

Strength Act of 2016” or the “POSTURE Act.” At a time when our Army is confronting growing threats and increasing operational demands, it would be wise to pause the current budget-driven force reductions and allow the next administration time to assess land force capabilities and needs before determining troop levels.

Under current plans, the Regular Army is expected to fall to 475,000 Soldiers by 1 October 2016, and then further decrease to 450,000 Soldiers by 1 October 2018. These same plans will also reduce the end strength of our Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. Such a reduction in our landpower capability does not make sense in a time of increased threats and global instability.

While the POSTURE Act puts the brakes on budget-driven force reductions, the Army will also face negative consequences if the additional end strength is not funded. During a recent hearing on the Army’s Fiscal Year 2017 budget, Army Chief of Staff GEN Mark Kinney told the Senate Appropriations Committee that stopping the drop in Army end strength without providing funding to cover the additional costs would undermine readiness and potentially result in a hollow Army.

AUSA looks forward to working with you to advance the POSTURE Act, but urges you to consider ways to provide the additional resources to prepare our Army to face a dangerous and increasingly unstable world.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN,
General, USA Retired.

NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF
THE UNITED STATES, INC.
Washington, DC, February 26, 2016.

Hon. CHRIS GIBSON,
*House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.*

On behalf of the nearly 45,000 members of the National Guard Association of the United States and the approximately 450,000 soldiers and airmen of the National Guard, please accept our sincere thanks for your leadership in introducing the Protecting Our Security Through Utilizing Right-Sized End-Strength (POSTURE) Act of 2016 (H.R. 4534), a bill that would stop the drawdown of U.S. Land Forces.

NGAUS strongly supports your legislation. The National Commission on the Future of the Army (NCF A) recommended a minimally sufficient Total Army of 980,000 soldiers; however, it provided no optimal end-strength level. NGAUS testified before the NCF A that the Total Army was at the risk of becoming dangerously small given the current threat environment.

Given the velocity of instability, the demand for U.S. Land Forces will likely only increase for the foreseeable future. U.S. Land Forces must be sized to address these threats without putting undue stress on our soldiers and marines.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure this important legislation becomes law. Thank you, as always, for your continued support for members of the National Guard.

Sincerely,

GUS HARGETT,
Major General (Ret), USA, President.

RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION,
1 March 2016.

Hon. CHRIS GIBSON,
*House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN GIBSON: The Reserve Officers Association (ROA) supports your bill H.R. 4534, “Protecting Our Security Through Utilizing Right-Sized End-Strength Act of 2016” or the “POSTURE Act.” This bill recognizes the vital contributions of the Reserve Components and the need to ensure

they have the right Fiscal Year 2016 end strength authorized.

Since 9/11, more than 900,000 Reserve Component members have been activated to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and other contingencies. Despite increased use of the Guard and Reserve, the Congressional Research Service, identified end strength reductions between FY2001 and FY2015.

“Between FY2001 and FY2015, the largest shifts in authorized end strength have occurred in the Navy Reserve (–31,600 or –35.5%), Air Force Reserve (–7,258 or –9.8%), and Coast Guard Reserve (–1,000 or –12.5%). A smaller change occurred in the Air National Guard (–3,022 or –2.8%) and Army Reserve (–3,300 or –1.6%), while the authorized end strength for the Army National Guard (–326 or –0.1%) and the Marine Corps Reserve (–358 or –0.9%) have been largely unchanged during this period, (FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act: Selected Military Personnel Issues, R44120).”

As stated in the bill, passing this legislation will ensure Guard and Reserve members are available, “. . . to deter threats, shape the international security 15 environment, respond to emergent situations and crises, and, if necessary, to fight and win the Nation’s war, . . .”

ROA has a membership of 50,000, which represents all the uniformed services of the United States who would be favorably affected by your bill. Thank you for your efforts on this issue, and past support to the Military.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY E. PHILLIPS,
Executive Director.

Mr. GIBSON. Lastly, Madam Speaker, the legislative strategy here is that we have been building out support. Our hope is that when the mark for the national security policy bill, which will be unveiled here in the next couple of weeks, that this bill will be included in the underlying bill because we think it is just so critically important that we get this done this year.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to come together with my colleagues to talk about such an important issue for the American people.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS—
ROAD TO RUIN: HOUSE REPUBLICANS FAIL ON THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JEFFRIES. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Madam Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege, once again, to come to the House floor on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus and join with my distinguished colleague

from Ohio, Representative JOYCE BEATTY, as we anchor this Congressional Black Caucus Special Order—the CBC hour of power—where, for 60 minutes, we get an opportunity to talk to the American people about issues of great importance to the African American community, to our democracy, and, certainly, to our country at large.

Today, we are here to discuss, tragically, the House GOP’s continued failure to demonstrate the ability to govern in a basic fashion—that is to pass a budget, which is required by statutory law, as of April 15. That deadline has come and gone, and we are still waiting for the House majority to present a budget to this body for our consideration.

We were told for years by people, including by the current Speaker of this great House, that the most fundamental tenet of governing is the passage of a budget. Yet, even with Republicans in firm control of both the House and the Senate, it seems that this Congress is still unable to get its act together. It is a stunning act of legislative abdication of basic responsibilities. We are going to explore that tonight, not just from a procedural standpoint, but from a standpoint of how this is indicative of this majority’s unwillingness and inability to do the business of the American people.

