

Statement on Legislation to Extend Middle Class Tax Cuts

Written by Mike Honda

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As many of my colleagues know, it is an extraordinary achievement for any legislation to receive this many Republican votes in the United States Senate, and I applaud their bipartisan collaboration to find a workable solution.

Now, once again, House Republicans have been hijacked by the extreme demands of the Tea Party Caucus. At every opportunity, the far right holds our nation hostage, and now their grandstanding is putting middle-class Americans and our seniors at risk.

Instead of indulging Tea Party extremism, our chamber should hold up its end of the deal and move to pass the Senate-passed compromise bill without delay.

The compromise legislation will prevent an immediate tax increase on 160 million Americans, and will ensure 2.2 million – and more than 362,000 Californians – don't lose their unemployment insurance. Further, the bipartisan agreement protects the health care of 48 million seniors by preventing a 27.4% Medicare physician payment cut.

However, I must say, I am given great pause by other items included in this legislation. In particular, I am opposed to the inclusion of the language forcing the Administration to move forward with the Keystone XL pipeline. While I am as concerned as anyone about our energy security now and in the future, I believe that Keystone XL is the wrong way to achieve security. Instead, we should be focused on promoting renewable energy that does not damage our planet or harm public health.

So while I need to do the right thing for my constituents by voting to extend the provisions that protect our nation's middle class and our seniors, I am being forced to do the wrong thing by the House Republican majority on the Keystone XL pipeline.

This is what good governance requires: compromise. This motion to go to conference is just the latest act of a party overtaken by extremists, set on creating dysfunction and disorder. The American people have given Congress its lowest approval rating in history because of Republican actions like these. I ask my colleagues to put their country before their party, pass the Senate bipartisan compromise, and defeat this motion to go to conference.