

The high cost of the GOP's hatred of Obama

Written by Staff Writer

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Everyone knows what this shutdown is about. Rep. James E. Clyburn, South Carolina Democrat, said that the budget fights on the Hill are about undercutting President Obama and his presidency, not his landmark health care law.

“This is about the president, not his program per se,” Clyburn, a member of the House Democratic leadership, said this week on MSNBC’s “Jansing & Co.”

Clyburn also pointed out that major parts of Obamacare went into effect last Tuesday even though the government shut down at midnight, saying that the debate on the implementation of Mr. Obama’s health care law and the fight over the budget are unrelated.

“That’s got nothing to do with the budget — that’s paid for,” he said.

“We can spend the rest of this year, and part of next, with this budgetary brinkmanship, all driven by the fact that many Republicans simply cannot stand the notion of the Affordable Care Act. Actually, it’s not just about the Affordable Care Act, it is about President Obama and Republican resistance to anything he proposes. Their attitudes go beyond partisanship to venomous distaste,” said noted economist Dr. Julianne Malveaux.

According to even the most conservative estimates, the GOP-forced shutdown of the federal government will result in an economic loss of at least \$12.5 million per hour. The costs of the

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shutdown aren't just numbers. Real people are being hurt by this forced shutdown and GOP obstruction. The people most effected are our most vulnerable.

Among the programs deemed "non-essential" was the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Voucher Program, the federal program provides food vouchers for low-income women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and for their children up to age 5. The shutdown could mean as many as 122,000 women and young children in South Carolina could lose food benefits they now get through the WIC program.

While WIC is a federal program run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it's administered in South Carolina by the state Department of Health and Environmental Control. DHEC says, "We have received some contingency funding from the USDA due to the federal shutdown. Based on current projections, we believe we can maintain WIC services until Oct. 15, 2013. This projection is being reevaluated daily and DHEC is attempting to identify additional reserve funding to maintain WIC services during the federal government shutdown."

On average, \$8 million in federal dollars is spent per month providing nutrition assistance to WIC recipients in South Carolina. The average number of monthly WIC recipients by region are: Lowcountry – 26,392; Midlands – 31,448; Pee Dee – 29,605; Upstate – 35,223.

A monthly Medicaid Part D plan for seniors costs on average \$31.92. With the money the GOP is costing in just one single hour during the government shutdown, medicine could be provided for 363,636 senior citizens.

This past Saturday, President Barack Obama in his weekly address called on far-right republicans in the House to stop demanding a ransom for doing their fundamental job duty and to pass a budget "with no partisan strings attached."

Though there are enough democrats and republicans in the House to pass the Senate's budget resolution, the GOP far-right tea party caucus with House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) on their side has not allowed a floor vote on the bill.

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House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is attempting to garner democratic and republican signatures for a discharge petition to circumvent the House Speaker and force a vote; however the earliest such a vote could be taken is October 12.

Asked whether he foresees any solution to the impasse, Clyburn said, "I have no idea. It is almost impossible for me to predict anything. ... Everything about this is so unreasonable and so irrational. It's insanity."