It is now my honor and my privilege to yield to my distinguished colleague, my coanchor, my classmate—the always eloquent and effervescent gentlewoman from the great city of Columbus in the great State of Ohio, Representative JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. I thank the gentleman.

I always look forward to engaging in our Congressional Black Caucus’ Special Order hour and, tonight, for our dialogue, for our debate, on the House Republicans’ repeated failure to pass a budget.

First, let me say, as your classmate and colleague, being able to be the voice for your constituents and my constituents and America at large, it is an honor. I think it is so important, when we think about how important the work of this Congress is, for us to take on challenging the House Republicans’ road to ruin.

Madam Speaker, tonight, the Congressional Black Caucus is going to discuss the importance of why we should pass a budget. Not only that, I am sure Mr. JEFFRIES and I will have a dialogue about the value and the importance of having a budget. As Members of Congress and, especially, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, we know specifically that a budget creates jobs and that it raises the paychecks of hardworking American people while reducing the deficit in a balanced and responsible way.

Madam Speaker, let me just take a moment to point out that this is not

the first time that the Congressional Black Caucus has held a Special Order hour on the subject of the Republicans' inaction. Earlier this year, the Congressional Black Caucus came to this House floor and implored the Republican leadership to do its job—the job America wants us to do—and that was to enact commonsense gun control legislation. To date, Madam Speaker, Republicans have continued to fail the American people by putting forth or by bringing forth commonsense gun control legislation. It is still hanging out there, waiting for action.

Now, again, here in the House of Representatives, the people's House, we are faced with another instance of Republican failure. Under law, as spelled out in title III of the Congressional Budget Act, Congress is directed to complete actions on the concurrent resolution on the budget by April 15, as we heard Mr. JEFFRIES remind us. A concurrent resolution on the budget means it is supposed to pass both the Senate and the House, again, by April 15. At this date, neither Chamber has considered a budget resolution for 2017.

Madam Speaker, I don't know about your constituents, but in my district, Ohio's Third Congressional District, my constituents expect Congress to work; so let's take a look at it.

What happens when people refuse to do their jobs?

If postal workers don't deliver, you don't get your mail. If farmers don't farm, people don't eat. If teachers don't show up, our children don't learn. People all over America take their jobs seriously, and they expect us, as their elected officials, to also do that. It is time for House Republicans to get America off the road to ruin and back on the path to prosperity.

When Speaker RYAN took office—this is worth repeating, and Congressman JEFFRIES mentioned this earlier. When Speaker RYAN took office, House Republicans stated that passing a budget was a basic function of government. However, the statutory deadline of passing a budget resolution by April 15 has come and gone, although House Republicans made passing a budget a top priority for this year. In the Republicans' own words, they can't even accomplish the basic functions of government—their job.

Madam Speaker, why do we care that we don't have a budget? Let me give you the answer.

The importance of setting a budget is that it lays out the blueprint for the appropriations process. It outlines government spending for the year. Without a budget, we have 12 appropriations bills that are working their way through Congress without there being guiding principles on overall spending. If we cannot as a Congress perform the basic functions of governing, how are we going to tackle the much more complicated issues, such as income inequality, education quality, tuition affordability, tax reform, and so many others?

Once again, House Republicans have demonstrated the degree to which the sharp division within their Conference is impeding Congress' ability to work for the American people. Instead of coming together with Democrats to pass a budget resolution that will create jobs and grow the paychecks of hardworking American families, they have just decided not to pass a budget.

This decision was made despite the fact that President Obama submitted his budget request to Congress back in February. As you may remember, Madam Speaker, the Republican majority here in the House of Representatives and the Republican-controlled Senate took the unprecedented step of refusing to receive the OMB Director for a formal hearing so as to present the President's budget.

Madam Speaker, how did that turn out for us? We all know how it turned out. The Republican Conference failed the American people, and it set us on a road to ruin by not passing a budget.

Mr. JEFFRIES, I look forward to our continuing this dialogue tonight with other members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank Congresswoman BEATTY for a very thorough presentation and for pointing out that the Speaker, himself, and the Republican majority have indicated that they should be judged based on their capacity to complete the basics of their job responsibilities, which include the passage of a budget resolution. In fact, it was then-Congressman RYAN who, in 2012, stated that failing to enact a budget has serious consequences for American families.

There are at least three current health crises that we are trying to deal with in America and throughout the world, but Republicans have abdicated their responsibility: the Zika virus, the Flint water crisis, and the opioid addiction that is ravaging communities in the inner cities, in suburban America, and all throughout the rural parts of this country; yet House Republicans have failed not just to put forth a budget that would provide a roadmap to deal with these issues, but they have chosen to simply ignore these crises in a manner that represents such a stunning departure of what responsible Members of Congress should be doing at this particular point in time.

I am thankful that we have been joined by the distinguished gentlewoman from the great Lone Star State, who has always been thoughtful and eloquent on issues of importance not just to her district, which is anchored in Houston, Texas, but through her membership and leadership on the Homeland Security Committee as well as on the House Judiciary Committee. She has been so thoughtful and effective on a great many issues in the context of our safety, of our well-being, of criminal justice reform, of course, and of the protection of civil liberties—all issues that are fundamental to our democracy in the same way that a budgetary roadmap is fundamental to our democracy.

Let me yield to Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank my colleagues for their eloquence but, more importantly, for the Congressional Black Caucus in its taking up the mantle of the moral compass of justice.

