

Now, we have heard our friends from the other side of the aisle say, well, your tax relief plan was all wrong. It is the source of all of our fiscal woes.

Mr. Speaker, what does that mean? That means they want to bring back the death tax so that somebody has to visit the undertaker and the IRS on the same day. It means they want to cut the child tax credit as families are struggling to put food on the table, to put gas in the car. They want to bring back the marriage penalty and punish people who fall in love. They want to raise taxes 50 percent for low income families, take away the 10 percent bracket. And according to the Heritage Foundation, their program of tax increases will cost over 400,000 jobs, turning paychecks into welfare checks.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, this is what the future looks like. Doubling taxes on the American people as time goes by.

What does that mean for a family of four? It means their transportation program is cut \$1,300. A year's supply of gas they are taking away from the American family. Family housing will be cut \$2,700; a choice between owning a home or renting a home. Food, \$1,300 will be cut from American families with their double the tax plan, 3 months of groceries. Recreation budget cut, \$900. There went the family vacation. They talk about compassion. There is no compassion there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want everyone to remember this date, November 17, because in the final analysis the debate that is taking place obviously between Democrats and Republicans will be decided not due to the eloquence of the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) who obviously is leaving the House, but will be decided by the American people.

There is an old western song, "You Picked a Fine Time to Leave Me Lucille." To be the chairman of the Budget Committee and to try to find just what tax breaks can we give to the richest people that we have, and then to try to find out how you can really help the deficit by taking the two or \$300 billion that we are paying for the war in Iraq and not even include that, and then to really try to look for the programs that deal with the most vulnerable people that we have, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) is leaving the floor.

I can understand that. But he does not have to leave the Congress. When the people start looking and seeing what happens, they will be looking for the chairman that drafted this, and you will not be in Washington.

And the reason I want people to remember November 17 is because November 17 is going to be an historic day. Oh, true, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) did not see reporters up there, but it is going to be reported tomorrow who voted on which side. So we ought to say it with a great bit of pride

that old civil rights song, Which Side Are You on? And I tell you, we are so proud on this side that when the final vote is counted, those kids that are in foster homes that just have a little hope that maybe their lives could be better, the people on SSI that are disabled and everyone has left them, the kids who are trying to get a decent education and we are hitting them too, have we no shame on the other side as to what do we have to do in order to maintain the tax cuts?

I would like to believe that this was something that could have been worked out. I would like to believe that Democrats and Republicans should not have to vote party line. But it is shameful when you look at the deficit, you look at the war, you look at the tax cuts and then you decide that you are going to reform this system.

You try to reform Social Security and we looked at your cards and we found out that you are really trying to privatize it. Now every program that deals with the poor, every program that deals with those people that the Congress should be helping you want to reform.

Well, let me say to the other side, I think when the votes are taken tonight people would know who have the compassion, who has the plan, and who has hopes for the future. And you are making it abundantly clear as you leave this body to do whatever you want to do, that you have given us a chance, I say to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE), to present to the American people which side are they on? I personally would like to thank you for it, because it could not be made more clear as to the difference between our parties.

No matter what religion you are, each one of them has some kind of verse that says as human beings, we have an obligation to help those people who are the lesser of our brothers and sisters. There is not a church and not a synagogue that has not looked on your reforms and they believe that you have forgotten the lesser of our brothers and sisters.

I am not a very religious man, but I do believe that we will have a religious moments when it comes to the next election, and wherever you go, my prayers will be with you, I say to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE).

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, how much time remains on each side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) has 42½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) has 44 minutes remaining. The gentleman

from New York (Mr. RANGEL) has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, we are not dealing tonight with 30 pieces of silver, but we are dealing with tax cuts. And the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) would like to explain in non-biblical terms where the 30 pieces of silver have gone. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), an outstanding member of the Ways and Means Committee, to share with us his views.

(Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for the gallant fight that he has put up all year on these issues as well.

Let us, me, say something tonight that we ought to start this debate with. For everybody who is watching, for the Members that are here in this Chamber, as you listen to this debate, these are the people who began the year with what we all thought to be the worst idea of this Congress, and that was the argument to privatize Social Security.

Now that is the context in which we have moved to the next round of their proposals. Nobody who is watching should kid themselves tonight. This is about a tax cut for the wealthy, dividend and capital gains. I defy anybody on the other side to challenge the following statement: Half of this proposal tonight with tax reconciliation included, half of the dividend and capital gains cuts will go to people who make more than \$1 million a year.

□ 2300

Now, we brought that up the other night at the Ways and Means Committee. That was not a fact that was challenged. That was accepted as part of the debate. So we are going to talk about dividends and capital gains cuts at this moment, and then I want to draw attention to those 148,000 men and women in Iraq who serve us with honor and distinction every single day.

You know what their reward was? Two months ago, the Humvees arrived. The body armor is starting to arrive. But you know what? Only in this Congress, with this Republican leadership, could they declare there is a crisis in Social Security after they have ripped \$1.3 trillion out of the budget. The answer to not having Humvees, not having body armor: let us have another capital gains cut; let us have a dividend cut.

The title of this Congress is, we are rich and we are not going to take it anymore. Everything we do here is for the strongest, most powerful.

I asked the other night at the committee, does anybody ever read the gospel of Matthew? To clothe the naked, to feed the poor and to provide dividends and capital gains relief to the

rich? Because that is where we are going with this debate.

This is about what is happening to the middle class tonight. They are going to cut student loan opportunities. The Senate is going to cut Medicare. Medicaid comes up before you know it. All of this is being done so they can shoe-horn a rigid, intransigent ideology.

There is no flexibility with the modern Republican Party. Everything they do is to satisfy a constituent group in America called the wealthy. Every step they take is to reinforce the separation of class along budgetary lines.

Vote down this proposal tonight and stand up for those men and women in Iraq and get them the equipment that they need.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) to share with us some of the reforms that the poor will have to suffer under.

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, here we are with the rubber-stamp Congress again.

Over the past 4 years, Mr. Speaker, the number of Americans living in poverty has grown by 5.4 million people. The number of Americans without health insurance has increased by 6 million people, and the number of Americans who are living in hunger has grown by 5 million people in the last 4 years.

Now, this is the time that the Republicans chose to cut funding for programs that help families escape poverty, access health care, and put food on the table. Did we not learn anything from Katrina?

The bill before us cuts Medicaid, food stamps, child support enforcement, foster care, student loans and every other plan that helps people on the bottom. It is lucky we are going to get to vote about this right after midnight. So in one day we can cut the living daylights out of the poor, and then we will bring out the gifts for the rich.

We are going to have a bill tomorrow with tax breaks for capital gains and dividends. Over half of those benefits, as we just heard, uncontested by the other side, they stand there with a straight face and say we have to cut food stamps so we can give a tax break to people making more than \$1 million. I mean, why do they have to give them a \$100,000 tax break next year? What is that about, when you are saying to people we are going to take away your food stamps, we are going to take away your child care? Listen, lady, you leave your kids at home and you get out and get a job. But what about some child care? Well, that is not our problem. You figure it out, dear.

330,000 mothers are going to be sent out to work with not one thin dime of child care support. For a bunch who says leave no child behind, you are so shameless.

I remember, what was it that Welch said to McCarthy, Don't you have any decency left over there at all, that you would come in on the same day and vote these cuts, and right behind it, or, well, you let us go home and sleep for 6 or 7 hours. I understand you think that will separate and the public will never know because it will all be wrapped up in one day.

The American people are not stupid. They know we ought to vote this down.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

How is this working? I mean, we have made some serious accusations about what these people are doing to the poor, and we have not heard from them; and three of us have spoken. I mean, is the public not entitled to hear something in response to what we say they are doing to the country? I am asking, if they do not want to speak, then I would like to yield the remainder of the time to the gentleman from California who might share our concerns about the poor and believe that those who God has blessed should be sharing some of those blessings with the rest of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the rest of the time remaining to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

We were told during this debate on Social Security that we could save Social Security by privatizing it, and the American people got it and said no. We were told by the Republican Congress and the President that we could cut taxes and still be fiscally responsible; and today we have the largest deficits we have ever seen, and the American people are beginning to get it. We were told that if we went to Iraq we were saving America from mass destruction; and today we know it was a misrepresentation and deception, and the American people today are getting it.

Today, we are being told that we have to cut \$12 billion in health care for seniors, disabled, and children. We are being told we have to cut \$14 billion from students who are trying to go to college. That amounts to about a \$5,800 cut in student loan programs for each and every middle-class American child who wants to get a college education. We are being told we have to get \$5 billion out of the enforcement programs that would compel deadbeat dads to pay their child support, and we are being told we have to cut \$600 million out of foster care programs that rescue abused and neglected children from dangerous households.

We are being told we have to do that for what, to reduce the deficit? To pay for the cost of Katrina? And guess what? The American people get it. It is not going to be for that. It is going to be for this, the tax cut that will do what we see here.

Every one of those cuts I just talked about, those children, those seniors, those disabled, they fall here. They have incomes up to about \$40,000. They

represent over half of America's tax-paying families. They will get out of this tax cut that we will see come up tomorrow or soon thereafter 1 percent of this tax cut. Who gets the lion's share? That over-50 percent lion's share will go to this percentage up here, one-fifth of 1 percent of all American tax-paying families. That is the folks who make \$1 million or more.

The American people are getting it. Unfortunately, too many people here in this House of Representatives are not.

We cannot pass this type of fiscally irresponsible budget and tell the American people we are doing good for them. We have got too many good men and women in Iraq fighting for the freedoms that we say we are trying to uphold, and here we are giving money to the wealthiest Americans.

Vote against this reconciliation bill and get it for the American people.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume to respond to just say I have had a chance to check out Matthew in the Bible, and I want to let you know that Matthew was referring to Jesus's speech to people.

Jesus did not say raise a bunch of taxes, create 1,000-page tax code, hire millions of government workers, build hundreds of big white fancy buildings, stick them in there, create a system, pass a bunch of mandates, a bunch of regulations, all sorts of paperwork, measure your compassion by increases only in order to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. He said you do it as an individual.

So do not measure compassion by government. Measure it by what you are willing to do for the least of your brothers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW), a member of the committee.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time, and I hope tonight we can all join together and take this historic step toward getting our financial house in order.

We took step one when we lowered taxes and let people keep more of what they earn, and millions of Americans benefited from that. When they felt that bump in their paycheck, they could be free to save that money for retirement or they could invest it in the stock market or their small business or they could buy something for the family or make a down payment on a brand new home, and it worked. People went back to work. The economy is moving again. Four million new jobs were created.

Tonight, we are taking step two. We are going to get a handle on the way we spend money around here. We are going to reform the way we spend money because that is what we need to do.

We have got to tighten our belt just like every family has to do from time to time. We have got to set priorities. We have got to make hard choices because we all know that government

needs money to provide services; but it seems to me right now, at this very moment, government needs something more.

Government needs discipline to rein in spending. Government needs courage to make the right decisions even when they are hard; and government needs a commitment to reform itself, to reform the way it spends money, to make sure that every task of government is accomplished more efficiently and more effectively than it ever has been before, because if life is going to change in this country, life has to change in Washington.

This bill takes a giant step in that direction. I urge your support.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ).

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, what have America's children ever done to the Republican Party? Because if one looks at this budget bill, one can only conclude that children have somehow wronged House Republicans. Why else would there be an all-out assault against our Nation's most vulnerable and their families.

This Republican budget guts vital services for New Jersey's working families and those across the country. For a party that talks about family values, in this bill Republicans walk away from nearly every responsibility we have as parents and legislators.

What type of value cuts more than \$14 billion in student loan funding, increasing the costs of college for American families by \$6,000?

What type of value could deny 6 million children the health care they need, adding to the 9 million children who are uninsured?

What type of value decimates Federal funding for child support enforcement by \$5 billion, allowing deadbeat parents to avoid their responsibility?

What type of value leaves an estimated 270,000 children without child care while cutting foster care by over \$500 million?

What type of value forces 300,000 low-income families to lose their food stamps?

What type of value increases the deficit by over \$100 billion, leaving our children and our grandchildren to repay tomorrow the tax cuts we are giving to the wealthy today?

The chairman talked about the bureaucracy that failed the people of the gulf coast. It is your Republican administration that failed them and fails them tonight.

This is compassionate conservatism. Vote down this immoral budget, and let us work together to enact a budget such as the Democrats offered previously that truly reflects the values and the priorities of all the American people. Together, America can do better.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), a member of the committee.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my chairman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, in the brief time I have allotted, I want to talk about one of the important reasons why this bill needs to be enacted, and that is with regard to the reforms we have in Medicaid.

Currently, Medicaid provides medical care for 53 million Americans at a cost exceeding \$300 billion each year. It is a great program; but Medicaid is already the biggest item in many State budgets, exceeding elementary and secondary education combined. If unreformed, Medicaid will bankrupt every State in as little as 20 years, absorbing 80 to 100 percent of all State dollars.

□ 2315

Because of these stark realities, the bipartisan National Governors Association has stated that serious Medicaid reforms are needed. The Deficit Reduction Act, which we vote on tonight, takes an important step in that direction by slowing the rate of growth in this valuable program.

Currently, Medicaid grows at a rate of 7.7 percent per year, as indicated by this chart, making it one of the fastest growing programs in the government. The plan included in this legislation tonight reduces the Medicaid rate of growth over the next 10 years from 7.7 percent a year to 7.5 percent annual growth rate. While this is a very small change, the bill includes necessary reforms to address the problem before it is too late.

The plan provides greater flexibility for our States and its governors. Under the current program, governors cannot tailor Medicaid benefits to meet the needs of the people. Under the new plan, they can.

The most irresponsible thing we can do at this time, Mr. Speaker, is to do nothing. I urge the Members to vote for this bill.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding me this time.

It is interesting that the good friend on the other side wants to quote the Bible. Let me simply remind him that the Good Samaritan says that we are, in fact, our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

This budget, which causes an offset not on taxes and the rich but the offset on the backs of those in Hurricane Wilma, Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita, what would you give to the answer of those who are going to be evicted in 2 weeks from hotels because this government says it has no money? And then we add insult to injury by cutting Medicaid \$11 billion, student loans \$14 billion, food stamps another \$796 million, and we throw the crying mothers and the hungry babies to the streets.

This is a budget that cries for shameless disgraceful attention to the other side of the aisle.

Why are we mad, Mr. Speaker? We are mad because the American people

are suffering the brunt of the inconsistencies of the other side of the aisle who want to give taxes to the rich and do not want to give equipment to the soldiers, but they want to break the backs of Americans.

Vote "no" on this budget reconciliation and send us to victory in 2006 so we can take back America from these people who do not understand.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us perhaps the most important piece of legislation that we will vote on all year, H.R. 4241, the Budget Reconciliation Spending Cuts Act. This \$50 billion of spending cuts have turned everything we believe in as a country on its head. The Republicans are actually asking the poor, the downtrodden, the disabled and the young to sacrifice on behalf of the rich. I want to emphasize that these cuts are not meant to free up money to rebuild the gulf coast. In fact, many of these proposed cuts will actually hurt those affected by Katrina. Overall, the plan before the House will increase the deficit and the national debt.

From a Homeland Security standpoint, H.R. 4241 proposes to cut funding for the COPS program by \$480 million and to remove important funding for local firefighters by \$215 million—cuts of 80 percent and 30 percent, respectively. As ranking member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims, I am outraged at the fact that its provisions seek to break the promise of putting an additional 2,000 border patrol agents on the job in 2006, as promised in landmark intelligence reforms passed late last year and endorsed by the 9/11 Commission. The budget provides funding for only 210 agents. Overall, the plan before the House will increase the deficit and the national debt.

In the Homeland Security Committee, we completed a markup of a border security measure, H.R. 4312, that proposes to enhance the way our Department of Homeland Security protects our international borders and ports of entry. The cuts contained in the legislation on the Floor will render this measure a nullity if there are no resources available to execute its provisions.

From a healthcare perspective, there are 45 million Americans living today without any health insurance at all, but this budget cuts \$11.4 billion over 5 years from Medicaid, and \$46 billion over 10 years. The budget includes a proposal to expand enrollment in high-deductible health savings accounts would actually increase the number of Americans without insurance by 350,000. It also includes language which allows States to increase premiums and decrease coverage to children. This bill decimates health care funding for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities and making it even harder for families to afford nursing home care.

