdown, the county is not able to draw down their grant money, jeopardizing these vital services for nearly 3,500 young children in my county.

About an hour east of my district is Joshua Tree National Park, where 92 park employees were given furlough notices. When the shutdown happened, park rangers were forced to notify campers that they had to vacate the park within 48 hours. There are 7,000 people a day who visit Joshua Tree National Park, and this shutdown is estimated to cost nearly \$8,000 a day.

Not just the park and its employees are going to suffer; local businesses will suffer as well. A cafe next to the park normally has a line out the door. The other day, the manager reported that the cafe made only \$39. This is a small business, Mr. Speaker.

We have to end this shutdown, not just for the furloughed public employees but for small businesses like that cafe.

I am very pleased to be joined by several of my California colleagues, the first of whom is from southern California, the distinguished gentleman, ALAN LOWENTHAL. He represents the cities of Long Beach, Garden Grove and Cypress. He sits on the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Committee on Natural Resources.

I am happy to yield to the gentleman from California's 47th District.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Thank you, Congressman TAKANO.