One would argue that justice is tied to our committee, the Judiciary Committee; but as I look at this Congress and as I look at a very small document called the Constitution, one can anchor the responsibilities of this body—of both the House and the Senate—Mr. JEFFRIES, in the Bill of Rights. I would like to just, very briefly, take us on a journey that indicates that our moral compass is broken because a budget that was supposed to be passed on April 15, by midnight, was not.

To the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands, let me thank her. She will have her own distinctive story, in her eloquence, about the fairness to the territories.

I listened, as I came in, to the presentation by the gentlewoman from Ohio, who knows full well that we need a budget to ensure that there is full employment in America. Then I work extensively with my colleague on the Judiciary Committee, and we will not pass or fund prison reform without a budget.

I rise today, however, to weave in and out of my comments about the moral compass that is broken to indicate that my district—the 18th Congressional District in Houston, Texas, and Harris County—is under a terrible emergency disaster. We are underwater. We are again facing an enormous rainfall that has been listed as historic and, possibly, as catastrophic.

Let me acknowledge my mayor, Mayor Turner, and county judge, Judge Emmett, for the work that has been done so far; and let me indicate two pastors with whom I have just gotten off the phone, Bishop Dixon and Bishop Bady, who are watching hungry people come to a site, looking for food.

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As I was speaking to the emergency leadership, they are indicating they were evacuating babies from apartments and people were being displaced.

So what does that have to do with where we are today and no budget? Well, we know that the President introduced his budget a few months ago.

Because of his responsibility, we know that Homeland Security was provided funding and FEMA was provided funding to deal with emergency declarations of a disaster.

My district now needs it more than they have ever needed it. They need it in terms of providing for those immediate needs of vulnerable people without the resources to have stocked food, medical care, clothing, and also those who may be off work now because of the disaster.

So we don't have a budget. We are not moving along to ensure that

FEMA, which has seen a lot of disasters over the last 2 years, has the necessary funding to do their job. That is a broken moral compass.

It also reflects the Constitution because we are owed an equal treatment under the law and due process under the Fifth Amendment. There is no due process when I hear that one area is under water and we are not able to get help.

Let me also say that, as I watch a broken moral system, I also look at the predicament that we will be in with the Zika virus.

Congressman JEFFRIES has mentioned the opioid crisis, and we cannot forget the water crisis in Flint, but there is also the water crisis across the Nation. There is hard work that is being done by the Members in Michigan and Mr. KILDEE.

They need a budget to be able to fund the crisis or to help repair the crisis, restorative dollars, that a budget does to give a roadmap to the appropriators.

I also know that we are facing another potential epidemic, if you will, the Zika virus that is taking control of places like Puerto Rico and other places in the Caribbean, places that we have not yet fully documented. I can assure you that the Gulf Coast States of Florida, Louisiana, and Texas are in the eye of the storm.

The President a couple of months ago dutifully and responsibly introduced to this Congress a request of \$1.9 billion—no, I didn't say trillions. I didn't say 5 billion. I said 1.9 billion—so that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can do their job.

Mr. JEFFRIES, colleagues, if we are not doing our job, we need those who have the distinctive responsibility for issues of health and epidemics in this country to be able to do their job.

We have now been told by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that it is not just in the prestages of pregnancy that the Zika virus can have a severe impact.

It is throughout the pregnancy. We also know that they have just determined that it will be severe brain damage that will come about.

So how irresponsible can it be to not put forward the emergency supplemental of \$1.9 billion? I have sent letters to Secretary Burwell. I have sent letters to, obviously, the President of the United States in supporting his efforts. I have sent letters to our leader, NANCY PELOSI, who has been a champion on these issues of Zika funding. And I have sent a letter to Speaker PAUL RYAN.

Might I speak to the Speaker and certainly ask that a half-baked, if I might say, contribution to fighting the Zika virus is not going to work because any taking of monies from other places is going to damage the funding of malaria, tuberculosis, and a universal flu vaccine. Yes, it is going to undermine our needed and continued effort of fighting Ebola.

Let me finish by simply saying this: Along with the idea of the Zika virus

and other crises, when we hear headlines like this that indicate Americans still don't see a vibrant labor market, then you know what else is needed under this budget? We need a budget to be able to fully fund the retraining of Americans.

I have introduced legislation that will train middle-age or middle-management workers and others and give them a stipend while they are being retrained for the 21st century jobs. We cannot do that with a budget not passed and an assessment not being made on how we would fund job training.

Lastly, the Supreme Court heard a case today dealing with the issues of executive orders and immigration. I would argue that Texas and the other States do not have standing because they are not required to give driver's licenses or anything else, as the President provides a prioritization of who should be deported.

I will say to you that, over the years, we have said over and over again to pass comprehensive immigration reform, which could have been a key element of a budget revenue to be able to help this country move along.

Without a budget and an intelligent discussion about what comprehensive immigration reform would do as an added revenue for this country, here we are mumbling along while Houston remains under water, needing resources from FEMA, while the Zika virus is in distress with no monies and while a number of other important issues are not addressed.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. JEFFRIES for allowing me to spend a moment to at least tie in the Bill of Rights that deal with the very core values of this country.

We have let down that basic document that guarantees equal protection, guarantees a certain freedom to be protected, guarantees that Americans have due process, if you will, and certainly guarantees the freedom of expression so that Americans can speak and be heard. They are speaking, but they are not being heard. What a shame that this budget has not been passed.