As founder and co-chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, as a person who understands the value of our Nation's youth, and as a mother of two children, I really want to bring focus on the effect this bill will have on our nation's children. If you have children who are in, or who are considering going to college, I want you to listen to this: this republican spending cut will place an added burden of \$7.8 billion dollars directly on our students over the next five years. This is accomplished through added fees of \$4.8 billion, and increases of interest rates. A typical student borrowing money for college could pay up to \$5,800 more. This is in the face of college costs up over 7 percent this past year alone.

Allow me to cite some of the specific cuts I, and our constituents across the country, find so objectionable:

**Medicaid**—The bill cuts Medicaid spending by \$11.4 billion nationwide.

**Student Loans**—The bill cuts spending on student loan programs by \$14.3 billion over 5 years.

**Food Stamps**—The bill imposes cuts to food stamps of \$796 million over 5 years, affecting nearly 300,000 people.

**Child Support**—The bill cuts \$4.9 billion from child support programs over 5 years. Custodial parents will receive \$7.1 billion less child support over 5 years and \$21.3 billion less over 10 years.

**Foster Care**—The bill cuts \$397 million from foster care over 5 years.

These are some big numbers, and we politicians love to throw around big numbers, but often times it is difficult to understand the true impact of what these numbers mean. Let me break some of these numbers down to what they will mean to my State of Texas, because the devil really is in the details for this legislation.

One program the Republicans are trying to cut is Child support enforcement. It is said that for everyone \$1 the government puts in to collecting money from de ad-beat dads, the family receives \$4 back. In Texas, this bill will cut \$411 million from child support enforcement in the next 5 years.

In Texas, this bill will cut \$110.2 million from Elementary and Secondary Education. This breaks down to \$52.8 million for education for the disadvantaged, \$18.9 million for special education, and \$34.7 million for school improvements.

In Texas, this bill will cut \$6.8 million in vocational and adult education—in other words, job training.

In Texas, this bill will cut \$5.9 million from Low Income Home Energy Assistance. This program helps poor families heat their homes, not forcing a family to choose between paying heat and groceries. This bill is projected to cut 3,600 recipients from this program next year. Nearly 600,000 people will lose the program nationwide.

In Texas, this bill will cut nearly \$1 billion from WIC, the Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. Eighteen thousand recipients will be cut from this program in Texas.

In Texas, this bill will cut \$45.5 million in Children and Families Services, including Head Start and Services for Abused and Neglected Children; 2,000 children will be cut from this program next year.

In Texas, 4,700 people will lose their housing vouchers as a result of cuts offered in this bill.

In Texas, this program will cut \$2.8 million from the Maternal and Child Health block grants, which provide money to support the efforts of our public health departments to reduce infant mortality, improve prenatal care for pregnant women, provide child health prevention services, and more.

In Texas, we have 400,000 students borrowing money for school. For the typical student borrower, new fees and higher interest charges in this bill could cost each student as much as \$5,800.

This is not how we take care of our own in Texas, and this is not how we do things in the United States. The Republicans are launching an unabashed attack on the American way by

slashing funding towards those that are most vulnerable. And don't you be fooled. These spending cuts aren't meant to offset the costs of rebuilding the gulf coast, these spending cuts are meant to offset tax cuts that will benefit the rich.

Mr. Speaker, we can not allow the burden of the \$70 billion in tax cuts to be placed on the backs of our Nation's neediest families. The decision to vote up or down on this legislation isn't a blurry line involving political ideology; it isn't a debate of republican vs. democratic philosophy. This is black and white. This cut hurts the children, it hurts the poor, it hurts the old and it hurts the young. I am strongly opposed to this legislation, and I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote against these unreasonable cuts.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, it is all politics.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN), member of the committee.

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, as we take up the Deficit Reduction Act, I think there are a few things that Americans should know. This bill has been demonized, demonized by those who want to ignore the growing Federal deficit, the waste, the fraud, and the abuse that exist in several Federal Government programs. But we all know that entitlement spending is growing at nearly three times the rate of inflation and that we simply cannot sustain that growth.

Entitlement spending on programs such as Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security make up 54 percent of the government spending now, and it is projected to double in the next decade. Medicare is growing at over 7 percent annually and Medicaid is at 8 percent annually.

There are no easy answers to this problem, Mr. Speaker, but if we do not act on these programs now, they will only grow worse.

The Deficit Reduction Act simply starts with the most obvious, common-sense reforms to save taxpayer dollars by finding waste and abuse in entitlement programs and eliminating them so that the funds that we put into these programs go to people who really need them.

In my State of Kansas, a pharmacy recently received a Medicaid payment of \$1 million for eardrops that only cost \$1.95. Mistakes happen, Mr. Speaker. But in a program that is growing at an unsustainable rate, we need to do all that we can to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse.

The Deficit Reduction Act takes a very important first step to pay for entitlement spending by making common-sense reforms to outdated programs so that we can help those most in need instead of enriching those who abuse the program.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the Deficit Reduction Act.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 12 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the dean of the House, and I ask unanimous consent

that he be allowed to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, 75 percent of the so-called savings from Medicaid come from higher cost sharing, reduced services, or barriers to sick people getting care and old people and people just scraping by having their needs met. But mostly they come from kids.

Fully half of the people affected by the reduced benefits will be children, and many of them will be children with special needs and disabilities. These are the kids with spina bifida, cerebral palsy. These are the kids with developmental disabilities and autism. These are the kids with mental illness. These are the children that need a full array of medical support and rehabilitative services. These are the kids where the care demands are endless, where families need help to support them and care for them. Parents of special needs children know that. They know that the idea of cost sharing for these kids so that they do not overutilize services is ridiculous.

One of Medicaid strength for all children, but particularly special needs children, has been the benefit known as EPSDT, or early and periodic screening, diagnosis and treatment. That is a lot of words for one simple concept. Screen kids early. Find and diagnose their health problems. Give them the care they need. Give them eyeglasses. Give them mental health services, give them physical therapy. Make them into the healthiest individuals possible. Let them realize their full potential.

But this bill changes that. It takes away these services for millions of kids with family incomes just above the poverty line. It takes away benefits. It imposes premiums and cost sharing that we know will be barriers to care. In fact, CBO estimates the savings because people will not get the care they need. What kind of sense does this make?

I urge my colleagues to vote against it.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, the so-called Deficit Reduction Act, is not about reducing the deficit. If that were the concern of the majority, they wouldn't be cutting taxes for the wealthy and adding to the deficit for all Americans.

This bill is not about taking on the special interests who can afford to give up some of their corporate welfare. You don't see provisions in this bill that take away overpayments for HMOs. You don't see any provisions asking the big drug companies to give a fairer price to Medicaid.

This bill isn't about helping Children's Hospitals or providers that serve the uninsured get better support. Instead, this bill requires them to take inadequate payments when managed

care enrollees end up in their emergency rooms. This bill asks them to absorb lost dollars because they either have to eat the cost of copayments that poor kids and persons with disabilities can't afford to pay—or else turn them away without giving them the medical care they need.

What this bill is about is putting the burden of reducing Medicaid expenditures on those least able to bear it. Fully three of every four dollars this bill "saves" in Medicaid come from higher cost-sharing or reduced services or barriers to care for the people who need help the most.

Who are we talking about here? This is going to have the greatest effect on low-income children. Fully half of the people affected by the reduced benefits will be kids. And many of those children are children with special needs and disabilities.

These are kids with spina bifida and cerebral palsy. These are kids with developmental disabilities and autism. These are kids with mental illness.

These are children that need a full array of medical, support and rehabilitative services. These are kids where the care demands are endless, where families need help to support them and care for them. Parents of children with special needs know that.

They know that private health insurance, even if they could get it, doesn't have the services these kids need. They know that the idea of cost-sharing so that services aren't overutilized for these kids makes no sense.

One of Medicaid's strengths has been the benefit known as EPSDT, or early and periodic screening, diagnosis and treatment. That's a lot of words for one simple concept. Screen kids early and find and diagnose their health problems, and then give them the care they need to treat them. Give them eye glasses. Give them mental health services. Give them physical therapy. Make them into the healthiest individuals possible. Let them realize their full potential.

This bill changes that. It takes away these services for millions of kids, with family incomes just above the poverty line. It takes away benefits. It imposes cost sharing so that there will be barriers to getting service.

So what if their family is struggling to exist on a little over \$1000 month. Let's ask them to pay 5 percent of that in cost-sharing. If they can't afford it, and it keeps their kids from getting services, well it's just too bad.

What kind of sense does this make. Noone benefits if kids don't get the health services they need to grow up as healthy and productive individuals.

The Republican majority tries to justify this by saying copayments haven't been increased for years. That is a bogus argument. The fact is low-income people spend an increasing portion of their income on out-of-pocket medical expenses. A recent study showed that between 1997 and 2002, their out-of-pocket obligations increased twice as fast as their incomes. That's the relevant point.

This bill also puts some heartless barriers in the way of moderate income seniors who need nursing home care. People who innocently help their children or their grandchildren by giving them some small amount of their savings, or people who unselfishly give money to their church or to charities, find themselves unable to get Medicaid help when they need it.

They are accused of transferring their assets to get Medicaid to pay their nursing home bills. At the very point when they are desperately in need of Medicaid help, they get penalized for a transfer that might have occurred 5 years ago. They haven't got the money to pay for their own care. They can't get Medicaid. What will happen to them? And if they do get into a nursing home, what will happen to the quality of care that nursing home can provide if they aren't being paid? Is this the way we want to treat our seniors?

This bill deliberately tries to evoke the fear of illegal immigrants to take benefits away from needy people. With food stamps, the rhetoric is about illegal immigrants, but the reality is that immigrants who are here legally, and have been in the country legally for 5 years, get food stamps taken away. Why? Because the Republican majority evidently feels they can take help away from them with impunity because they are powerless.

It is similar in Medicaid. This bill imposes a requirement of documentation of citizenship that is going to block many needy citizens from getting necessary care. In order to be covered, people will have to document their citizenship with passports or birth certificates. Many poor and elderly people don't have those papers available. So they simply won't be helped.

There is a pattern here. Whether we are talking about arbitrarily taking food stamps from legal immigrants or putting barriers to care in front of sick children, this bill takes its savings from people who are the most vulnerable and in need of help.

They haven't got high priced lobbyists to argue for them. They're not getting special treatment and big tax breaks. They are just at the end of the line, relying on our health care programs.

If you've got a conscience, if you've got compassion, you cannot support this budget reconciliation bill. Stand up and insist on finding a fairer way. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY).

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, what we have going on here tonight is a huge con game. That is what the Republicans are playing on the American public. A re-con-ciliation game. What they do, these Republicans, is they cut the money from Medicaid. Sixty percent of all seniors are on Medicaid in nursing homes. One third of all babies born in the United States are born on Medicaid. They are cutting student loans. They are cutting money from food stamps for poor people.

They tell us they want to reduce the deficit. But, no, their money goes over to the "ways and means" Republicans who are giving a \$50 billion tax break to the wealthiest Americans. Fifty-three percent of the dividends of the capital gains breaks go to the fat cat Republicans. And then because they are not happy with that, they borrow another \$7 billion for more tax breaks, increasing the deficit, which will bring them back here next year with croco-

dile tears about how much they care about the deficit, which will bring them back to the poor people, seniors in nursing homes, one third of all babies, student loans, for more tax breaks to give away to the wealthiest in America.

It is a re-con-ciliation game they are playing. They do not care about the deficit. They only care about these Republican fat-cat millionaires who are getting this money after all of the programs for the poorest seniors and children and students in America are cut as they increase the deficit, a con game where they increase the deficit while taking the money from the poorest in our country.

Vote "no" on this re-con-ciliation con game where the crocodile tears will be shed for the rest of the night about how much they care about the deficits when all it is, is a way to transfer money to every millionaire in America. Vote "no" on this con game.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY).

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, the only con game we have here in the House this evening is from the other side of the aisle. We have cons and cons.

Have I made my point? Have I made my point? Do we hear enough hypocrisy from the left on this budget? Do we hear enough shouts and screams about how we are hurting people?

What we are trying to do is save future generations from mountains and mountains upon mountains of debt. And what we are trying to do is reform the budget. The only con has been perpetrated through rhetoric here on the House floor, Mr. Speaker.

The deception is saying that we should do nothing, that we should allow our government to continue on this massive growth rate that 40 years of Democrat control provided this country.

I think it is wrong to leave future generations in debt. I think it is right to step forward and reform much-needed programs in this country to ensure that Medicaid is available to future generations, that student loans are available to young people. We must reform these programs to make sure they are available in the future. Not to look the other way, not to provide more tax increases, not to provide for a larger, more intrusive government.

Let us stop the con, Mr. Speaker. Let us provide for budget reform and reconciliation. I thank the gentleman for this moment to ensure that no future cons are provided here tonight.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 20 seconds.

To respond to the gentleman, he may be too young to remember, but 5 years ago, we bequeathed the Bush administration a surplus of \$236 billion. This is what has happened in the last 4 fiscal years. The statutory debt ceiling of the United States has been raised to accommodate the budgets of the Bush administration to the tune of \$3 trillion.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding me this time.

Hurricane Katrina exposed poverty for what it is. It reminded us that poverty ensnares Americans who work hard, who pay their taxes, who play by the rules. Yet on the wages they earn, millions of Americans are falling further behind. They often cannot afford health care. They cannot afford child care. They cannot afford transportation, and they cannot afford our indifference.

I cannot understand how less than 3 months after Katrina, Republicans can take Medicaid away from people who need it. Medicaid is not a luxury. It is a lifeline. It does not pay for luxuries. It pays for health care and nursing homes. Medicaid does not protect some of us; it protects all of us. Disability, job loss, disappearing pensions, natural disasters, aging parents. If one is an elderly American living in Ohio, they must be living at or below 64 percent of poverty to qualify for Medicaid. What is an elderly American who earns \$5,800 a year going to do while she waits for Medicaid to help her?

Time and again, Republicans feed on programs for the poor to finance tax cuts for the rich. It does not matter if the Nation is paying for a war, rebuilding after a hurricane, running up record deficits, or bleeding jobs right and left. Their policy is always the same: cut programs for the poor, give tax breaks to the rich.

When this bill was considered in the Commerce Committee, I offered an amendment to leave Medicaid funding alone and, instead, eliminate \$20 billion in overpayments to insurance company HMOs. Republican leadership said no. They want to take care away from people who desperately need our help, but they do not want to eliminate bonus payments to insurance company HMOs. And the President agrees. He said he would veto the bill if we touch those HMO payments. But he is fine with our cutting Medicaid. I guess the elderly in nursing homes do not make political contributions to the President.

Mr. Speaker, it was the American people, not the insurance company/HMO industry, who hired us. Vote "no."

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

□ 2330

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, on the issues we are debating tonight, Republicans can only see numbers on a page; they are blind to the people whose interests they are sacrificing to protect tax cuts for the wealthy.

This bill provides fewer services to fewer people. That is a cut. This Re-

publican bill allows States to impose higher copayments and premiums on Medicaid beneficiaries who are on Medicaid precisely because they are poor. Take, for example, people who are chronically ill. Most people with diabetes, schizophrenia, Alzheimer's or other chronic conditions are dependent on multiple medications. Once you charge higher copayments for their medications, they will start to skip their drugs. Studies have shown that doubling copayments by the chronically ill will reduce their use of prescription drugs by 8 to 23 percent.

When people on Medicaid can no longer afford their medicines, when they cannot afford to call a doctor, they do not disappear, they do not get well, they just get sicker or they go to the emergency room.

The CBO has concluded that 80 percent of this bill's so-called savings from raising costs to beneficiaries comes from decreased use. In short, you are just taking health care away from people who need it. Moreover, you are cutting health care services to Medicaid beneficiaries and calling it reform. Immoral and inhumane would be better and more accurate words.

This bill strips health care from all types of Medicaid beneficiaries, from children and their parents, the disabled, the elderly and the chronically ill. No amount of Republican rhetoric can hide that truth. America can do better. Vote down this bill.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, these are the same arguments we heard before we reformed welfare and unlocked 30 million Americans from the dependency of government.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot of screaming from the Democrats from the extreme left saying that they are mad, and even some personal insults tonight which is, frankly, unfortunate. I think it is because Democrats, I guess they think if they say it loud enough and scream loud enough, they can hide and drown out the facts.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard tonight, they loudly scream against the high deficit, and then they do not want to do anything to reduce the deficit. Right here we heard leaders of the Democratic Party loudly criticizing tax cuts. Those are horrible. But let me quietly quote what they said just 2 days ago about some tax cuts.

