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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Government Shutdown; Speaker Mike Johnson on Negotiations & Impact]

TONY DOKOUPIL: We're in day two of a government shutdown and President Trump is threatening mass layoffs of federal workers. For more on all this, Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson, who's been blaming Democrats for all of it joins us to expand on those thoughts and more. My first question is an easy one, is any negotiation going on right now on Capitol Hill?

HOUSE SPEAKER MIKE JOHNSON (R-LA): There's no negotiation right now because the Democrats have dug in. You say I'm blaming the Democrats. I mean, these are objective facts. We passed in the House more than two weeks ago a clean, continuing resolution. There's no partisan bills in this. There's no Republican priorities. It's just an extension of current funding, Tony, to keep the government open until November 21 to allow the appropriators in both parties to continue their good work.

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

JOHNSON: They've been working very hard in a bipartisan fashion to move the 12 appropriation bills. We ran out of time because the end of the fiscal year is September 30.

DOKOUPIL: Mr. Speaker —

JOHNSON: Wait a minute. This is important. All we're asking is Senate Democrats do what they have always done in the past every single time and allow the additional clock. That's it.

DOKOUPIL: — Mr. Speaker, they clearly think they have leverage right now, which is why they're doing this. There's also things the Trump administration and Republicans think they can get in a shutdown. One thing is shrinking the size of government in some layoffs. I know you think government is too big. I know you think it does too much. And does too much of it poorly. You know about the layoffs that are planned. You got word of them. What departments, how many people?

JOHNSON: I don't know. I don't know those details yet. We did have a long conference call with Russ Vought who directs the Office of Management and Budget. What was communicated to us they're trying to mitigate the damage. The President and Republicans in Congress do not want a government shutdown. We are bending over backwards to prevent it because real people get hurt. The Senate Democrats — 44 of them — have now voted three times to shut the government down and here's what's going to happen, Tony. Real Americans are going to suffer from this. You have veterans' benefits, food, nutrition programs for women, infants and children

that are being stalled. You have health services that will not be provided. We have troops, TSA agents and Border Patrol agents now going to work without pay. There's real damage. FEMA services are being shut off in the middle of a hurricane season. Chuck Schumer is leading the Democrats off a cliff and it's very simple. Everyone now knows why. He's trying to fend off a challenge from his far left in his party for his next Senate race. That's why he's done it. Chuck Schumer voted for this exact product in March of this year —

DOKOUPIL: Mr. Speaker —

JOHNSON: and every year that he's been in congress, which is more than half my life.

DOKOUPIL: — Mr. Speaker, I'm curious about the implications of there not being a deal. The subsidies that support the Affordable Care Act — also known as ObamaCare used by more 20 million people — have come to depend on them. If those subsidies go away, health care premiums will spike. Some people will choose not to go on insurance. Bernie Sanders is arguing some are going to die as a result. Are Republicans trying to topple or effectively topple ObamaCare without outright saying so?

JOHNSON: No. This is an absolute, 100 percent red herring. Everyone in Congress knows it. The Democrats know as well, even the ones making this crazy argument, that is a provision that does not expire until the end of December. December 31. We are in the beginning of October.

DOKOUPIL: Well —

JOHNSON: They're trying to make a December policy issue — wait a minute — part of the argument for a stopgap —

DOKOUPIL: — people at home —

JOHNSON: — funding measure in Congress. That is not the issue.

DOKOUPIL: — Mr. Speaker, people at home have to make decisions about what they're going to be too doing next year. They're looking at how much money they have and how much something might cost and they're deciding now.

JOHNSON: Tony, we have three months for congress to do its deliberate work. All we're saying is while that work is done on these and other issues keep the lights on for the American people/ The Democrats have made a wild series of counter demands. What they're demanding is to spend 1.5 trillion additional dollars in the — for a seven-week stopgap funding measure. We can't do that. They want to give health care paid for by taxpayers, hardworking Americans, to illegal aliens. We are not going to do that.

DOKOUPIL: Mr. Speaker, I did ask that —

JOHNSON: They want to give half a billion back for left-leaning media organizations paid for by

taxpayers. We're not doing that. They know that. They're — they're playing a political game here and it's dangerous and quite said.

DOKOUPIL: — Mr. Speaker, I hear you on that — I hear you on that and I did ask Senator Warren about some of those subjects in the last hour. I want to get you on the record on this AI sombrero video thing with Leader Jeffries. Everyone talking about it. He says that the video and the images are racist and bigoted. You've gotta work with this individual. Do you see his point of view here? Can you see how he might feel that way?

JOHNSON: Hakeem is my friend. We have a great relationship of trust. He's a great colleague. I think he has to lighten up. When you show that you're upset — I get attacked in memes every hour of every day. I don't react to it. That's what people are trying to get out of you is a reaction. The President was making a joke — okay — and so much has been made out of this. They're acting as if the issue of the day is a battle over memes on social media.

DOKOUPIL: Yeah.

JOHNSON: The issue is to get services returned to the American people. Young mothers who are depending upon the nutrition assistance right now, veterans who need their services. We have suicide prevention programs that are being halted right now.

DOKOUPIL: Mr. Speaker —

JOHNSON: This is serious business.

DOKOUPIL: — it is.

JOHNSON: We should not be talking about sombreros on the internet. We should be talking about the American peoples' needs.

DOKOUPIL: It is serious business. We've given it extensive come today and we'll continue covering it tomorrow. One additional topic I want to get your answer on is Representative Grijalva, who won a special election in Arizona, she's yet to be sworn in, I know you're not in session but you've sworn in Republicans out of session. Why not her? Does it have anything to do with Jeffrey Epstein?

JOHNSON: Well, the House is not on the floor doing business this week, but we will do it immediately early next week as soon as everyone returns to town. We have to have everybody here. And we'll swear her in. I congratulate her on her win. She's replacing her father who had a long history here and she'll be a productive member of Congress. We look forward to that.

DOKOUPIL: All right. Speaker Johnson, I appreciate your time as always. Thank you.

JOHNSON: Thanks so much.