I am grateful to the Congressional Black Caucus. Let me acknowledge the chairman and say: Let us keep our fight going because we have reason to provide that kind of comfort to the American people.

Madam Speaker, Last week, House Republicans blew past the statutory deadline for Congress to enact a budget—reflecting apparently the belief of the Leadership that their already severe budget proposal was not radical enough to pass through a Republican Majority.

The Do-Nothing Republican Congress is back.

Instead of coming together with Democrats to pass a budget resolution that will create jobs and grow the paychecks of hard-working American families, Republicans have decided not to pass a budget at all.

The Republican-led Budget Committee, at the direction of the House GOP Leadership,

put forward the most devastating 'Road to Ruin' budget in history, but the Republican majority has rejected the plan as insufficiently severe.

Here's what was too weak to satisfy the radical forces that have seized control of the Republican Party; a budget that would:

1. End the Medicare guarantee for seniors;
2. Make \$6.5 trillion in cuts—the sharpest cuts ever proposed by the House Budget Committee;
3. Devastate investments in good-paying jobs, education, and American infrastructure;
4. Repeal the Affordable Care Act and dismantle the affordable health care of 20 million Americans.

Republicans have failed to keep their promise to pass a budget but their goal is still clear: to take us back to the radical trickle-down agenda that shattered our economy and hollowed out the wages of middle-class Americans.

At the same time, House Republicans have done nothing to help the thousands of Americans struggling to protect their families from the three public health emergencies of the Zika virus, opioid addiction and the Flint Water Crisis:

1. As the House Democratic Leadership wrote to Speaker RYAN last month, these public health crises require swift and decisive Congressional action.

2. Also last week, Democrats on the Appropriations Committee wrote to Chairman HAL ROGERS (R-KY), requesting an immediate hearing on the Administration's \$1.9 billion emergency supplemental request for Zika, pointing out that "The Zika virus is a true public health emergency that has the potential to affect millions of Americans this summer, including more than two million pregnant women."

3. But House Republicans have responded with nothing but inaction and indifference.

Instead of taking action to pass a budget or address urgent public health crises, House Republicans are now wasting a full week grandstanding on the IRS.

That's just the kind of hollow, meaningless posturing the American people have come to expect from the Do-Nothing Republican Congress.

As NPR notes:

Under Republican leadership, the 114th Congress has been "short on meaty legislation and short on weeks in session . . . But there seems to be plenty of time to think about other things. Last month, one House member introduced a measure that would nationally recognized magic as an art form."

Hard-working families deserve a Congress that invests in their future, protects safety, and creates a level-playing field for them and their children to succeed.

Democrats will continue to press for a budget that creates jobs and raises the paychecks of the American people, while reducing the deficit in a balanced and responsible way.

Today, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in its review of the President's Immigration Executive Actions, which, as a result of congressional Republicans' inaction, address our Nation's broken immigration system and set important priorities in enforcing our immigration laws.

The President's executive actions fall well within both the clear legal authority provided by Congress and the Constitution, and the

well-established precedents of immigration actions by every Democrat and Republican President for the last 50 years.

1. Six Republican presidents have used the same clear authority to make our immigration enforcement priorities better fit our values as a people and our needs as a nation;

2. Past presidents have routinely acted in the face of Congressional inaction;

3. Numerous noted legal scholars have found that the President's actions are well within his legal authority.

The Immigration Executive Actions follow the same constitutional and legal precedent used by every Administration—Republican and Democratic—since President Eisenhower.

Just as Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush did before him, President Obama took executive action to make our immigration system better meet the needs of our country and better reflect our values as Americans.

As former Republican Senator Richard Lugar wrote in the *New York Times*:

“... whether or not you like President Obama's actions, he has operated under longstanding provisions of law that give the executive branch discretion in enforcement. This presidential prerogative has been recognized explicitly by the Supreme Court.”

Democrats stand for restoring sense to our utterly broken immigration system—so that we stop tearing apart families and separating parents from their children.

Last month, House and Senate Democrats filed our own amicus brief with the Supreme Court in support of the President's Immigration Executive Actions.

We are confident that the Supreme Court will affirm these vital immigration reforms and allow the President's steps to start fixing our immigration system to move forward.

While Republicans stand with Donald Trump's incendiary anti-immigrant agenda, Democrats will continue to champion the comprehensive immigration reform our nation needs.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas. She raises several important points.

One of the things that has struck me during my time here in Congress is that, under Republican reign, we have consistently seen government by crisis on one issue after the next.

From the group of people that spend so much time messaging the point to the American people that they believe in fiscal responsibility, where is the fiscal responsibility in failing to put forth a budget consistent with the law that you supported?

The other thing that amazes me—and the gentlewoman from Texas raised the point about the Supreme Court case that was argued earlier today on the immigration executive order issued by the President—I sit on the Judiciary Committee along with the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE and we hear almost every week about how lawless this President allegedly has been in terms of his time in office.

Now, it is interesting to consistently hear the lectures about how lawless this President has allegedly been from people who believe that President

Barack Obama exceeded his authority on January 20, 2009, the moment that he took the oath of office because there are folks who still cannot believe that this man is the President and leader of the free world. So I never buy that lawlessness argument.

This is a group now that supports essentially undermining the Constitution over in the other house of this Congress. The President has done his job in putting forth the Supreme Court nominee, who is clearly qualified not according to Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, but according to ORRIN HATCH himself, one of the leading Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, amongst others.