Let me quote, for example, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) about a \$10 billion tax cut over 5 years offered just 2 days ago. He said: I ask that the amendment be passed by unanimous consent. So 2 days ago he liked that tax cut. But wait, there is more.

The gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), who we heard a little while ago screaming to try to drown out the facts, said 2 nights ago about tax cuts: Mr. Chairman, I do not think

anyone is going to oppose this cut, like the other ones.

Mr. Speaker, they cannot speak from both sides of their mouths.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO).

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished ranking member for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I think this evening is really a very sad moment for our country. I think that we have hit, unfortunately, sadly, a new low. This Republican bill can be summed up as follows: tax cuts for the most privileged in our country come first. That is their priority, and what is on the other side of this? What is on the other side of this? Child support enforcement and Medicaid, which is the safety net of health care.

Mr. Speaker, who bears the burden of this? Where do these cuts fall? On the most vulnerable people in our society. America can do better than this. This is not just a cut in program. This is a cut in our moral fiber. This is a cut. It cuts to who and what we are as a society. This is wrong. This is wrong, and I think many of my colleagues on this side of the aisle understand that as well.

We are asking Americans at the bottom of the scale of our Nation to bear the heaviest burden, and the tax cuts deliver almost 80 percent of their benefits to the top 3 percent of our people. That is not who and what we are. We can do so much better. I urge all of my colleagues to stand up for what the best of the American people is all about, and that is not in this bill.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), one of the eight very distinguished committee Chairs who worked on the bill.

(Mr. GOODLATTE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his good work on this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of rhetoric from this side of the aisle about what this is about today. Let me tell Members what this is about. This is about reforming programs that are important to the American people, but they do not always work properly. They do not always reach the people that the programs are intended to reach; and these positive reforms which are a modest, a tiny percentage of the \$2.5 trillion that this government will spend next year, more than \$12.5 trillion over the next 5 years, to save \$50 billion is not a very big percentage.

I would say to my colleagues, Where is your plan to reform programs? Where is your plan to achieve savings? What are you doing for the American people, the American taxpayers? And, yes, even the people who depend upon the programs that you claim to so strongly support. And yet you will do nothing to protect the programs by

putting in the reforms that are necessary.

I will tell you where their plan is, it is locked up. And I will tell you why it is locked up, because what that plan primarily consists of is raising taxes on the American people. The reason they want to raise taxes is because they are opposed to the effort to do what has done wonders for our economy in the last few years, and that is to extend the tax relief that we have provided to stimulate the economy, create jobs, bring the unemployment rate below 5 percent; and they have done nothing except wait in the wings to raise taxes on the people of this country. That is what this is all about.

That is the party of spending. They will not come forward with any savings. That is the party of taxes, the tax and spend Democrats, the same way they have always been. That is why we are here today with a responsible plan in response to this abuse that they would sit here and attack modest reforms of important programs and suggest that, as a result of that, they can sit back with nothing and wait for the opportunity to raise taxes yet again on the American people.

The last time they were in power, the last thing they did was to impose the largest tax increase in history on the American people, and we should not ever allow them that opportunity again. That is what they are trying to achieve here by bringing down this plan, and they should not be allowed to succeed.

Let me talk briefly in the time remaining about the reforms we have made in important programs under the jurisdiction of my committee.

First of all, we have approached this across the board. We have achieved fair savings in farm programs which keep the programs intact. We have achieved savings in conservation programs that make those programs work better. We have achieved savings in research for agriculture. We have achieved savings in other areas that are important. And, yes, we have also achieved savings from the food stamp program: one-half of 1 percent of the \$180 billion that will be spent on food stamps in the next 5 years is what we are hoping to achieve. It is less than one-half of 1 percent. It will affect less than 1 percent of the 24 million Americans that receive food stamps. And it is targeted at whom? People who are not citizens of the United States who signed a document that said they would not become wards of the State and who by virtue of having been in this country for more than 5 years are eligible to apply for United States citizenship and avoiding the savings we are attempting to achieve by not giving food stamps to people who are not citizens of this country.

Secondly, we say that under the food stamp program if you are attempting to achieve food stamp benefits through a particular State's programs, you ought to qualify for real welfare programs like the TANF program. The

bridge from welfare to work ought to be sustained, but it ought not be abused by those who would do so. Those are the savings we want. They are good reforms, and we ought to pass them.

We are here today in a good faith effort to continue putting the Nation's fiscal house in order. Some have questioned the need or the degree to which mandatory spending should be reduced. I would remind my colleagues that mandatory spending today takes up almost 55 percent of the total federal budget and, if left on its current path it will, within a decade, consume 60 percent of the federal budget. Clearly, it is unrealistic to think we can meet the pressing challenges facing our Nation without reducing Federal spending and re-directing priorities.

The House and Senate agreed to reduce mandatory spending by \$34.7 billion earlier this year to start reining in mandatory spending. Paying for hurricanes and other disaster assistance—in addition to addressing the threat of international terrorism here and abroad—has necessitated targeted reductions in spending by all authorizing committees, including agriculture.

Eight House Committees were instructed to put together a reform savings plan to reduce the growth in mandatory spending over the next five years to reduce spending and address some of the Nation's most pressing financial needs. The committees were asked to do more and I am pleased to report that the committee on agriculture headed this call and reported out savings above the \$3 billion we were originally asked to find.

From the beginning of this process it was the goal of the House Agriculture Committee that no single program should bear a disproportionate share of the spending reductions. The committee's final recommendations are balanced terms of the impact they will have on the many diverse interests that will be affected by this reform savings plan.

The Agriculture Committee's savings plan includes an overall reduction in mandatory spending of \$3.48 billion over five years (FY06–10). The savings package includes reductions in a variety of programs under the committee's jurisdiction including commodity, conservation, energy, rural development, research, and food stamp programs.

There are some who have suggested that food stamps take a disproportionate share of the spending reductions. This is simply not the case. While food stamps comprise nearly 60 percent of the agriculture committee's mandatory spending, they account for only 19 percent of the total savings under the package. The proposed reductions account for less than a half a penny for every dollar spent on the food stamp program.

Under the agriculture's reform savings plan, eligibility requirements are harmonized between Federal assistance programs so that food stamp benefits go to those truly in need.

By tightening the categorical eligibility for some temporary assistance to needy families (TANF) recipients as well as the eligibility requirements for non-citizens, this legislation ensures that the Nations most needy will continue to receive this Federal assistance.

When an individual enters the country to become a legal permanent non-citizen, an affidavit is signed indicating that they will not participate in programs such as food stamps;

however, this is not the reality. Under current law, non-citizens are eligible for food stamps after five years of resident status. The house agriculture committees savings reform plan extends this time requirement to seven years.

This provision will not affect children non-citizens. Non-citizens who are 60 years old and above and are currently receiving food stamp benefits on the date of enactment will not be affected. Additionally, non-citizens who have submitted their citizenship application by date of enactment and currently receive food stamps would still be eligible to receive food stamps.

After five years, non-citizen residents can apply for U.S. citizenship. If approved, they can apply for food stamps immediately. If someone chooses to remain a non-citizen, that choice will result in a longer waiting period to qualify for food stamps.

It is essential that the House approves a reform savings plan. While all government safety net programs—including agriculture—need to be sustainable, the burden of addressing the nation's budget pressures needs to be broadly shared in order to be effective. Let me also say that in an ideal situation we would have had the support of the minority in moving this reform savings plan forward. However, in the absence of bipartisan cooperation, it is incumbent on those of us who are privileged to serve in the people's house that we address the budgetary problems facing the Nation. I urge my colleagues to support the deficit reduction act.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman who said our budget is locked up, well, here it is. It is right here on the table. We introduced it several months ago. It will go to balance in the year 2012 and accumulate about \$200 billion less debt than theirs.

As for tax and spend, his is tax and borrow, Mr. Speaker. For the last 4 years, the debt ceiling has been raised four times by \$3.15 trillion under your administration and your watch.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I can understand why my Republican colleagues do not want to get close to the facts. What are the facts? First of all, when this administration came into office, there was a \$2 trillion surplus. Now we have increased the national debt by \$3 trillion, and they have spent the \$2 trillion besides. No wonder they do not want to talk about the facts.

They are cutting \$11.4 billion out of Medicaid. Why are they doing so? To fund additional tax cuts. The richest 0.2 percent of the country has already gained an average of \$103,000 from the Republican tax cuts, but the Republicans have a fine program: they are going to cut funds for women, poor children, individuals with cystic fibrosis and other chronic diseases, elderly widows in nursing homes, and others who rely on Medicaid.

If this bill passes, the following will happen: in 1 year alone, 110,000 Medicaid beneficiaries will lose coverage

due to the new burdensome health care premiums imposed by this bill; destitute elderly will be denied needed nursing home care right when they need it the most. These provisions will force many seniors out of homes that they may have lived in for decades, and those elderly persons who try to help their families to pay medical bills or go to school are going to be penalized.

Children will be hurt. According to CBO, half of those affected by higher cost-sharing and half of those affected by reduced benefits will be children. Those with disabilities will be particularly hurt by the newly allowed State benefit cuts and increased cost-sharing. They already pay a greater portion of their income for out-of-pocket medical expenses than privately insured individuals with higher income.

The simple fact of the matter is this bill is going to take from those who have the least and give to those who have the most and the smallest needs. This is an outrageous piece of legislation.

The simple fact of the matter is my Republican colleagues are entitled to their own opinion, but they cannot have their own facts; and the facts say this is a bad proposal. It is going to hurt the poor. It is going to benefit those who have no need.

□ 2345

This is an outrageous piece of legislation, and it should be rejected by this body. And I would point out that one of the reasons for these cuts in benefits is so that there can be a tax cut. I would remind my good friends on the Republican side that one of the interesting things about this piece of legislation is that when all is said and done, it is actually going to increase the deficit.

There is no question that the cuts proposed by the Republicans will harm beneficiaries. First, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO)'s November 9th study on the bill as it left the Budget Committee, of the \$11.9 billion in cuts to Medicaid, 75 percent—nearly \$9 billion—is due to provisions that hurt beneficiaries. These cuts will have harsh effects, reducing needed care and causing millions to lose coverage and benefits. For example:

The vast majority (80 percent) of the savings from cost-sharing increases come from forcing beneficiaries to cut back on their use of healthcare services. Some six million children from families with incomes just above the poverty line would lose all current Federal cost-sharing protections if this bill is adopted. This bill would offer children who live just above the poverty line significantly less protection than in the State Children's Health Insurance Program. The remaining savings from cost-sharing come from \$300 million in payment cuts to providers over five years.

Half of those affected by the reductions in benefits—so called "benefit flexibility"—will be children. By 2015, five million individuals, including 2.5 million kids, will face benefit cuts. Most of the services that beneficiaries will lose in the reduced benefit packages would be for mental health, certain therapies, dental, and vision. There will also be new restrictions on the amount, duration, and scope of services covered.

Benefit reductions result in \$18 billion in Federal savings over 10 years. The actual magnitude of lost coverage, however, will be much higher over those 10 years, closer to \$32 billion, when you count the State share, because CBO only considers Federal savings. Therefore, the total benefit-related reductions would be nearly twice as high.

New premium charges will force hundreds of thousands more who are covered today to drop their coverage. A full quarter of the savings associated with new higher premium charges come from individuals no longer being able to afford Medicaid. In 2015, for example, 110,000 enrollees will lose coverage because of premium increases. And, for those elderly citizens lucky enough to own the home they live in, the Republicans want to force them to sell it in order to get care.

Second, the numbers tell only part of the story. Examine, for example, the hurtful effect these changes will have on individuals with disabilities. Over the past number of years, individuals with disabilities have made significant gains in improving options for community living. Would we really want to enact legislation that would force people, who were previously able to live in their community, to live in institutions? Because that is exactly what this Reconciliation package will do.

The healthy among us do not need extensive health services, but those with disabilities and chronic illnesses such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, schizophrenia, and AIDs, do. The Reconciliation package allows States to cut critical benefits that these individuals need, with the burden placed on those who need the most care.

Together, these changes will only result in more individuals with disabilities being forced back into institutions, rather than enabling them to live in the community. Increased costs and decreased benefits for individuals with disabilities will leave them with no other option but to return to an institution where they can get needed medical care.

Those with disabilities who are under Medicaid already have higher out-of-pocket medical expenses than higher-income, privately insured people, even with the current protections the program offers. Out-of-pocket costs consumed an average of 5.6 percent of the incomes of these beneficiaries in 2002. On the other hand, privately-insured adults with incomes over \$19,140 spent 0.7 percent of their incomes on out-of-pocket medical costs. Individuals with disabilities already have their incomes stretched to the limit. In 2004, a national average rent for a modest one-bedroom unit consumed more than the entire monthly payment (109.6 percent) for a person receiving SSI.

In addition to these increased out-of-pocket expenses, the working disabled may find they must sell their homes if they wish to continue receiving the needed long-term care services provided under Medicaid that enables them to work. And it is difficult to keep people in the community if they are forced to sell or mortgage the home they reside in.

According to CBO, Congress could achieve \$20 billion in savings by simply not overpaying Medicare HMOs. Yet these provisions are nowhere to be found in the Republican legislation. Clearly the profits of health insurers are protected while the poor and working families are squeezed to fund Republican tax priorities.

The Republican solution to the hard economic times facing many families is to charge

them more for their health care, take away needed benefits, and make it easier for States not to cover those in need. Rather than provide States with the tools to slash coverage and impoverish more families through higher medical expenses in order that their tax cuts for the wealthy may stay intact, Congress should seek ways to join with the States to shore up healthcare coverage for our most vulnerable citizens.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, the Education and the Workforce Committee has contributed to this effort, and I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) for 2 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a Republican. I am proud to be a Member of the party of Lincoln, who knew and understood that you cannot build up the poor by tearing down the rich. The class warfare being waged by the other side belittles a once-proud party.

What we are trying to do here is to renew our commitment to hard-working American taxpayers, reforming the process, cutting red tape, and setting priorities. This is smart spending, and it is what we should be doing in every area of government. And contrary to what our colleagues say, there is more money for education.

We know and understand how difficult it is for some to get funding for college. I, myself, was the recipient of student loans during my education, and this bill gets more money to students. It simplifies the process, gives greater flexibility, and protects taxpayers. There are no cuts. Student aid money increases. All you have to do is look at the numbers. Increase in Federal loans, increase in Federal grants, increase in Federal work study money, and increase in education tax benefits. That is more money, that is not less.

We are providing common-sense proposals to reform and strengthen student aid for education. That is more money for students. To characterize this as anything else is demagoguery and deception and does a disservice to all Americans. I urge all of my colleagues who are truly concerned, truly concerned about education, to support this positive move in the right direction with more money for education.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I would challenge any Member who votes for this budget to answer just one question: name one, just one religion in the world that preaches the values of asking the most from those who have the least and asking nothing from those who have the most. Sadly, that is what this budget does.

This budget is an assault on the faith-based values of American families. It is about mean-spirited cuts in college student loans and harmful cuts in health care for low- and middle-income working families. Why? To pay for Katrina? No. To reduce the deficit? No. This budget increases the deficit.

These cuts are being made tonight to pay for tomorrow's \$220,000 tax cut and



dividend tax cuts for those making \$1 million a year. That is right. But it is wrong.

If the House Republican leadership thinks this budget truly reflects American values, it proves just how sadly out of touch they are with the values of average working families.

All the fig-leaf sound bites in the world will not hide the sad truth that this budget is an assault on the dreams of middle- and low-income working families, dreams of decent health care, a college education, and a better life for their children: the American Dream.

The congressional architects of the three largest deficits in American history once again tonight fail the test of fairness and fiscal responsibility.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOX).

Ms. FOX. Mr. Speaker, someone on the other side has said we have hit a new low tonight. I certainly agree with that. I have never heard so much hypocrisy and hyperbole, and I doubt that the American public has either.

I rise, Mr. Speaker, with my colleagues today because Federal spending has been out of control. Just because former Congresses and Presidents have foolishly increased spending does not mean we must continue along this destructive path in the future.

This Congress must become a better steward of taxpayers' dollars, and we must do it now. Contrary to what our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying, we are not finding these savings on the backs of college students. These reforms will actually strengthen student aid programs and expand student benefits.

Republicans are proposing rational solutions that will increase student benefits and expand college access without expanding the deficit.

The Deficit Reduction Act provides key benefits to students including lower loan fees, higher loan limits for borrowers, low market-based interest rates, new loan flexibility, and a simplified financial aid process. Our constituents deserve to send less of their hard-earned dollars to Washington and spend more on their families, businesses, and dreams. It is the taxpayers' money we spend and we must be accountable, meticulous, frugal, and effective in the ways the Federal Government spends money. This budget reconciliation bill does just that. And on behalf of all of my hard-working constituents, I hope that all of my colleagues join me in supporting this great bill.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ).

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the budget reconciliation process is supposed to be about reducing deficits, enacting fiscal discipline, and setting priorities.

Yet the Republican majority's reconciliation package, you have heard it

all tonight, fails to meet any of these goals. It fails to reduce deficits. Instead, it adds \$20 billion to the Federal deficit. It fails to enact fiscal discipline or move us toward a balanced budget. Instead, it will continue to borrow from foreign countries to meet our basic obligations, further increasing our debt and leaving it to be repaid by our children and our grandchildren. And it fails to set priorities that benefit millions of average Americans.

My constituents in Philadelphia and in Montgomery County are all hard-working Americans. In fact, all hard-working Americans deserve for us to do better than we will tonight. So I say vote "no" against this budget because voting "no" is a vote for fiscal responsibility. Vote "no" on this budget, and by doing so, insist that we make the right investments to build a safer, stronger Nation. Vote "no."

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS) from the Resources Committee.

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take on just a little bit of a different tone about this bill that provides a plan to reform our government to really add some savings here. And I want to talk about the subtitle B, section 6, which allows for mining claims, et cetera, to be utilized for our rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Resources Committee provisions contained in this title. If you oppose the budget bill because of this title, then let me just say patently straight out you are against rural America.

My home State is Nevada, and it has 85 percent of the land owned by the Federal Government, and there are few places that are more rural than Nevada. My western colleagues know what I am talking about because they are largely in the same boat that I am in.

In the western United States, where a majority of the land is owned by the Federal Government, our rural communities depend on industries like the mining industries for their basic survival.

My colleagues from the East tell me that western communities should not be so dependent on one industry for their survival. Well, in this case I would agree with them. Today, we have an opportunity to show our support for diversifying rural economies by giving rural western communities a second chance at survival after one of these mines closes. We are giving them a chance to keep their economic base and to give their families hope for the future.

Contrary to the misrepresentation that you have heard from opponents of mining, this is not about putting national parks up for sale or a massive land grab or building K-Mart's on every mountain top. This is about sustain-

able economic development for rural communities that otherwise would have no options when mining companies leave. These provisions will provide jobs and money for schools, law enforcement, hospitals, and other vital services and communities after a mine closure.

I urge my colleagues to disregard the half truths and misinformation they have heard about these provisions, stand up for rural America, stand up for this bill, and pass this very important piece of legislation.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it has been a difficult year for our country: a brutal hurricane season, this government's inadequate response, leaving thousands homeless without power or a roof over their heads, energy costs skyrocketing, poverty on the rise, the recently passed mark of 2,000 troops killed in Iraq, an ongoing insurgency, little good news coming out of the country.

Americans want leaders who put the public interest first, who put the American people first when we face difficult national choices.

I look at this legislation with its cuts to student loans, food stamps, health care, child support enforcement, and I wonder, could this Congress possibly be more out of step with what the American people expect from their leaders right now. Most Americans saw Katrina and the extraordinary poverty and problems exposed and asked where did we go wrong. What can we do to get this right?

I look at this legislation, to \$70 billion in tax cuts planned for the wealthiest Americans, and I wonder, why is this Congress not asking the same questions.

I have deep reservations about this legislation, about the values that would motivate such a terrible response to our times. It runs counter to our better nature. It does not reflect the moral responsibility of our government and our obligation to the people of this great Nation, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), the very distinguished chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and ask unanimous consent to allow him to control the time for the purposes of yielding.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to make a couple of very quick comments on the process. I had the privilege to attend a National Governors Association Conference early

last spring on the issue of Medicaid reform, and Subcommittee Chairman Nathan Deal was with me at that conference, and Ranking Member DINGELL and, I believe, even subcommittee Ranking Member BROWN was at that conference. And the Governors, on a bipartisan basis, said they wanted to work with the House Energy and Commerce Committee to help reform Medicaid this year.

They supported legislative action. Mr. DEAL and I said we would be happy to work with the Governors to try to come up with a bipartisan package. Ranking Member DINGELL, at that conference, I cannot remember his exact quote, but it was something to the effect that it would be over his and the other Democrats on the committee's dead political bodies that they tried to do anything to reform Medicaid.

And they have been true to their word. I do not believe any Democrat on my committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, voted at any level to help reform and improve and maintain the integrity of our Medicaid program, which is one of the most important health care programs in this country for low-income and senior citizens, low-income Americans and senior citizens.

Today, the House will make important reforms in telecommunications and Medicaid in the title provided by the committee I chair, the Energy and Commerce Committee. By going to conference with the Senate, we also keep hope alive for a critical energy policy—safe and limited crude oil production from the Alaskan north slope.

The legislation before us effectively sets Thursday, January 1, 2009, as the day America goes all digital. The analog television signals that have come into our homes over the air since the birth of TV will end the night before, and a great technical revolution that has been in the making for years will finally be complete.

In June 2004, at my first DTV hearing since becoming chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I announced that expediting the DTV transition would be a top priority. I also noted that the 85-percent loophole in current law is delaying the consumer benefits of digital television and preventing the clearing of broadcast spectrum for critical public safety and wireless broadband uses.

The DTV legislation brings needed certainty to allow consumers, broadcasters, cable and satellite operators, manufacturers, retailers, and government to prepare for the end of the transition. It includes a strong consumer education measure. And it helps ensure that all consumers have continued access to broadcast programming, regardless of whether they use analog or digital televisions, or whether they watch television signals broadcast by a local station or subscribe to pay-TV.

We're also here today to consider Medicaid reforms. Medicaid is a victim of its own success. The program has grown so expansive that it is unsustainable in its current form. The Nation's governors understand the grim future of Medicaid without reform. They tell us that Medicaid will begin to bankrupt the States unless some reasonable reforms are enacted. They were Democrats and they were Repub-

licans. They came to us and told us what they needed done, and we did it.

Our proposal contains common-sense reforms and will help fix some of the flaws in the current Medicaid program to ensure that it can continue to be the safety net that protects our Nation's most vulnerable citizens.

The reforms in this legislation include allowing States to charge basic co-pays to higher income beneficiaries, reducing Medicaid overpayment for drugs, and providing States with the flexibility to tailor their benefit package to meet the specific health care needs of beneficiaries. We'll also make it difficult for lawyers to hide assets so wealthy clients can pretend to be poor enough to qualify for Medicaid coverage of nursing home services.

We were tasked in the budget resolution to reduce the growth of Federal spending. However, these changes are the right thing to do, regardless of the budget implications.

I recognize that some critics will argue that even the most modest reforms will hurt the poor. I would submit to you that Medicaid in its current form is already hurting the poor.

Between 2002 and 2005, 38 States reduced eligibility; and 34 States reduced benefits. This year, hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries are losing Medicaid eligibility or facing reduced benefits because of State action. This committee will not stand by and do nothing while Medicaid slowly collapses.

The reforms we are offering today will help to save the program while at the same time protecting the poorest of our society. In fact, most provisions in the legislation include additional protections for the most vulnerable recipients, such as children, pregnant women, the disabled, the mentally ill and those in hospice care.

It is perplexing to me that so many who say they care the most, want to do the least. If you want Medicaid patients to lose health care, the best thing to do is nothing.

I want fairness and efficiency from Medicaid, and a vote for reform is a vote to save it. A vote to keep what we have is a vote for waste and for bankruptcy. It is a vote to cut health care for those who can't afford it, and certainly can't afford to lose it.

We also can't afford to keep locking up our critical energy resources. A small, small part of ANWR was set aside by Congress twenty-five years ago for consideration as an energy resource. We have learned since then just how great those resources are. Today's gasoline prices would go down if we produced in ANWR. Dropping ANWR is ignoring what Katrina taught us—we need diversity of energy supply.

I will vote for this bill today because it includes the right set of reforms and saves the taxpayers money. Let's get to conference with the Senate and come back with ANWR.

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Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. DINGELL. Let me observe that, first of all, the gentleman is dead wrong. I said that that particular package of reforms was not something which was acceptable. I encouraged the Governors to reject it and I urge you to reject it. I have never supported it. But I have never said that reform of Medicaid would pass over my dead body.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Reclaiming my time, I have the utmost respect for the gentleman from Michigan. But at that first conference with the Governors there was not any package on the table. We were talking concepts. There was no package on the table. It was just the concept.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL).

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

A lot has been said tonight about people losing coverage under Medicaid if these reforms go in place. I would like to call the reality of today to attention. If you want to lose people from Medicaid rolls, just do nothing. The status quo is doing that very adequately. Tennessee is having to remove over 200,000 from their Medicaid rolls. Missouri is removing over 100,000. In the last 3 years alone, 37 States have had to reduce eligibility, and 34 States have actually had to reduce benefits. The Governors are crying out to us to do something. If we don't do something, they can no longer sustain their portion of the requirement of paying their part of Medicaid. That is the message that they have sent to us on a unanimous basis. All Governors, both Democrat and Republican across this country have said, please reform the program. It is in dire need of reforms in order to be sustainable.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), Telecommunications Subcommittee chairman.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Telco Subcommittee, I want to focus for a second on the DTV provisions. Last year the Congress passed the 9/11 Commission Report Implementation Act, which contained a sense of Congress saying that the Congress must pass comprehensive DTV hard date legislation this session and that any delay would delay the ability of public safety to get much-needed spectrum for interoperability. Mr. Speaker, today we are taking a significant stride towards fulfilling that commitment that we made to public safety. The legislation before us sets a hard date of December 31, 2008, for the end of the DTV transition, at which point the broadcasters will return their analog spectrum. Setting such a hard date will enable public safety to get access to that spectrum for interoperability, spectrum that it was promised way back in 1997. It will also enable the auction of the remainder of that spectrum for advanced wireless services.

Moreover, it will give consumers adequate notice and time to get ready for the transition and this legislation sets aside a portion of the spectrum proceeds to fully fund a robust digital-to-analog converter box program.

The legislation also included a provision that I helped author with the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) and the gentleman from

New York (Mr. TOWNS) to set aside \$500 million of the spectrum auction proceeds to assist State and local public safety agencies in acquiring interoperable communication systems. That amendment enjoyed widespread support within the public safety community. I would urge my colleagues to support this bill so that we can, in fact, see this provision enacted.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the Energy and Commerce reconciliation package consists of two components. There is a Medicaid reform package and there is a digital television transition package. Both of those packages have widespread support outside of the halls of this body. Cumulatively, together, they are going to change the baseline for Medicaid from a rate of growth of a little over 7.3 percent to 7 percent per year for the next 5 years, and in terms of the digital television transition package, expected to raise in the neighborhood of \$10 billion and put America on a digital broadcasting and receiving footing beginning January 1, 2009. Both components of the package are worthy of support. I would hope we could support those components in this package.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to address comments made by distinguished Chairman regarding a provision of the bill that addresses the FCC's proceeding on unlicensed operation of wireless broadband devices in the vacant broadcast bands, commonly known as "white spaces." I thank the Chairman BARTON for recognizing the importance of additional unlicensed spectrum.

Unlicensed, wireless broadband devices have spurred entrepreneurship, technological innovation and phenomenal new capabilities for the country. Hot spots in coffee shops and airports, and wireless access in homes and offices, have made it easier and easier for people to access the Internet. These unlicensed uses have generated billions in new business for U.S.-based manufacturers, retailers and providers. However, these devices could do more to bridge the digital divide and bring more broadband choices to consumers if they could operate in spectrum below 1 GHz, (spectrum below 1 GHz propagates over greater distances and through tougher obstacles than does the spectrum being used by today's unlicensed wireless broadband devices).

Mr. Chairman, I know you are aware that in some smaller markets, only a handful television stations are actually operating. In some rural or suburban markets, there may be dozens of TV channels available for other uses. Nationwide, the white spaces offer hundreds of megahertz of spectrum for unlicensed wireless broadband devices to operate in. In its white spaces proceeding, the Commission proposes to allow unlicensed devices to operate in those spaces where the spectrum allo-

cated to broadcast television stations is not being used, subject to the additional condition that the devices do not cause harm to licensed television broadcasters and certain other users of the spectrum. The Commission's proposal outlines possible noninterference requirements.

In response to the Chairman's point on preventing harm to broadcast signals, I would note that interference should be easily avoided, because "smart" unlicensed devices identify frequencies in use with "listen-before-talk" technology and similar capabilities. Developers and producers of equipment for wireless broadband operation in the white spaces have every incentive to demonstrate that their equipment is designed so as to prevent interference to television signals, where such signals are actually being transmitted. The reward of preventing interference is tremendous; the risk of being forced to exit a market because of an engineering mistake is equally weighty. The Commission has had this proceeding open for over a year, and meanwhile, innovation that could occur to deploy broadband to a greater number of Americans has been delayed.

In ordering the Commission to complete the white spaces proceeding within one year, my colleagues and I expect the Commission to promote robust and efficient use of vacant spectrum by unlicensed wireless broadband devices and networks. I thank the Chairman for his efforts on this issue, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Chairman to promote the use of additional unlicensed spectrum in the vacant broadcast bands.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous consent request to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

(Mr. FARR asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the bill.

The American people know better than the politicians here in Washington about what's best for American families. If you've learned anything from Tuesday's election is that you ought to listen to the American people. The American people know that this Congress, under the Republican Leadership, is cutting over \$50 billion in important domestic programs, while still adding billions to the Federal deficit.

The Republican leadership's fantasy of deficit reduction comes at the expense of significant cuts to domestic programs that middle class American families—making \$27,000 to \$65,000 rely on. I've gotten hundreds of letters from concerned and distraught constituents urging me to oppose this bill and they're screaming that America does NOT want: \$14.3 billion in cuts to student aid programs, raising the cost of college for students and families. Nearly half a million Californians borrow money for education, we should be assisting the next generation of Californians, not raising fees and interest rates on students; \$800 million cuts to food stamp programs, eliminating nutrition and lunch/breakfast programs for hundreds of thousands of families and children; billions in cuts to child support programs run by the States—over 5 years, Californian families will lose almost one billion in funds that should be going towards our children; \$11 billion in cuts to Medicaid, with over

\$1 billion of those cuts coming out of California; and \$425 million in cuts in Social Security Insurance benefits for the disabled.

With all of these cuts, the Republicans and this Administration will still be adding at least \$20 billion to the Federal deficit when the Republicans push through \$70 billion in tax cuts to the wealthiest of Americans. America deserves and wants a Federal budget that is fair and compassionate. I urge my colleagues to listen to their conscience and the voices of the American people and strongly oppose this bill and throw out these misplaced budget priorities.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 12 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and ask unanimous consent that he be permitted to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Republicans were unable to pass this bill because of the severity of the cuts. They have since then done a lot of horse trading about those cuts and apparently, now tonight, they have the votes. But the one thing that remained consistent throughout all of that horse trading was they never lost their appetite to raise the cost of student loans. According to the CBO, this budget will add almost \$8 billion in new cost onto the backs of students and onto their parents as they borrow money to pay for higher education, a higher education that is absolutely essential today to fully participate in the American economy.

They will add almost \$5 billion in new consolidation loan fees and higher interest rates that go directly to those students borrowing money. They mandated a 1 percent insurance fee, \$1.47 billion, on the backs of these students. Repealing the lower interest rate caps, \$505 million to these students. A 1.5 percent origination fee, \$350 million to these students. So that the average student today who borrows \$17,500, you will increase their cost of that loan, and that education \$5,800. Not according to me, but according to the Congressional Budget Office.

You can say all you want, but none of you apparently raised your hand and said, How about helping the students? How about reducing the taxes on the students? How about reducing the \$8 billion in new taxes on these students? Students who are going to Kansas, they are going to UT, 30 students here are going to Georgetown. Nobody raised their hand on behalf of these students or their families who are going deeper and deeper in debt.