The lawlessness is not taking place at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. It is taking place right here in the United States Congress under the leadership of House and Senate Republicans.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. JEFFRIES. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me just finish my point by saying that the reason why the budget is not here is because they could not muster the votes of the majority and they could not muster them even though their budget ended Medicare, it took \$6.5 trillion in cuts from the overall budget, it devastated good-paying jobs, education, American infrastructure, and, again, it repealed the Affordable Care Act and dismantled the Affordable Care Act for 20 million people.

Even with those poison pills to draw in support for some kind of budget that would fit within the law, their responsibility or the responsibility of Congress—they are in the majority—they could not pass or get on the floor a budget.

Clearly, the moral compass is broken. More importantly, it denies equal protection under the law, in my interpretation, of millions of Americans depending on this Congress doing its job.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the thoughtful observations of the gentlewoman from Texas.

I think we want to bring Representative STACY PLASKETT into this conversation in terms of the stunning inability to present a budget.

As Representative JACKSON LEE said, what else is there to do in terms of satisfying the extreme elements of your party? Privatize Social Security and throw older people out of their homes across the country? What else can you do?

We are going to explore some of these draconian cuts that were in a budget that apparently is not extreme enough.

I yield to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT), my good friend and colleague by way of Brooklyn, New York, I point out. We are so thankful for her presence here in the Congress. It is my honor now to yield to her.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman JEFFRIES and I

thank the Congressional Black Caucus for giving us this opportunity to always be the conscience of this Congress.

I want to thank the gentleman for his tireless efforts to raise awareness on not just the Committee on the Judiciary, but all of the work that he does.

This group has come together this evening to talk about the fact that once again the Republicans have created a road to ruin in their budget failure.

We talked about the fact that this Republican Congress has blown past the statutory deadline to enact a budget last week, reflecting, apparently, the belief of the leadership that their already severe budget proposal was not even radical enough to pass through this Republican majority.

The gentleman talked about some of the draconian measures that were already in the budget that they had proposed, which seems to have not been sufficient enough for their caucus.

At the direction of the House GOP leadership, the Budget Committee put forth one of the most devastating budgets in history and the majority rejected that plan as insufficient, which can only lead us to believe that it was not even severe enough for them.

Some of the things that were in that budget were an end to a Medicare guarantee for seniors, makes \$6.5 trillion in cuts—the sharpest cuts ever proposed by the House Budget Committee—devastates investments in good-paying jobs, education, and American infrastructure, repeals the Affordable Care Act and dismantling the affordable health care of 20 million Americans.

Now, as expressed by the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY), in February, the administration, our President, requested support for Americans through the budget that he submitted to this Congress, which provided support for education, job training support, bolstering our obligation to seniors, real tools for growth for the territories in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and others by inclusion in the Affordable Care Act and expansion of Medicare.

But it seems that the Republicans have failed their promise to pass a budget, never mind even listen to or hear the head of OMB on that budget.

Their goal is still clear, to take us back to radical, trickle-down agenda that shattered our economy in the past and hollowed out the wages of middle-class Americans.

At that same time, House Republicans have done nothing to help the thousands of Americans struggling to protect their families from the three public health crises the chief spoke of: Zika, the opioid addict addictions, and the Flint water crisis. In Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Florida, and now even Texas, this is a real crisis concerns the Zika virus.

Last week, Democrats on the Appropriations Committee wrote to Chairman HAL ROGERS requesting an immediate hearing on the administration's

1.9 billion emergency supplemental request for Zika, pointing out that: “The Zika virus is a true public health emergency that has the potential to affect millions of Americans this summer, including more than 2 million pregnant women.”

What did that committee do? Absolutely nothing. Not even the respect of a hearing. They have not responded to anything but just their inaction and indifference.

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Instead of taking action to pass a budget or address urgent public health crises, the House Republicans are now wasting a full week grandstanding on the IRS. That is just the kind of hollow, meaningless posturing the American people have come to expect from this Congress.

Hardworking families deserve a Congress that invests in their future, protects their safety, creates a level playing field for them and their children to succeed. Democrats will continue to press for a budget that creates jobs, raises the paychecks, creates opportunities for American people while reducing the deficit in a balanced and responsible way.

I look forward to hearing, with the rest of my colleagues, their thoughts on this budget process and even possibly solutions for us as American people to come away with a clear budget that creates growth and opportunities for Americans.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative PLASKETT. She raised several important points. She noted that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to embrace this notion of trickle-down economics, which is sort of the foundation of many of the slash-and-burn cuts that are contained in at least a budget document that has been passed in prior years and the document that was put forth by the Committee on the Budget this year, this belief that if you lower the tax rate for millionaires and billionaires, that it will result in some residual benefit to the American people. But there is an irony in the embrace even of that term, “trickle-down economics.”

With the leadership of Representative BOBBY SCOTT and others, the CBC has consistently put forth a budget designed to open the floodgates of prosperity for working class Americans and middle class folks all throughout this country, but what the Republicans want to do is trickle-down economics. The only thing that you get with that philosophy, you may get a trickle, but you are guaranteed to stay down.

We are thankful that Representative SCOTT for so many years has consistently put forth through his leadership a budget from the Congressional Black Caucus designed to be both fiscally responsible and consistent with our ideals as a country that looks out for the least of those amongst us.