Just 2 weeks ago, we got a report that the cost of a college education is outstripping the ability of middle-class families to pay for it, and certainly lower income families to pay for it.

Earlier this day, you took away the promise of this President to increase

the Pell grant by \$50. He originally promised to raise it to \$5,100. But, no, you couldn't keep that promise, the President couldn't keep his, you didn't keep his promise, nobody kept the promise to the students. Somehow you are just not able to keep your promises. What happens is that these students here are punished because of your inability to keep your promises.

No, the House is not out of order, you are out of order because you are hurting the students of this Nation, you are hurting their families, you are piling on the debt, you are piling on the interest rates, you are increasing the cost to the students and to their families. You ought to be ashamed of it. Because the taxes that these kids are going to have to pay and their families pay are way beyond what is fair to do to them. It is a tragedy, an absolute tragedy that you would do this to young people.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House. The Chair would further remind Members that they are not to refer to persons in the gallery. Finally, the Chair would request that all Members respect the gavel.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON).

Mrs. EMERSON. I would like to engage the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL), chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, in a colloquy.

Mr. Chairman, in the bill before us, we do make significant changes in the way we pay pharmacies for Medicaid prescription drugs. I am very concerned that these payment rates will significantly reduce access to prescription drugs for Medicaid beneficiaries in districts like mine particularly, which is quite rural. I think that we need to make sure that our Nation's community pharmacies are adequately compensated for Medicaid prescription drugs. I would like to ask you if you could to explain the new provision that calls for a GAO study on pharmacy reimbursement.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. EMERSON. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. In the manager's amendment, we provide for a GAO study that would authorize the Secretary to delay the implementation of the new reimbursement structure if the study finds that the average payment rates to pharmacists for drugs under the new Medicaid program are below the pharmacy acquisition cost. We think that this study will determine whether pharmacies are paid adequately and that we continue to provide access to Medicaid recipients for prescription medications.

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Chairman, I am hopeful that we might have the opportunity in conference to clarify in the GAO study that prior to implementation, States would be required to submit to the Secretary of HHS the amounts they would propose to pay pharmacies under this new payment formula. Would you be willing to work with me on this.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Yes.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of New York. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into a colloquy with the gentleman from Texas, the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, regarding the Digital Television Transition Act of 2005 which is included in title III of H.R. 4241. Section 3406 of this bill directs the NTIA to establish a new \$500 million interoperability grant program for first responders.

Chairman BARTON, I strongly believe the Department of Homeland Security should be given, at the very least, a strong consultative role in the administration of these grant funds. Given the Department's expertise in administering first responder grant programs and its responsibility for establishing and implementing the national policy on interoperable communications, I would ask the chairman to ensure that this new grant program uses standards, grant guidance and technical assistance established by the Offices for Domestic Preparedness and Interoperability and Compatibility. I would ask the chairman to seek such a resolution in conference.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of New York. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from New York, who is also the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security.

Chairman KING, I agree the Department of Homeland Security should have a strong consultative role in administering this new program. The Department of Homeland Security standards and grant guidance for interoperable communications must be used to ensure consistency in the administration of this new \$500 million program.

It is too late at this point to amend the language establishing the program, but I pledge to work with you and your committee to resolve this issue during conference.

Mr. KING of New York. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his comments. I appreciate your willingness to address our policy concerns.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the bill we consider today cuts over \$50 billion from essential programs that help Americans struggling just to get by.

Over a quarter of these cuts, a staggering \$14.3 billion, will be slashed from student aid programs, the largest cut in the history of these programs. According to a new CBO estimate, much of these so-called savings are generated by forcing students and parents to pay nearly \$8 billion in new fees and increased interest rates. These cuts will force individual students and their families to pay as much as \$5,800 more for college.

Why would Congress want to force students to pay more for college? The harsh truth, Mr. Speaker, is that the underlying intent of this bill is to balance the massive deficit and pay for additional tax cuts on the backs of students already struggling to pay for college. Instead of reinvesting the so-called savings into making college more accessible and affordable, we will vote later to hand out an additional \$70 billion in tax cuts. These additional tax cuts, Mr. Speaker, will benefit the wealthiest in our country while increasing the burden on ordinary Americans.

Mr. Speaker, our budget decisions reflect our values. This bill does not reflect the values that I cherish. I oppose this Robin-Hood-in-reverse bill. I ask my colleagues to vote their conscience and oppose this merciless reconciliation package.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. I thank the gentleman from California for yielding.

Parents and students, please take note. College will soon become a lot more expensive if these budget cuts pass. Yes, at a time when college costs are rising and students are struggling to afford college, this bill cuts over \$14.3 billion from Federal student aid programs. This represents the largest cut in the history of the student aid programs at a time when the College Board tells us that this is the most expensive semester ever.

This bill includes nearly \$8 billion in new charges that will raise the cost of college loans through new fees and higher interest for millions of American students and families who borrow for college. While millionaires will soon gain another \$19,000 tax break, the typical student already saddled with \$17,500 in debt faces \$5,800 more in new fees and higher interest rates. To whom does this make sense? We all know that championing tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans by punching holes in middle-class priorities is the hallmark of this administration's failed economic policies. But the burden should not be placed on the backs of students. All of us should rise in strong opposition to this legislation, for it will hurt the very generation that will eventually lead this country.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote against this unprecedented raid on student aid.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support America's college students. Our competitiveness in the global economy is built on a foundation of a highly educated workforce. My Republican colleagues feel higher education is a privilege and not a necessity for American students. The Republican strategy to cut and gut Federal financial aid by over \$14 billion for its students hurts families and threatens America's competitiveness. The Republican raid on student aid makes the largest cut in the history of financial aid while also increasing the deficit by \$20 billion, adding more debt on the backs of hardworking Americans and students.

Tim McDonald who attends Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, told me and other students last week: "The generation that benefited from highly subsidized affordable higher education is now pulling the ladder up with them and forcing us to finance debt not only of our own education but of their tax cuts."

Congress should promote hope and opportunity and provide America's scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, police, nurses and teachers, our future leaders, with the skills and knowledge and opportunity to keep America strong and prosperous. These budget cuts cut and gut the resources that students depend upon to achieve their career goals and to contribute to America. Instead of investing in students, instead of investing in America's future, this reconciliation forces students to pay the price for the mismanaged Republican budget.

I rise today to support America's college students and our nation's higher education institutions.

Our competitiveness in the global economy is built on the foundation of a highly educated workforce.

My Republican colleagues feel financial aid for higher education is a privilege, not a necessity for American students.

The Republican strategy to cut and gut federal financial aid by over \$14 billion hurts students, hurts families and threatens America's competitiveness. Harming higher education harms America.

The Republican raid on student aid makes the largest cut in the history of financial aid, while also increasing the deficit by \$20 billion—adding more debt on the backs of hard working Americans . . . and students.

Tim McDonald attends Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Last week speaking against these cuts Tim said:

"The generation that benefited from highly-subsidized, affordable higher education is now pulling the ladder up with them and forcing us to debt finance not only our own education, but their tax cuts . . ."

Congress should promote hope and opportunity. Vocational and technical schools and our colleges and universities provide America's scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, police, nurses, and teachers—our future leaders

with the skills, knowledge and opportunity to keep America strong and prosperous.

This budget cuts and guts the resources students depend upon to achieve their career goals and contribute to America.

Instead of investing in students, instead of investing in America's future, this reconciliation forces students to pay the price for a mismanaged Republican budget.

I ask my Republican colleagues to protect America's economic future, to not abandon the next generation and to DEFEAT the cutting and gutting of hope and opportunity for American students.

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Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this plan has \$70 billion in tax cuts, \$50 billion in spending cuts, and therefore adds \$24 billion to the national debt. Let us look at one of those cuts, cuts in student aid. We know that your future opportunities depend on your education, and college will enhance your education.

Unfortunately, 400,000 children cannot go to college because they cannot afford to. It will get worse before it gets better. In the last 4 years, the cost of a public college education went up \$3,000. The maximum Pell grant in this package as adopted will not go up at all. This bill cuts over \$14 billion over 5 years from student aid, adding up to \$5,800 per student of what they have got to pay on those loans. That is not the right vision for the future.

It is particularly egregious when you look at the tax cuts that go into effect next year. One tax cut goes into effect involving personal exemptions and standard deductions. Mr. Speaker, this is a chart of who gets it. Under \$200,000, you cannot even see what you get. Millionaires get \$19,000; \$500,000 to \$1 million, over \$4,000. Ninety-seven percent of this tax cut goes to those making over \$200,000. Fully phased in, it is \$100 billion over 5 years.

While this tax cut is going into effect, we are cutting student aid by \$14 billion, denying many students an opportunity to go to college, and saddling many others with up to \$5,800 in new debt. We can do better than that. We ought defeat this resolution and not saddle those children with additional debt.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for his leadership in education.

Mr. Speaker, tonight's debate really is not about fiscal responsibility. That ship sailed almost 2 years ago to the day when the Republican majority passed the largest expansion of entitlement in the last 40 years with the new prescription drug bill that they refused to pay for. They sold it as \$400 billion. It is closer to \$1.2 trillion today with no cost control and refusing to pay for it.

Tonight's debate is about what the values and priority of our Nation will be. Is it going to be another round of large tax cuts for the most well off, or will it be an investment in the education future of our students? They are choosing the tax cut.

This raid on student aid that we have been talking about is the largest cut in the student financial aid program in our Nation's history. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has stated that it is going to add, to the average student, over \$5,800 in up-front fees and higher interest payments through their collegiate career.

This is happening when one-half of low-income students in this country today who are qualified and want to go on to school cannot because they cannot afford it. This is happening when countries like China and India and South Korea and Japan are ramping up their education investment in their students' future. This is happening when China last year graduated nine times the number of engineers that we did. China last year graduated more English-speaking engineers than we did in this country. This is a recipe for economic disaster in their budget.

Instead, what we need to be doing is investing in economic growth. We are leaving too many of our students behind today when we need them advancing their skills and knowledge base more than ever. At a time when our long-term economic and national security hangs in the balance, it is as if the Republicans want to unilaterally disarm in the race for global creativity and innovation. Instead of being so eager to dismantle the New Deal, we should be offering the American people a new, new deal with the hope and promise of helping all Americans develop the skills and tools they need to compete in the global marketplace. This budget does not do it. We can do better.

I encourage my colleagues to defeat this proposal.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield the remaining time to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, it is true that dogs collect fleas, and so do large fiscal year bills. This bill is no exception. I want to talk about one of those fleas infesting this bill. One of the worst infestations in this bill is a provision slipped in in the dead of night, like many of these things happen, that will essentially give away America's most pristine areas in our national forests to the special interest friends of the majority party.

There is a provision in this bill that will allow places that have been "patented for mining," to be essentially given away to these special interest companies that can take our most pristine national forests, somewhere between 300,000 and 20 million acres, and

give it away to special interests, give it away to special interests and increase the deficit at the same time.

What will happen with that property? Anything the special interests of the majority party wants. It is not about mining. There is a provision in this bill that will allow your special interest friends to come into the Mount Baker National Forest in Washington, the national forest in Colorado, the national forests of California, take that property, pay the taxpayers nickels, literally nickels, and take that property away from the people that want to enjoy those national forests right now.

It is bad enough that that bill will leave future generations \$1 billion of debt. You would think you would give them the Cerces to take their kids out to be able to have a picnic in the national forest, portions of which will be gone because you want to feed the rapacious appetites of your special interest friends.

This is a rip-off of American taxpayers. It is unfair to the kids that want to go up to the national forests and enjoy this property. There is no excuse for it. You are doing it in the dead of the night. You ought to be ashamed.

There is nothing sacred to the Republican Party except tax cuts. You would sell anything in America to finance your tax cuts. The Washington monument could be next. This is a shame.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). The Chair again reminds Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I am trying to find where we are taking away picnics now. I am looking for picnics in here. I may not vote for this now. I did not realize we were taking away picnics, of all things. My goodness. How could we do that, my friend.

I would now like to yield to the very distinguished gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) for 2½ minutes.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Federal spending has been on the rise. Over the period of time from 2001 to 2005, inflation has only gone up 12 percent during that period of time. However, when you look at the various other government spending programs, they have gone up anywhere from 21 percent all the way up to 99 percent for education.

Believe me, government has grown. It has grown to the point where our constituents are saying, stop already, make some changes. The significance of this chart is how much government has grown. A lot of it was due to 9/11; a lot of it was due to the slowdown in the economy.

The time has come where we need to start cutting back on the future growth. That is all that this does is cut back on the future growth. That is all that this does by one-tenth of 1 percent.

I heard somebody say, where is the Democrat plan? Well, their plan would

increase spending by \$21.5 billion, provide \$54 billion in new taxes and virtually no cuts. It would grow the government. That is not what our constituents and that is not what our taxpayers want us to do.

Democrats have opposed virtually every spending bill recently. Why? Because the bills do not spend enough. It is not that they are spending too much. They do not spend enough, because no sum is too great ever to spend on their pet issue of the day.

The Republicans standing with me today have made it clear to constituents that the time has come for Congress to finally control the growth of Federal spending. That is what we are talking about, reducing government waste, inefficiencies, and putting common-sense measures in place to help reduce the Federal debt.

It is time we put some commonplace measures into place to help reduce the Federal debt to help stop this out-of-control growth of government. Ladies and gentlemen, that is what the bill we have before us tonight does.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I hope everybody in America knows, I say to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE), your party has been in charge for all 5 of the years that spending has gone out of control, and your conservatives are telling you just that, including Mr. Dick Armey, your former majority leader. It is you who have allowed spending to go out of control.

□ 0030

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, the distinguished ranking member for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the reconciliation package the Republicans have put together before us tonight is unfair and will increase the deficit. We have an analysis documenting that unfairness by the Democratic staff of the Joint Economic Committee which I will be placing in the RECORD.

The spending cuts hit programs that benefit middle and lower income families while the tax cuts go overwhelmingly to very high income people. For example, families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution receive only 3 percent of family income, but they are being asked to absorb 22 percent of the cuts in spending for individuals. When you put together the tax cuts and the spending cuts, you see that the richest 20 percent of the income distribution receives benefits from tax cuts that far outweigh their losses from the spending cuts.

In contrast, middle and lower income families, the remaining 80 percent of all families in our country, lose more from program cuts than they gain from tax cuts. This is terribly unfair. This plan does not reflect American values. We can do better.

THE IMPACT ON FAMILIES OF THE HOUSE BUDGET RECONCILIATION PACKAGE  
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE DEMOCRATS  
Senator Jack Reed (D-RI)—Ranking Democrat  
Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)—Senior House Democrat

November 17, 2005

Summary

The FY 2006 House budget reconciliation plan will increase the federal budget deficit and is unfair in its impact on families.

The deficit will increase because reconciled spending cuts of \$50 billion are not sufficient to offset reconciled tax cuts of nearly \$60 billion, which could rise to \$70 billion in a future conference agreement.

The plan is unfair because the spending cuts affect programs that benefit middle and lower-income families, while the tax cuts go mainly to very high-income people.

Spending Cuts

Of the \$50 billion in reconciled spending cuts, about \$22 billion are in payments for individuals that can be allocated by family income group (Table 1).

That \$22 billion is spread relatively evenly across families in all income groups. But because income is so unevenly distributed, the share of spending cuts borne by low-income families is substantially larger than their share of total income (Table 2). For example, families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution receive only about 3 percent of total income, but they bear 22 percent of the total cuts in spending on payments for individuals.

The remaining reconciled cuts and offsetting receipts do not directly reduce payments for individuals, such as the proceeds from auctioning electromagnetic spectrum licenses. Nevertheless, some of the additional cuts will hurt vulnerable families. For example, the roughly \$5 billion in cuts to child support enforcement efforts will reduce payments to single parents and their children by over \$7 billion.

Tax Cuts

Of the \$57 billion in tax cuts, \$28 billion are in taxes on individuals that are allocable by income group (Table 3).

By far the largest amount (\$23 billion) of the tax cuts for individuals that can be allocated by family income group accrue to the richest 20 percent of families (Chart 1).

Most of the taxes that are not directly allocated in this analysis are business tax cuts that would also end up benefiting high-income taxpayers.

Net Impact

The top 20 percent of the income distribution receives benefits from the tax cuts that far offset losses from the spending cuts (Chart 1).

Middle and lower income families (the bottom 80 percent of all families) lose more from program cuts than they gain from tax cuts.

TABLE 1.—HOUSE SPENDING RECONCILIATION BILL  
MAJOR PROVISIONS  
(In billions)

Provision	Change in outlays 2006–2010
<b>Payments for individuals, allocable by income group</b>	
Program cuts:	
Student loan programs <sup>a</sup> .....	–13.8
Medicaid .....	–8.4
Farm programs .....	–2.9
Food stamps .....	–0.8
Supplemental Security Income .....	–0.7
Child welfare services .....	–0.6
Program cuts, subtotal .....	–27.1
Program expansions:	
Katrina health care relief .....	2.6

TABLE 1.—HOUSE SPENDING RECONCILIATION BILL MAJOR PROVISIONS—Continued  
(In billions)

Provision	Change in outlays 2006–2010
Other provisions <sup>b</sup> .....	2.4
Program expansions, subtotal .....	4.9
Net impact, payments for individuals .....	-22.2
<b>Other provisions</b>	
Spectrum auction proceeds <sup>c</sup> .....	-8.7
PBGC premium increases .....	-6.2
Child support enforcement cuts .....	-4.9
Medicaid <sup>d</sup> .....	-3.0
Dumping and subsidy offset repeal .....	-3.2
Other <sup>e</sup> .....	-1.7
Total, other provisions .....	-27.8
Total .....	-50.0

Source: CBO, Estimated Budgetary Impact of House Reconciliation Recommendations (HR 4241), and JEC Democratic Staff calculations.  
<sup>a</sup> Excludes student loan provision reducing guaranty agencies' share of collections.  
<sup>b</sup> Includes funding for LIHEAP, TANF, and child care.  
<sup>c</sup> Includes offsetting spending for digital transition and public safety.  
<sup>d</sup> Includes limits on pharmacy reimbursement and other unallocable provisions.  
<sup>e</sup> Includes proceeds from selling federal land, increasing visa fees, and other provisions.

TABLE 2.—DISTRIBUTIONAL IMPACT OF HOUSE SPENDING CUTS IN PAYMENTS FOR INDIVIDUALS

(Share of spending cuts and share of family income by family income group)

Income group (quintile)	Share of spending cuts <sup>a</sup> (percent)	Share of family income (percent)
Bottom 20 percent .....	22	3
Second 20 percent .....	17	8
Middle 20 percent .....	15	14
Fourth 20 percent .....	17	23
Top 20 percent .....	29	52

Source: JEC Democratic Staff calculations using data from CBO and Census Bureau public use files.  
<sup>a</sup> \$22.2 billion of cuts in payments for individuals allocable by income group from Table 1.

TABLE 3.—HOUSE TAX RECONCILIATION BILL MAJOR PROVISIONS  
(in billions)

Provision	Change in revenues 2006–2010
<b>Extension of Certain Expiring Tax Provisions</b>	
Taxes on Individuals allocable by income group:	
Lower tax rates on dividends through 2010 .....	-13.3
Lower tax rates on capital gains through 2010 .....	-7.3
Extend above-the-line tuition deduction through 2006 .....	-1.7
Extend retirement savers credit through 2008 .....	-2.9
Continue to allow personal credits against AMT through 2006 .....	-2.8
Subtotal .....	-28.0
Other Taxes on Individuals:	
Extend deduction for state and local sales taxes through 2006* .....	-2.6
Total Taxes on Individuals .....	-30.6
Taxes on Businesses:	
Extend small business expensing through 2009 .....	-7.3
Extend research and experimentation credit through 2006 .....	-10.0
Other Extensions and Modifications .....	-8.8
Total .....	-56.7

Source: JCT, Estimated Revenue Effects of the Chairman's Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 4297, the "Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act of 2005," JCX-79-05, November 15, 2005, and JEC Democratic Staff estimates.  
<sup>\*</sup> There are no direct estimates of the distributional impact of extending this deduction.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), a member of the Ways and Means Committee, and the Ways and Means Committee has contributed reform to this package.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Congress must make the hard decisions to rein in Federal spending. The

legislation before us today does just that by reducing or eliminating waste or unnecessary Federal spending across a range of programs.

I would like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) and my fellow Ways and Means Committee members for their support in bringing this legislation to the floor this evening. Overall, the provisions in this legislation produced by the Ways and Means Committee saves over \$8 billion over the next 5 years through common sense reforms that fix or clarify current law.

These changes target spending on administration, not benefits meant to be paid under current law. For example, this legislation ends double dipping on certain child support bonus funds. The bonus funds will continue. The double dipping will end. This change will save \$1.6 billion over the next 5 years.

This legislation also extends and improves the 1996 welfare reform so even more parents will be able to leave welfare for work. It provides full funding for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Programs despite a 60 percent welfare caseload decline. It increases child care funding to support more work, and it encourages and supports healthy marriages and stronger families to further reduce poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support these common-sense reforms.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, this Congress is set to vote on a budget that will cut education and health care investments in order to make room for \$70 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

If you are asking yourself what kind of Congress passes a budget that cuts \$9.5 billion from Medicaid adversely affecting 6 million children while overpaying HMOs by \$10 billion, look no further. A Republican Congress.

What kind of Congress hands out \$14.5 billion in tax subsidies to oil and gas companies, and yet cuts \$14.5 billion in college tuition assistance? Look no further than a Republican Congress.

What kind of Congress cuts child care assistance to 330,000 children while giving special tax breaks to bow and arrow manufacturers and logging companies. Look no further than a Republican Congress.

Child care, child support, children's health care, college tuition assistance. You guys give a whole new meaning to women and children first.

When George Bush in 2000 declared he was opposed to nation building, who knew it was America he was talking about.

This budget continues your policies of cutting taxes for the wealthiest 1 percent in America, while cutting child support, children's health care, child support collection and child care assistance as well as college tuition assistance. Have you no shame? Have you no decency when it comes to America's

future? Then you stand up here having added \$3 trillion to the Nation's debt in 5 short years and declare yourself that you believe we have to put our fiscal house in order, and all the while you add to the Nation's deficit.

Thank you very much. No one has quite said thank you for all your hard work.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). The Chair would once again remind all Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BEAUPREZ).

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, as we get close to the end this has been an interesting debate to listen to tonight.

If I listen to all the eloquence from the other side of the aisle, I must think this is surely the only place in the United States of America that believes we do not spend enough, nor tax enough.

I tell you what, I could go into any sale barn, any peach orchard, any machine shop, any office building, sit around any kitchen table in my State of Colorado, and I could ask that question and they would tell me straight up, no, we do not believe that the United States Congress handles our money quite as efficiently as maybe they could.

Do you know what we are talking about here tonight? Over the next 5 years, reducing the rate of increase by a mere one-third plus or minus of 1 percent. One-third of a cent on a dollar rate of increase.

Now, go back home and ask the folks in your district, the folks that live across the street, the folks you go to church with if they really believe we are so good in the United States Congress with their tax dollars that somehow, somehow we could not find one-third of a penny of savings out of their dollar. You know how we are finding it. We are finding it by saying, you know, folks, if you want to get in the nursing home and you happen to have three-quarters of a million dollars of equity in your house, maybe you ought to take care of yourself for a little while.

We are saying that if you sign an oath that when you immigrated to the United States America that you will not become a ward of the State, you will be self-sufficient, we think you ought to abide by that oath for 7 years. We are saying that student loans actually ought to go to students, not just brokers who trade them around in the market and try to make a buck off the deal. That is the kind of savings and efficiency that I think we all said we are going to come here to try to find for the American taxpayer. Tonight we have got a choice.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished Whip of the Democratic Party.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I tell my friend, the chairman of the Budget Committee, this bill is no picnic.

Mr. Speaker, for 5 years, the Republican Party in Washington has pursued the most irresponsible and dangerous fiscal policies in the history of this country. Today, they claim they are getting tough on spending, that they are restoring fiscal discipline. I suppose that is the fiscal discipline that they threw away over the last 5 years.

I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I have been a Member of this House for 25 years. For 17 of those years, there has been a Republican President in the United States of America. The one person that can stop spending in its tracks, none of the rest of us can, we can vote but only one of us in the government can stop spending in its tracks and that is the President of the United States. And during those 17 years that we have had Republican Presidents, every year without exception we have had large deficits. For 8 years, we had a Democratic President, and for 4 years we had surpluses, 4 straight years.

In every single one of those years that the Republican Presidents presided we had large and growing deficits. This bill today will perpetuate that Republican performance.

Five years ago, the Bush administration and this Republican Congress inherited a projected 10-year surplus of \$5.6 trillion according to President Bush. President Bush promised the American people when he offered his economic program, "We can proceed with tax relief without fear of budget deficits even if the economy softens." But almost immediately, the Washington Republicans enacted policies that instigated deficit and debt that will immorally force our children to pay our bills and then threaten our Nation's future.

Under President Clinton, we had \$559 billion of surplus in his last 4 years. Under your 5 years, I tell the amused chairman of the Budget Committee, you have planned and achieved \$1.57 trillion of debt. At the very same time, Republicans have raised the debt limit four times. \$4.15 trillion of additional debt during your last 5 years.

Do you know how much during the last 4 years of the Clinton years we raised it? Zero. Zero. You talk about fiscal responsibility and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) says you had a Republican majority. Is that not wonderful? My, my, my, you could do it when you had President Clinton as President but you cannot do it when you have President Bush. Is that not a strange thing to happen? In 5 short years they have driven us \$3 trillion deeper in debt.

Today Republicans say they want to restore fiscal discipline. All of America must ask, Why do you insult our intelligence?

President Bush has not vetoed one spending bill that you have offered. If spending is out of control, it is out of control because you let it get out of control, you planned to get it out of control, and you passed bills that put it out of control.

Republicans rammed a prescription drug bill through. They told us, which was not true and they knew it not to be true, it was going to cost \$395 billion. Why? Because your budget said you were going to spend \$400 billion. That was a lie. You knew it was not true. In fact, 2 months later, you came by and said, no, it is 524. Now, it is over a trillion dollars.

You claim that you are cutting spending by \$50 billion, but you are coming with a tax bill that is going to cut \$57 billion in revenue, a net increase of the deficit. That is why you have had 17 straight years under your Presidents of deficits.

Look at the facts. I implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, face fiscal reality. Stop posturing, vote no on this irresponsible bill. Join Democrats in adopting a budget plan as we offered that balanced the budget in ten years. You did not even plan to balance it.

Let me read now a quote. "We do not touch Social Security. It does not touch Medicare. This budget accomplishes the largest reduction of the debt held by the public in our history. By the end of 10 years of this budget, we will have eliminated the debt held by the public." Chairman JIM NUSSLE, May 25, 2001.

□ 0045

\$1.57 trillion in budget deficits and \$3 trillion later additional debt on the national debt. The gentleman from Iowa's (Mr. NUSSLE) representation was totally, absolutely, unconscionably wrong in 2001, and your predictions today are equally in error.

Vote against this bad bill.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, except the gentleman forgot Osama bin Laden, and I thank the gentleman for that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the very distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), a member of the committee, so maybe he can answer some of the diatribe that we heard.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, in 2 minutes I will try to answer all of that diatribe. It is going to be very challenging.

Number one, the last speaker talked about all the new spending. Every time we brought a spending bill to the floor of the House, an appropriations bill, a budget bill, a Medicare bill, what did they do? They proposed more spending. Our budget on Medicare, \$400 billion. Their bill on Medicare, \$1 trillion. What did our budget on Medicare come in at? \$319 billion because competition is working.

Mr. Speaker, let us put this in perspective. Look at the rhetoric we have been hearing tonight: deep cuts; draconian cuts to government; we are hurting women; we are hurting children; we are hurting children with cystic fibrosis; we are taking picnics away from tourists; we are burning the house down. What is this budget doing?

Mr. Speaker, this budget, if it does not pass, the government will spend

over the next 5 years \$13.855 trillion. With this budget, the government will spend over the next 5 years \$13.795 trillion. We are talking about growing entitlement spending at 6.3 percent instead of 6.4 percent, a one-tenth of 1 percent reduction in the increase of spending. Yet you would think the world would be coming to an end.

There is a difference here. There is a difference in philosophy. Mr. Speaker, it is this: they are talking about tax cuts. They are talking about big tax cuts. Their definition of tax cuts is not raising taxes because this budget does not cut taxes. This budget keeps taxes where they are. We are simply proposing that we do not raise taxes; and, instead, we want to control spending. What is it they are offering? No spending control and more tax increases.

We are going into a very expensive winter. Where I come from in Wisconsin, we are going to have a cold winter. We are going to have high heating bills. We are going to have to pay a lot for our heating bills. We have high health care costs. Why on Earth would we want to stick our constituents, the American people, with more taxes?

Mr. Speaker, we should vote for this bill to control spending and keep taxes low and disallow their world view of higher spending and higher taxes.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), a very distinguished gentleman from the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Anyone watching this debate tonight must be very, very confused. Are we talking about cuts? What are we talking about? Are we talking about taxes? Taxes are not a part of this bill. Are we talking about cuts? Let me tell you what is happening under just the Ways and Means portion of this bill.

The programs affected in this legislation within my committee's jurisdiction grow. Let me repeat that. Federal spending for the open-ended entitlement programs that are affected in any way by changes in this legislation will grow. These programs include cash welfare, yes, child care, child support enforcement, also foster care and disability benefits.

This year, the Federal Government will spend about \$68 billion on this set of programs. That is almost \$650 in spending per household in America, and that is before we start counting any spending on health care, retirement, defense, education and other programs; and guess what, spending on these programs, they will grow under this legislation.

Five years from now, we will spend \$74 billion on them or \$6 billion more than today; but because the spending 5 years from now will not be a projected \$76 billion, or about \$8 billion more than today, compared with a \$6 billion increase provided in this bill, we are supposedly engaging in draconian cuts.



Mr. Speaker, figures do not lie, and neither should we.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4½ minutes.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. The Democrats come to the floor and they want us to only remember two parts of a very large story. They want us to remember back in May now of 2001. It is kind of an interesting date they picked out of the air, May of 2001. What a wonderful time. Can we all remember back to that time of innocence? Can we all remember back to that time? They want us to remember a time of surpluses. Everything was perfect. They make it sound like such a blissful time.

What they do not want to remind you is that we were suffering at that very moment from a Clinton recession, a Clinton recession where the stock market bubble burst, the dot-coms were failing. We had corporate scandal, and the stock market was plummeting.

We saw some real challenges. We stepped into that breach. We made a very important economic decision that people spending their own money, investing their own money, making decisions in the towns and cities and suburbs and counties of our great land is the best way to grow our economy. It worked and we did create jobs, and we did provide prosperity, and we do know how to do it again.

But then they jump ahead. They do not want you to remember any more of 2001, not 2002, not 2003, 2004. All the way to 2005 is where their story goes next, and it is deficits as far as the eye can see. They do not want you to remember about what happened on September 11. They do not want you to remember the fact that we are now in the middle of prosecuting a global war on terror with our men and women in the field that now they want to recklessly call home and not even want to fund.

What they do not want to recall is the fact that we had reforms that we needed to put into our homeland security to protect our country. They do not want us to recall any of the emergency spending for New York or for the Pentagon. They do not want you to remember the needs that we had when natural disaster struck our country and where, in minutes, the Congress was willing to come back and spend whatever it took to make sure our people were taken care of.

They do not want you to remember any of that. They voted for it. They voted for a lot of that spending, but they do not want you to remember that. They just want you to think that Clinton caused surpluses and now we are in deficits; do not think of anything else in between.

Well, you know, there is a lot in between. It may be a good political plan what they are putting on the floor today. It may be great in a press release. It may be good in a 12-step press release by a Blue Dog budget. It may be great if you are going to go home and run attack ads. It may be great if you are just getting ready for the next election.

But if you want to govern, you need a plan. If you want to govern, you have got to put it on the table. If you want to govern, you have to be serious about the activities and not just come to the floor and be negative. If you want to govern, you need to put it out so that we can decide whether it is the right way to go or not.

Well, we have a plan. It reforms government. It grows the economy, it protects America, and it gets us moving again in a positive way that trusts Americans to make the correct decisions about their future and not trust government to do it for them.