Let me now yield to the distinguished representative from the Com-

monwealth of Virginia, Mr. BOBBY SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for getting the title of our State correct. I thank the gentleman from New York and the gentlewoman from Ohio for yielding and organizing tonight’s Special Order.

Last week, the House of Representatives failed to pass a budget by the statutorily mandated date of April 15. This failure is unfortunate for our budget process, but perhaps not unfortunate for the American people because no budget is better than the proposed Republican budget that would have been brought to the floor.

Our Nation’s budget reflects priorities, but the Republican budget only highlights the wrong priorities. The budget the House Republicans wanted to bring to the floor would be even more devastating to students, working families, and seniors than their previous proposals.

The Republican budget would end the Medicare guarantee for seniors by converting Medicare into a voucher payment that would not keep pace with medical inflation, shifting billions of dollars in medical costs onto our senior citizens.

The Republican budget would repeal the Affordable Care Act and would jeopardize the health insurance for millions of Americans, even though the budget assumes all of the revenue collected by the Affordable Care Act to pay for the Affordable Care Act, all of those taxes remain in the budget.

The Republican budget includes a total of \$6.5 trillion in spending cuts, largely unspecified. If this level of cuts were ever made, it would devastate our investments and jobs, education, research, and would essentially eliminate any new transportation projects.

On top of these devastating cuts to vital programs that support and uplift hardworking American families, the Republican budget calls for trillions of dollars in tax cuts that would primarily benefit millionaires and billionaires, and then they claim the tax cuts would be revenue neutral, suggesting that we are to believe that trillions of dollars in new taxes would be imposed to pay for those tax cuts for the wealthy. But despite this, the Republican budget is not a credible plan.

Are we really going to dismantle Medicare? Are we really going to cut hundreds of billions of dollars out of education and job training and transportation? Are we really going to raise trillions of dollars in new taxes to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy?

I don’t think so. But the House leadership couldn’t even secure enough votes for this budget proposal because a faction of their conference wanted even deeper, unrealistic spending cuts. Budgeting is about making tough choices, and the only choice the Republicans seem to have made with the budget proposal is that we can only balance the budget on the backs of stu-

dents, workers, seniors, the disabled, and vulnerable communities across the Nation while cutting taxes for the wealthy.

The Congressional Black Caucus knows that is not the right choice. That is why, as we have done for the last 30 years, we have diligently prepared our own budget alternative to the Republican budget, which we would have offered as an amendment to the Republican budget if they had brought up their proposal.

The CBC budget chooses to invest in programs that we know will grow our economy and ensure that every American family is able to prosper. Our budget proposes a comprehensive jobs program, totaling \$500 billion over 3 years that will accelerate our economic recovery and ensure that it reaches virtually every community in America while also investing in what will guarantee America’s long-term economic competitiveness.

This jobs plan includes funding for direct jobs creation programs, school modernization, jobs for teachers and first responders, immediate investments in our Nation’s crumbling infrastructure, assistance for neighborhoods and families still reeling from the housing crisis, job training programs, and summer jobs.

Our budget calls for significant and sustained investments—approximately \$300 billion over the next decade—above the President’s request for programs that have been instrumental in lifting millions of Americans out of poverty. Some of these proposals include restoration of cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, expanding access to affordable housing, increasing access to quality and affordable education, increasing funding for job training and Trade Adjustment Assistance, adjusting the earned income tax credit and child tax credit to inflation, as well as decreasing the age where you can benefit for the earned income tax credit down to 21 years of age.

Thanks to the leadership of Congressman JIM CLYBURN, our budget also ensures that Federal resources are targeted more efficiently toward eradicating poverty by targeting Federal spending toward persistent areas of poverty through the 10–20–30 formula.

Our budget also includes more than \$340 billion above the President’s request for education over the next decade. This additional money will help make college more affordable by increasing the Pell grant, fully funding the President’s free community college program, reducing interest rates on student loans, and financing other proposals to ensure that no student graduates from college saddled with unmanageable debt.

The CBC budget also provides much-needed funding for families of Flint, Michigan, to help address the short-term and long-term cognitive and behavioral development of children exposed to high lead levels. However, the

Congressional Black Caucus appreciates, unfortunately, that Flint is not the only community in America impacted by lead exposure. This is why our budget includes funds to help not only Flint, but also other communities across the Nation deal with the effects of lead exposure.

Unlike the Republican budget, the CBC budget clearly shows how we pay for these additional investments. Our budget sets a new revenue target of \$4 trillion over the next 10 years above the current revenue baseline. To demonstrate how this is achievable and realistic, our budget suggests several specific alternatives, totaling \$7 trillion, that the House and Senate committees can choose from to reach that target.

We ask for \$4 trillion in new additional and specifically outline at least \$7 trillion to choose from. We do this by specifically talking about closing specific corporate loopholes, treating capital gains and dividends as regular income, a reasonable fee for financial transactions, restoring the estate tax to levels paid over a few years ago, specific items where you can choose from and, in fact, if we just cancel the Bush-era tax cuts, we would have almost \$4 trillion in new revenue right there.

At the end of the day, our budget realistically reduces the deficit by approximately \$3.2 trillion over the next decade compared to the Congressional Budget Office's March 2016 baseline. The CBC budget chooses investments in America's children and workers, protects our most vulnerable communities, and changes the wrong choices offered by the Republican majority.