People, individuals and families, make much better decisions about their daily lives than the government can for you. When Democrats come to the floor, their plan will be tax increases and trusting bigger government, bigger bureaucracy, more big, fancy, white buildings filled with bureaucrats to provide the compassion that they do not believe the American people will have for themselves. They have got to manufacture it through government and government bureaucracy; and that is the reason that we are here tonight, because that has not worked. Our government bureaucracy has let down the American people.

We have got to reform those programs so they deliver a quality product, and we have to do it tonight, and we are the only ones to do it. There is no point in talking to the Democrats. They are all in lock-step going to vote "no." They have decided tonight they are going to wait for the election for the American people. They are not going to do anything in the meantime except be negative.

So we have got to do it. We have got to put the plan out. We have got to support it. We have got to provide the reforms, and we have to provide the savings so that we can reduce the deficit and get back to fiscal responsibility.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 15 seconds to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

1984, it was Good Morning in America, the economy was growing, President Reagan was President, Bob Dole the Republican the majority leader of the United States Senate, and big deficits, big deficits, big deficits, big deficits, big deficits.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of our time to the gentleman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the minority leader.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, up until now I think we have had a very civil debate here this evening on a very important matter to the American people, a matter that consumes a great deal of the time of the Congress, the blueprint for what we do in the year, the budget.

Tonight, the Republicans are launching an attack on America's children and America's families; and they are

also launching an attack on America's middle class, all of this to give a tax cut to the wealthiest people in our country.

This budget is a sham, and it is a shame. Democrats believe that together America can do better.

I am so proud of my Democratic colleagues tonight because they have stood proudly for fiscal responsibility.

I am so proud of the Blue Dogs and how they led this debate tonight for pay-as-you-go, for no deficit spending, for fiscal soundness so that future generations will not have to bear the brunt of the fiscal irresponsibility that the Republicans are continuing to present to the Congress.

I am proud of the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) for his tremendous leadership as our ranking Democrat on the Budget Committee. He, indeed, has put forth an alternative budget, a Democratic budget, that would eliminate the deficit in 2012, was balanced in terms of its values, its priorities and in addition to its funding.

□ 0100

Mr. RANGEL led the way from the Ways and Means Committee in terms of tax fairness in our country. Mr. DINGELL spoke in and his members spoke so eloquently about what would happen to Medicaid in this Republican proposal, and Mr. MILLER, of course, was relentless in his advocacy for America's students.

I have heard my Republican colleagues talk about those who disagree with their budget priorities as hypocrites and demagogues. Well, let me introduce some others to this debate who might fall into that category by our Republican colleagues' characterization.

Let me start with the National Council of Churches USA. They have written to every Member of Congress and very carefully dissected this budget, and this is what they say: "The role of government is to protect the people and work for the common good. This is not the time for the budget reconciliation process to create greater hardships for those who are already experiencing great suffering. To do so is not only unjust; it is a sin. It violates all the fundamental Christian principles of loving thy neighbor, caring for the poor, and showing mercy. As religious leaders, this is a violation that is unacceptable to us.

"How is it that we show mercy for oil millionaires and not hurricane survivors? We urge you to change this destructive course of action for the sake of our Nation and for generations to come."

I submit this for the RECORD. But first I want to read a list of those who signed the letter so that they perhaps will be labeled by our colleagues on the Republican side as hypocrites and demagogues.

The National Council of Churches USA, the Alliance of Baptists; the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America; the Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America; Friends United; Philadelphia Religious Society of Friends; Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; International Council of Community Churches; Moravian Church in America; National Baptist Convention USA; National Missionary Baptist Convention of America; Polish National Catholic Church of America; Presbyterian Church USA; Progressive National Baptist Convention; Swedenborgian Church; United Church of Christ; General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church.

I am very proud, also, that we have a letter from Catholic Charities. And Catholic Charities says that it is our "tradition that teaches us that society, acting through government, has a special obligation to consider first the needs of the poor. Yet the proposed budget cuts put a disproportionate burden on the poor, those that can least afford it."

"We urge you to oppose these proposed cuts."

And that letter I wish to submit for the RECORD because it carefully goes into every detail of this budget and urges opposition. And, in fact, leaders of the faith community, indeed, came to the Capitol Rotunda to pray that Congress would make the right decision. On November 3, they said that the House Republicans seem to be saying that they literally want to take food out of the mouths of children to make rich people richer. They said budgets are moral documents and they reflect our national priorities and values. In the name of social conscience, fiscal responsibility, equality of opportunity, protecting our communities, and the very idea of the common good, they said that the faith community is drawing a moral line in the sand against these provisions in this budget.

Democrats will join the faith community in drawing a moral line in the sand, because we know that together America can do better.

My Democratic colleagues have eloquently made an indictment against this budget, which is immoral because, with more than \$70 billion tax cuts which mainly benefit the wealthiest people in America, this Republican budget decimates the very programs that millions of middle class Americans rely upon to get ahead. As the number of people without health insurance has increased for 4 years in a row under the Bush administration, Republicans are charging ahead with billions of dollars in cuts in Medicaid, the health insurance program that provides medical care to America's poorest children, many of them Katrina survivors. Republicans give new meaning to the words "suffer little children."

The number of people in America go to sleep hungry because they cannot afford to buy food has risen by 7 million people in the 5 years of the Bush administration. Seven million more people go to sleep hungry because they cannot afford to buy food. That is a 12

percent increase. Republicans are slashing food assistance for America's poor children; slashing funds for preventative services and foster care for abused and neglected children when more help, not less, is needed; drastically reducing funding for child support enforcement programs, which could result in billions in reduced child support from delinquent dads for their children.

And how about this one: For our troops serving in combat zones in Iraq, they are prevented from fully accessing the low-income tax credit. How is that for honoring our men and women in uniform?

The Republicans, as the people of faith said in their document, are literally taking food out of the mouths of children to give tax cuts to America's wealthy. This is not a statement of American values. In their years in the majority, Republicans have turned budget surpluses into seas of red ink. These budget deficits are the result of misplaced Republican priorities, a refusal to join Democrats in putting forth fiscally responsible budgets, Pay-As-You-Go, no deficit spending, and shared sacrifice in spending cuts. Democrats believe that together America can do better.

And we did. I want to join my distinguished colleague from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our distinguished whip, in singing the praises of the Democrats. In August of 1993, Democrats passed an economic package that led to historic growth in our economy, and we did so without one Republican vote. As Mr. HOYER said, in the Clinton administration, we had zero deficits. In fact, we had surplus for the last several years of the Clinton administration. We were on a trajectory of \$5.6 trillion in surplus. And then the Bush administration began and that all reversed. They have taken us on a trajectory of over \$4 trillion, a swing of about \$10 trillion, the largest swing from surplus to deficit in our history by far, and a disgraceful one at that. The surpluses were based on Pay-As-You-Go, no deficit spending, and they were implemented with not one Republican vote for fiscal soundness.

The Republican Congress wants to give tax cuts to the rich, to subsidize oil companies which are enjoying obscene profits while American consumers are paying an increased price at the pump and an increased price for their home heating gas and oil. As the religious community said, why are we giving relief to the oil companies and not the people? They are increasing taxes on the middle class. Nineteen million middle-income Americans will have their taxes increased under this bill.

This is not a values-based budget. It is not worthy of our support. I urge my colleagues to reject this resolution that will increase our swollen budget deficits by another \$20 billion, hurt our most vulnerable citizens and the middle class. Again, together, America can

do better with a budget that would help Katrina and Rita survivors, veterans, students, working families struggling to fill their gas tanks, heat their homes, and afford medical care.

Democrats are proud to join the faith community in rejecting this immoral budget. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

The material previously referred to is as follows:

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES USA,

New York, NY, October 19, 2005.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: (As leaders of America's major faith communities, we write to you at a moment of great moral urgency for our Nation when hundreds of thousands of our most vulnerable citizens are at risk.) We urge you to put aside partisan politics and pass a Federal budget that reflects the moral priorities of the wide majority of Americans. (We urge you to work for, not against, the common good of all of America's citizens and not just a privileged few.)

This is a grave time in our Nation. We are in the midst of a tremendous social and economic crisis, thrust vividly into public view by the recent natural disasters along the Gulf Coast. The times demand profound changes if the quality of life is to improve for millions of families. The United States budget is a reflection of who we are and what our priorities are as a Nation. It is inconceivable—in the wake of the devastating impact of the recent natural disasters—that Congress would propose \$50 billion in cuts for child care benefits, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Head Start, student loans, and other vital services for people in need. In the aftermath of these disasters, such catastrophic cuts can only deepen the pain and suffering and dramatically increase the number of people living in poverty in this Nation.

We watched as members of Congress vowed to help rebuild the Gulf Coast. We heard our representatives promise to make helping those affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita a national priority. Yet despite those pledges, members of Congress now stand ready to cut \$50 billion in essential programs that help those in need, while maintaining excessive tax cuts that help only the wealthy. The hurricanes were a natural disaster. But this proposed budget reconciliation would be a moral disaster of monumental proportions—and it is one that can be avoided.

(The role of government is to protect its people and work for the common good.) This is not the time for the budget reconciliation process to create greater hardships for those who are already experiencing great suffering.

To do so is not only unjust; it is a sin. It violates all the fundamental Christian principles of loving thy neighbor, caring for the poor, and showing mercy. As religious leaders, this violation is unacceptable to us.

(How is it that we show mercy for oil millionaires and not hurricane survivors? We urge you to change this destructive course of action for the sake of our nation and for generations to come.)

The outrage expressed by Americans across the country to the images of injustice following Hurricane Katrina—and the subsequent outpouring of generosity from these same citizens—is a message from the grassroots that our government's priorities and budget must reflect American values by helping those most in need at their time of need. Please call a halt to budget reconciliation negotiations that are detrimental and direct your attention to healing rather than harming our society.

Respectfully submitted,  
Signed (as of October 19, 2005)

Bishop Thomas Hoyt, Jr., National Council of Churches USA.

Rev. Dr. Robert W. Edgar, National Council of Churches USA.

The Rev. Dr. Stan Hastey, Alliance of Baptists.

His Grace Bishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Friend Retha McCutchen, Friends United Meeting.

Friend Thomas H. Jeavons, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

His Grace Bishop Dimitrios, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Rev. Michael E. Livingston, International Council of Community Churches.

His Grace Metropolitan Zachariah Nicholovos Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

The Rev. David L. Wickmann, Moravian Church in America.

Rev. William Shaw, National Baptist Convention USA.

Dr. Melvin Wade, National Missionary Baptist Convention of America.

The Most Reverend Robert M. Nemkovich, Polish National Catholic Church of America.

The Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Rev. Dr. Major L. Jemison, Progressive National Baptist Convention.

Rev. Tyrone Pitts, Progressive National Baptist Convention.

Ms. Christine Laintner, Swedenborgian Church.

The Rev. John H. Thomas, United Church of Christ.

Mr. James Winkler, General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA,  
Alexandria, VA, November 2, 2005.

Hon. JIM NUSSLE,  
Chairman, Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NUSSLE: On behalf of Catholic Charities USA, one of the Nation's largest private networks of social service providers with 1,400 local agencies and institutions providing essential services to over 7 million people annually, including many families who have to depend on Federal means-tested programs to survive, we would like to express our deep concern about proposals to cut Federal spending by reducing health, nutrition, and income support for some of the poorest families in the United States.

We urge you to oppose these proposed cuts in the House to programs that assist families who are working, children, the elderly and the abused which will have very serious long lasting consequences for individuals, communities and in fact our Nation as a whole.

Increasing numbers of working families are seeking assistance from our agencies to meet basic needs even with the current levels of assistance they receive. Trapped at the bottom of the labor market, they are unable to meet the rising costs in housing, heating and transportation. The expenses these families face are not optional expenses; they must provide these basic needs for their families and are falling further and further behind. Among these families has emerged a new group, who because of a natural disaster, an event totally out their control, find themselves without jobs or their homes. Those who were living on the margins before the disaster are now in fact destitute.

House committees have proposed a series of budget cuts and program changes that will in fact make it impossible for these American families trying to meet the basic neces-

sities of life for their members. These cuts are certain to have long-term effects on the children, elderly, and physically challenged.

At the same time, the Energy and Commerce Committee proposes limiting access to Medicaid financed health care, thereby opening the door to allow states the ability to eliminate coverage for many services to children who desperately need it. Many of whom already skip eating to keep their homes and heat them will find it necessary to pay increased costs from their already stretched resources in order to receive life-saving medication and treatments or go without.

The Ways and Means Committee has chosen to meet its deficit reduction targets by targeting poor families with children. The Committee's proposals would reduce help for the very services for children for which government has a moral as well as legal responsibility: protecting and collecting child support from absent parents.

The Committee proposes that low-income grandparents who make great sacrifices to raise abused and neglected children must forego aid from the government. The proposal jeopardizes the stability of children who have been abused and neglected and who live with relatives. The child welfare system struggles to obtain stable placements for an ever-increasing number of children. Placing children in the home of extended family members whenever possible is an option that needs to be supported, not penalized by federal reimbursement policies.

The Committee's child support proposals will almost certainly increase and deepen child poverty among those families who depend on government aid to collect support from absent parents. These cuts, if implemented, would reduce federal child support program funding by 40 percent, severely reducing states' ability to collect child support for low- and moderate-income families. The Congressional Budget Office projects that child support collections would drop by \$24.1 billion over the next ten years. Many states believe that these estimates understate the impact of the cuts on their ability to collect child support for families.

We are also deeply disappointed that the Committee's TANF reauthorization proposal, which is included in its reconciliation package, would sharply increase work requirements for mothers of infants and toddlers. Many middle income families make the choice for mothers to work only part time while children are small and in need of constant attention. Even parents who can afford excellent child care often choose part-time care for pre-schoolers, yet here Congress would be telling very poor single mothers that they have no choice but to put their children in full time day care while they struggle to survive on incomes which are, on average, less than half the poverty level. With all the available research pointing to the importance of the relationships and care giving of children 0-2 on their brain development, this policy seems to suggest just the opposite.

Moreover, the increased work requirement would be imposed without sufficient child care funding for even the current work requirement. Without adequate resources, parents are forced to leave children in less than desirable circumstances with little or no stimulation. In the last Congress, the House agreed to an increase of at least \$1 billion for child care, yet the Committee's recommendation is only half that, despite rapidly growing need.

The House Agriculture Committee's proposal to "save" \$844 million by cutting about 300,000 poor people off the Food Stamp Program is inexplicable to us when U.S. Department of Agriculture reported last week that

38.2 million people lived in households that were "food insecure" in 2004—a government measure of the number of people who have difficulty meeting their food budgets. The USDA report shows that the number of individuals facing food insecurity increased by almost two million people between 2003 and 2004. The Agriculture Committee proposal would make it far more difficult for the working poor to qualify for food stamps, despite clear need.

In addition, legal immigrants who are already barred from receiving food stamps (and Medicaid and TANF) for the first 5 years they live and work in the U.S. would be denied food stamps for an additional 2 years. Even the poorest immigrants who work full time at very low wages and elderly and disabled immigrants who are unable to work would be denied assistance. This proposal would reverse President Bush's successful effort in 2002 to restore food stamp benefits to legal immigrants who have been in U.S. for five years.

On the other hand, the Energy and Commerce Committee package includes a provision for an additional \$1 billion in mandatory spending for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program which is urgently needed to help offset part of the ruinous increase in home heating costs to be borne this winter by very poor elderly and disabled people and families. We urge the House to include that provision in its reconciliation bill.

Taken as a whole, the proposals for cuts in programs that support low-income working families, families who take in vulnerable children and our elderly will have long term effects on the families, communities, and our nation. They would leave the most vulnerable among us poorer, sicker, hungrier, and more isolated.

On behalf of Catholic Charities USA, I strongly urge you to oppose cuts in programs that serve the poorest people in America. Our Catholic tradition teaches that society, acting through government, has a special obligation to consider first the needs of the poor, yet the proposed budget cuts put a disproportionate burden on the poor—those that can least afford it.

Sincerely,

FR. LARRY SNYDER,  
President, Catholic Charities USA.