I hope that we will have an opportunity to debate these issues if the House Republicans are ever able to bring their road-to-ruin budget to a full House vote.

Again, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Would the gentleman indulge one question?

It was mentioned during that very thorough presentation of what is contained in the CBC budget the 10-20-30 program, and of course 10-20-30, an initiative that has been championed by the CBC through the leadership of Representative JIM CLYBURN, would put forth a formula where 10 percent of the funding allocation would go to counties where 20 percent of the population has been living below the poverty line for 30 or more years. Is that correct?

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. That is correct. If you look at that, those counties and areas are spread all over the country, and if we are ever going to eradicate poverty, we have to target it to the high poverty areas, and 10-20-30 does exactly that.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentleman. In fact, what Representative CLYBURN has consistently pointed out, which I think is important in an era where we are trying to find common ground and deal with the problems confronting the American people, if you look at a breakdown of

persistently poor counties across the country and overlay that with congressional districts, a majority of those counties are actually represented by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

This is something that we believe should be embraced by the Speaker and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, as it would benefit, by the numbers, the constituents that they represent even more so than those of us within the CBC or on this side of the aisle.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. That is exactly true. I thank the gentleman very much for pointing that out.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative SCOTT.

Let me now ask my colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY), to just react to some of what we have heard.

One of the things that I thought was interesting in the presentation related to this budget is that if you look at the numbers, they are so extreme. I was on the Committee on the Budget during my first 2 years in Congress, but these numbers are even more extreme than what I remember in the 113th Congress. The budget apparently will cut \$157 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program over a 10-year period.

The Republican budget that came out of the committee would cut roughly \$2 trillion from Medicaid. When I was on the committee, the number was \$700 million. I thought that was out of control, \$700 million. Now we are at \$2 trillion over a 10-year period apparently.

And then we have got cuts in higher education. The proposal is \$185 billion over 10 years.

You have to ask the question: Why would anyone propose such draconian cuts?

The answer is clear. This is not something that is often talked about, but the objective is to create a situation where you can dramatically lower the tax rates for the wealthiest amongst us. The top tax rate right now is 39.6 percent, but what the budget that has been put forth by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would do is that it would create two tax rates, one at 10 and the other at 25 percent. So what you will see is a tax cut that goes from 39.6 percent to 25 percent.

The way that you balance a budget and pay for it is on the backs of working families, the middle class, senior citizens, children, the disabled, the poor, the afflicted, and everybody else who doesn't fall into the category of millionaire or billionaire.

□ 2030

Now, you wonder how it could be possible that anyone could think that they could get away with such a draconian budget. Well, again, the argument is trickle-down economics.

But what I found fascinating—and maybe you could react to this, Representative BEATTY—is that if you ac-

tually look at a side-by-side comparison of the economy 8 years under President Clinton with a side-by-side comparison of the economy 8 years under George W. Bush, and then a side-by-side comparison of the economy 8 years under President Obama, I think it is pretty clear who actually has been the responsible fiscal stewards.

There were 20.3 million jobs created under the Clinton Presidency. America lost 650,000 jobs in 8 years under the Bush Presidency. America has now gained more than 14 million private sector jobs under 8 years of the Obama Presidency.

What has been demonstrated is that the argument that if you lower tax rates, you create economic prosperity, is phony. Because Bill Clinton raised the top tax rate to 39.6 percent. It didn't seem to adversely impact the economy. In fact, it was humming between 1992 and 2000. George Bush comes to office, lowers the tax rate for high-income earners from 39.6 percent to 35 percent. We had the greatest recession in the history of modern America; the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

President Obama comes into office and he raises the top tax rate again from 35 to 39.6, more than 14 million jobs are created, the unemployment rate has dropped under his tenure from over 10 percent to 5 percent, the deficit has been reduced by more than a trillion dollars. The stock market has gone from 6,000 to over 16,000. Now it is up to 18,000. I haven't been in the 401(k) system as long as Congressman SCOTT, who clearly is monitoring the situation. So the prosperity numbers have been phenomenal.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) for her reaction.

Mrs. BEATTY. I think Mr. JEFFRIES and our other colleagues have said it so well, but here is what I am afraid of.

I think the Republicans—the GOP—want to take us down to the radical trickle-down agenda that shattered our economy and hollowed out the wages of middle class, hardworking Americans.

You said it all with that comparison from Clinton to Bush to now President Obama. And I could add to that long list: some 18 million people with health insurance; women having some of the best healthcare opportunities, getting mammograms for those who are under- and uninsured. We are able to have college students stay on their parent's insurance.

So I think when we look at what is happening, there are billions of dollars that they want to do away with in programs. And we can add to that: the \$185 billion from Federal college aid for low-income students or the \$150 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. Many of my constituents refer to that as their food stamps. And certainly, but for the Congressional Black Caucus, those members on the Agriculture Committee, those Members in leadership fighting for us to restore those dollars, I think it is quite simple.

I think what we are hearing tonight from our members of the Congressional Black Caucus is that they are trying to take us back in history. They are trying to take us back to an era of time, and we are not going to let them do that. We have too much at stake. We have gained so much.

Someone may ask us tonight: Why are we here? Why are we the conscience of the Congress, Mr. Speaker? Why are we here tonight talking about the road to ruin and destruction by not having a congressional budget?

I think the facts speak for themselves. I think that the American public needs to know that this is not something that just affects the Congressional Black Caucus. I want that to be clear. This affects America.

You mentioned it with Mr. CLYBURN's 10-20-30. The fact is more individuals who don't look like members of the Congressional Black Caucus will benefit. And that is the difference between Democrats and Republicans. We care about all people.

They profess to have hearings on poverty, and then when you look at the results of their own budget and what they are doing to those individuals who live in poverty—chuckle we may, clear our voice, Mr. Speaker, as we may—the facts speak for themselves. They are not creating programs that will help us eliminate poverty. And it is as simple as that.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank you for laying that out. And I think history can be judged by objective observers as it relates to fiscal responsibility. But a few facts that perhaps some in the Chamber may have had amnesia about, but maybe it bears going through.

Sequestration and painful budget cuts as it relates to the extreme agenda of some here in the Congress have been brought to us in a manner that has cost us both jobs and the ability to experience accelerated financial growth.

We saw in the aftermath of a severe economic shock the approach that was taken by our friends over in Europe of extreme austerity did not bear financial fruit. It was the stimulus package that was put forth—with not a single vote from anyone on the other side of the aisle—that was actually the financially responsible approach taken to help deal with the train wreck that President Obama inherited and to get the economy back on track.

But, of course, the objective from the very beginning—not my words, but the words of the Senate majority leader on the other side of the Capitol—was to make the President a one-term President.

I just don't even understand the philosophy of a President who takes office, inherits the worst economy since the Great Depression, and the number one agenda is to make sure that he is a one-term President. But that was an unsuccessful political endeavor. He gets a second term.

The first thing that some of my good friends on the other side of the aisle de-

cide to do, as we approach the end of the fiscal year in 2013, was to shut down the government for 16 days. It cost us \$24 billion in lost economic productivity. That is not hyperbole. Those are facts.

And what was it all for?

Because there is this obsession—perhaps clinical in nature—with the Affordable Care Act. This is why we voted more than 50 times to destroy it, defeat it, delay it, and do everything possible to stop it.

What could be possibly wrong with making sure that preexisting conditions don't prevent someone here in the greatest country in the history of the world from being able to get adequate medical care? What is wrong with more than 20 million previously uninsured Americans actually having health care?

Yet, in the budget that apparently is not extreme enough, we would take away the Affordable Care Act.

So these are just some of the facts. I wish we had some more time to explore it. That is not hyperbole. Historians will judge this Presidency and this Congress. I, of course, am of the belief that many will conclude that this is a Congress that has majored in obstruction, minored in dysfunction, and done everything possible to pursue a degree in legislative malpractice to the detriment of the American people. And I am hopeful that we can just get back on track and try to find common ground to do the business of the American people, which is why each and every one of us was sent here to the people's House.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Republican controlled House has once again missed a key deadline when it failed to pass a budget resolution before April 15. Despite promises to the contrary, House Speaker PAUL RYAN has been unable to bring a budget resolution to the floor in a timely fashion. This is simply unacceptable.

Completing a budget resolution is an important step in the budget process that will lay out Congress' spending priorities and create a unified vision for a more prosperous nation. While Democrats have endeavored to work cooperatively with Republicans to pass a comprehensive budget resolution, Speaker RYAN has insisted on pushing a budget that divides our country while further slashing critical investments aimed at strengthening our economy. The Republican budget reflects the needs of only a select few instead of the views and priorities of every American and places the burden of deficit reduction squarely on the backs of middle and working class Americans.

It is clear that our most vulnerable segments of the population—the elderly, minorities, low-income earners, and others—have been most impacted by the Great Recession. Yet this latest Republican budget resolution continues to reflect the failed economic worldview that wealth will trickle down when we give massive tax breaks to the wealthy. Time and time again, history has demonstrated that this is simply untrue.

It is unfortunate that the Republican-controlled Congress today is subjecting millions of

hard-working families to even greater pressures to work longer hours for less pay, while we continue to prop up the wealthiest earners and biggest corporations with tax breaks and other loopholes. The Republican budget exemplifies these principles and drives the wedge deeper between the wealthy and our most vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, I believe our nation is on a dangerous path under this Republican leadership. Congress should be working to create jobs and increase pay for hard-working American families, not giving additional tax breaks to the wealthy and cutting spending for key social programs. The Republicans have long abandoned their commitment to pass a budget resolution that reflects the needs of all Americans. Thus, I am strongly urging my colleagues to support fiscally sound and morally responsible budget alternatives that will create a level playing field and new opportunities for every American.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LOUDERMILK). The Chair would remind Members that remarks in debate may not engage in personalities toward the President, including by repeating remarks made elsewhere that would be improper if spoken in the Member's own words.

RESTORING ARTICLE I CONSTITUTIONAL POWER TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on this evening's Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, if Congress does not assert its constitutional authority, we risk becoming obsolete in the eyes of an Executive that would prefer to legislate with a phone and a pen as a replacement for this body.

Thank you to all my colleagues who join me this evening, and may God bless America.

Every day, before Members of Congress meet to conduct official business, we gather to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America. We place our right hand over our hearts and promise to our colleagues, our constituents, and all Americans that we will uphold the rule of law.

This very law is the very vehicle that has ensured liberty and justice for all even being a possibility: the rule of law. Unfortunately, this administration seems intent on operating outside the rule of law. It insists upon circumventing Congress by changing laws and legislating from the Oval Office, not from Capitol Hill.

Time and again, the American people have had to bear witness to the blatant disrespect this administration has for