[From the Sojourners, Nov. 3, 2005]

JIM WALLIS AND FAITH LEADERS CALL FOR A MORAL BUDGET AND URGE CONGRESS TO SAY 'NO' TO SOCIAL CUTS THAT PAY FOR TAX CUTS

Jim Wallis, the progressive evangelical founder of *Sojourners* and convener of Call to Renewal, joined several national religious leaders in a press conference today at the U.S. Capitol. Wallis and the religious leaders urged members of Congress to derail plans to make deep budget cuts that hurt poor children and families.

As the campaign to challenge the budget and tax cuts by the faith community continues to build momentum, Jim Wallis said in today's press conference: "Sometimes it takes a natural disaster to prevent a social disaster. The waters of Katrina have washed away our national denial of just how many Americans are living in poverty. But some in Congress are not paying attention. Cutting social services from this year's budget that help the poor—to pay for tax cuts for the rich—is a moral travesty that violates biblical priorities."

"Plans for deep cuts to social supports are contrary to national priorities we need to protect our most vulnerable citizens," continued Wallis. "We need strong moral leadership in Congress, especially during this time

of war, record deficits, rising poverty and hunger, and natural disasters. Cutting food stamps and health care that meets the basic needs of poor families would be a moral failure.”

“As this moral battle for the budget unfolds, I am calling on Members of Congress, some of whom make much out of their faith, to start some bible studies before they cast votes to cut food stamps, Medicaid, child care and more that hurt the weakest in our Nation. The faith community is drawing a moral line in the sand against these priorities. I call on political leaders to show political will in standing up for ‘the least of these,’ as Jesus reminds us to do.”

For the past 4 weeks, Jim Wallis and religious leaders from diverse traditions have met with Members of Congress to discuss how social cuts for poor families and tax cuts for wealthy Americans are unconscionable and immoral. Budgets are moral documents and they reflect our national priorities and values. In the name of social conscience, fiscal responsibility, equality of opportunity, protecting our communities and the very idea of a ‘common good,’ the upcoming budget votes will be closely watched by people of faith,” said Wallis.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, but still no plan.

But to close on our plan, Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the Speaker of the House.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

I guess we have heard it all. We have heard an argument wrapped in religious morality. We have heard revisionist history. We have actually heard a lot of words tonight. We have had epithets thrown back and forth across this hall, which does not make me proud and probably does not make the American people. But what we have to do is do the people’s work. We were elected by the American people to make a difference.

Now, I remember 1993. I remember the largest tax increase in American history. That is what they call “fiscal integrity.” The American people rejected that. I also remember 1997. Maybe I have been around too long, but in 1997, we did deficit reduction. We also did welfare reform. If I remember right, we passed it once; it got vetoed. We passed it twice; it got vetoed. We passed it three times, and the President decided if he was going to get re-elected, he had better sign it, and then he took credit for it.

In this body it has been the people on this side of the aisle that have done the tough work, that have done their homework, and have made a difference.

I also remember in 1999, 2000, and 2001, we paid down \$500 billion of public debt. We wiped that debt off. I will tell my colleagues in 2001 we had 9/11. Three thousand people got killed in 45 minutes in this country. And we probably had to respond to that. And we have. Then we had a deficit. The great bubble of that economy burst. It did not burst on their watch, but it burst because people were overleveraged and it was overheated. But we have re-

sponded. And we have had 10 consecutive quarters of 3 percent-plus economic growth because this party has worked hard to do what the American people sent us here to do.

You can talk about meanness and mean spiritedness, but I will tell you the most mean spirited thing we can do is to leave our children with a debt that they cannot pay. We can leave our children with a deficit. And you are right. You are right. Stand up and clap because we will leave our children with a deficit that they cannot spend down or save.

I will tell my colleagues when we look at this bill, we talk about the growth in Medicaid. Governors are calling us from both parties and saying, Help us do something, help us to have a plan to reform Medicaid so that we can save some money, so that we can offer more services to more people in a better way.

And you know what? We worked at it. We did have reform. And Medicaid is growing at a 7.3 percent growth rate per year. A 7.3 percent growth rate. It has been growing for years.

Is there a better way to do it? Is there a more efficient way to do it? Should we find some reforms to make it better? Yes, we should. And we are bending that growth rate from 7.3 to 7 percent. Think about it.

The American people expect us to do what is right. The American people do not want all of these platitudes of moral indignity. They want us to go to work. They want us to do our job. They want us to provide a better life for themselves and their children, and this majority will do it. It is our responsibility. We can start right now by voting for this bill.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to share my concerns on the language in the Budget Reconciliation Act on Medicaid pharmacy dispensing fees. As I understand these provisions, states are required to pay dispensing fees to pharmacies for Medicaid prescriptions. While this might seem like a step forward, all states pay such fees now. Thus, we are really not assuring adequate access to pharmacies by just specifying that states have to pay a dispensing fee. I represent a state with almost 200,000 Medicaid beneficiaries and by the end of this decade, one in five Rhode Islanders will have no choice but to turn to Medicaid for basic health care. As more and more working families are forced to enroll in Medicaid, it is our duty to ensure that they are able to access providers and pharmacies to receive the care they so desperately need.

This legislation sets a minimum \$8 dispensing fee for generic drugs, however there is no specific minimum fee set forth for brand drug dispensing fees in the bill. Currently, more than half of all prescription drugs dispensed in the Medicaid program are brand name drugs with no generic competition. I am concerned that we are not requiring states to provide a minimum dispensing fee for these drugs.

If states do not set appropriate dispensing fees, I am concerned that pharmacies will be

paid below their cost to dispense prescription drugs in the Medicaid program. As a result, Medicaid recipients could have difficulty obtaining the prescription drugs that they need from their neighborhood pharmacy, and many pharmacies may have to close or reduce hours.

The total payment to pharmacies for the drug product and dispensing fee must be adequate to pay pharmacies to buy the drug, dispense the medication, and have a reasonable return. It is my understanding that if the current proposed reductions to pharmacy reimbursement in Medicaid are enacted, states would have to pay double or triple the dispensing fees currently being paid just so pharmacies can break even. However, states are already faced with limited funds and I am concerned that they will not choose such high dispensing fees without being required to.

Community pharmacies play a crucial role in providing Medicaid beneficiaries with lifesaving medications. I hope that my colleagues will take my comments under consideration when moving forward with these reforms in the Medicaid pharmacy payment system in order to provide adequate reimbursements to pharmacies dispensing Medicaid prescriptions.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the so called “Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.” The purpose of this bill was to rein in the deficit in order to offset the costs of rebuilding areas devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and to aid displaced hurricane victims. Unfortunately, the Deficit Reduction Act does exactly the opposite. It raises the deficit, while cutting crucial funding for critical federal programs such as Medicaid (\$11.4 billion in proposed cuts), food stamps (\$796 million), student loans (\$14.3 billion), and child support enforcement (\$4.9 billion); programs hurricane victims need now more than ever.

The Deficit Reduction Act also hurts residents in my district by significantly cutting funding for rural development.

This legislation disguises the fact that the \$50 billion it proposes in mandatory cuts will go to offset revenue lost due to the President’s tax cuts passed in the budget resolution earlier this year. Additionally, this bill facilitates further tax cuts for the wealthy, leaving nothing for deficit reduction or for hurricane victims.

The Deficit Reduction Act is part of a larger budget resolution that calls for \$57 billion in additional tax cuts, increasing the deficit by at least \$35 billion. After the tax cuts are in place, there will not be a dime left to pay for Katrina or Rita. Why must those who suffered at the hands of the hurricanes be asked to sacrifice more?

Since 2003, Congress has passed three huge supplemental appropriations bills for the cost of the war and reconstruction in Iraq. I supported these bills because when we put troops in the field, we stand behind them. As a former Marine, I am committed to that. I ask my colleagues who support this bill this: We don’t offset the costs of rebuilding Baghdad and Basra; Why do you request we offset the costs for New Orleans and Biloxi? The bottom line of this bill is that average Americans are being asked to sacrifice so wealthy Americans can receive tax cuts.

When the Bush Administration took office in 2001, it inherited a surplus and predicted that surplus would continue even if tax cuts were

adopted. The Bush budget was passed by Congress and became law. In fiscal 2005 there was no surplus, but instead a deficit of \$319 billion. Estimates indicate that these deficits will only get worse over the next ten years, and it will be hurricane victims and the poor who will pay for it.

Because I serve in Congress for those who need the helping hand of the government during national emergencies, or who struggle to pay for college, or who are sick and poor and rely on Medicaid, or who live in the rural communities of my district, I cannot support the Deficit Reduction Act and I will vote against its enactment in its present form.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, as a lawmaker, we constantly must make important decisions while various forces pressure us one way or the other. Frequently "doing the right thing" is not the most popular choice. Often, "doing the right thing" for the majority of Americans could negatively impact small factions in the process. Rarely is "doing the right thing" an easy thing to do.

But "doing the right thing" is what my constituents elected me to do. "Doing the right thing" is why I first sought public office, and why I will continue to do so as long as my body allows. "Doing the right thing" is why I have consistently called for budget reconciliation and restrained spending. My constituents work hard for their money, and that money is not meant for the federal government to take and waste.

I cast a difficult vote against the massive Hurricane spending bill because it was the right thing to do. It was not easy and it was not initially popular, but it was the right thing to do. Unfortunately I lost that vote, and as a result our government slipped even deeper into a budget deficit. Just as my constituents spend less on other things when they encounter emergency costs, the federal government must do the same.

Although it wasn't the easy thing to do, we are now doing the right thing by slowing the growth of government spending to accommodate for the hurricane funding. Our Committee chairmen have been meticulous in cutting wasteful and duplicative spending so that the slowed growth that federal programs face will be minor. I am proud to have played a role in that process in the Education and Workforce and Agriculture Committees.

Over the past few weeks I have met with community pharmacists from North Carolina and my staff has spoken with dozens on the phone. The pharmacists believe that slowing the growth of the Medicaid bureaucracy will negatively impact them to the point that their pharmacies can no longer operate. As their Representative and as a customer of community pharmacies, those concerns are extremely important to me.

I approached Chairman BARTON and his staff on the issue, and if the changes made in this bill indeed adversely affect community pharmacists in the long term to the point that they can no longer operate, we must promptly revisit the topic with stand alone legislation or some other technical fix. However, I can not in good conscience vote against a bill so important to our nation's prosperity because of its effect on one important interest. That is not to say that their concerns did not weigh heavily on my mind; the good simply could not be thrown away for the perfect.

Voting for this bill is the right thing to do, and I hope we will continue to slow the growth

of our federal government. My constituents know how best to spend their money—not politicians.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today we are considering what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle call budget reconciliation. Ironically, the hurricanes are being used to rationalize cutting the very programs the hurricane survivors rely on. In fact, this budget will do more harm to the poor and unfortunate than the storms.

Let us be clear about the purpose of the legislation before us today: all of these spending cuts are going towards financing tax cuts. In recent years, deficits have been the largest in history—indicate that we are spending far beyond our means. I find it ironic that Republicans are calling this bill the "Deficit Reduction Act," because it will actually increase the deficit.

Republicans are asking working families to foot the bill for a massive tax giveback for the wealthy. Due to the President's previous tax policies, millionaires get an average tax cut of \$103,000 a year and the new bill will continue this trend. Americans, the young, aged, sick, poor and the unfortunate will get a reduction in benefits.

I have been before this body on numerous occasions to discuss priorities, so it is not necessary to go into detail about how misguided this legislation is. I hear time and time again how the Republican fiscal policy has been working to stimulate the economy and create jobs. No one has yet seen the evidence of this so-called success. My people back in Michigan certainly are not celebrating any successes of the GOP Congress. And not just in Michigan—poll after poll shows two-thirds of the American people disapprove of the way the President is handling the economy.

I frequently hear from constituents who are struggling just to make ends meet. From veterans who are not getting medical treatment, students trying to pay for college, farmers and laborers alike—all of these people are working hard to scrape by and make a decent living in this country. At minimum wage, they would earn \$10,700 per year, barely one-tenth of the average tax giveback for millionaires.

Meanwhile, my colleagues will ask these hard-working Americans to foot the bill for another massive tax giveback. Those with particularly low incomes will be hurt the most. The reconciliation package will cut food stamps, student aid and Medicaid—all are programs which largely benefit the most vulnerable members of our society.

The current conflict in Iraq has been entirely funded by the deficit. During times of war, past presidents have found ways to curb the deficit through increased revenue, closing tax loopholes and budgetary enforcement rules such as PAYGO. President Reagan realized that his tax act was causing large deficits and so in 1982 he supported a repeal of the parts of his tax bill that had not been enacted. President George H.W. Bush also realized that the deficit was getting too large and increased taxes in 1990. It may not have been politically popular, but it was the right thing to do. Shocking as it may seem to Republicans, President Bush's tax increase, along with President Clinton's balanced budget, led us into an unprecedented period of surplus and economic well-being.

This Administration and this Congress have chosen to ignore the obvious, opting instead

to keep the blinders on and march forward with their reckless tax policies. Republicans complain incessantly about "tax and spend" liberals, but all I see in Congress and the White House are "spend and spend" Republicans who cut programs which benefit ordinary Americans.

I know that many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have doubts about this legislation and I urge them to oppose it. This is not sound policy. We can do far better.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, this Republican-controlled Congress has run higher annual deficits and accrued more debt than ever before in the history of our Nation. This budgetary irresponsibility is leading us down a dangerous path and must be stopped.

After the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and with the continuing costs of our ill-advised war in Iraq, restoring fiscal discipline has taken on added urgency.

Our responsibility today is to decide how to begin to allocate the burden of restoring financial order. Our choice is straightforward: we can place the burden on those least able to bear it by cutting financial assistance to the poor and social services programs to the needy, or we can place it on those far more able to bear it by deferring the billions in tax cuts which were enacted just two years ago, some provisions of which have yet to take effect.

How we exercise this responsibility will reflect our philosophy on government, our faithfulness to the concept of a caring community, and the values of compassion and fairness we hold most important.

The Federal Government should not retreat from its role of caring for those Americans who are most in need and of enabling every individual to participate in the remarkable opportunities that America has to offer. I believe that all Americans have a responsibility, and most have a desire, to share in our national burdens and to participate in our national response to crisis. And I believe that every action this Congress takes must reflect the values and principles that make this country so unique in its greatness.

This bill is contrary to each of these beliefs, for it imposes practically the entire burden of putting our fiscal house in order on the members of our national community who are least able to bear it.

This bill cuts more than \$50 billion in mandatory spending on vital programs, such as food stamps, Medicaid, child support, student loans, SSI, and child care—\$15 billion more than the \$35 billion in mandatory cuts in the original budget resolution.

The bill will lead to 250,000 people losing food stamps, will result in children missing mental health treatment or simple aids like eye glasses because of the \$12 billion in cuts from Medicaid, and will make it more difficult for students to pay back student loans.

The bill will cut child support programs and SSI benefits, and will force a decline in the number of children who receive child care while their single mothers work.

Soon after considering this bill, we will consider another bill that proposes to reduce federal taxes by \$70 billion. These tax cuts, and the corresponding benefits, will affect a much different segment of Americans than the bill now under consideration. Indeed, the majority of these tax benefits will go to the 0.2 percent of Americans with annual incomes over \$1

million. They don't need this largesse, and we cannot afford to give it to them.

Taking from the poor to give to the rich is wrong, and I believe that our constituents recognize that it's also un-American.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this Republican Budget cut package.

First, let me state that I strongly support balancing the federal budget and paying off the national debt. I am tremendously proud that during my first term in the U.S. House, Congress and the White House worked together in a bipartisan manner to balance the federal budget for the first time in a generation and produced record budget surpluses.

Unfortunately, the current Republican Congressional Leadership has produced a budget plan with harmful cuts to essential services that does nothing to reduce the budget deficits or offset the costs of recovery from Hurricane Katrina or the ongoing war in Iraq. At a time when American families are getting squeezed, the budget reconciliation package cuts funding for priorities including Medicaid, student loans, child support and food stamps that assist the working poor and the middle class.

Specifically, this legislation will cut Medicaid by \$11.4 million, student loans by \$14.3 billion, food stamps by \$796 million and child support by \$24.1 billion. The bill also breaks the promise of the Farm Bill by cutting \$1 billion from agriculture support and \$760 million from conservation. Although I am pleased this version of the bill abandons earlier attempts to open the Arctic Wildlife Refuge and coastal areas like the Outer Banks to oil and gas drilling and a few other modest improvements, these changes in no way compensate for the bill's fundamental flaws.

Congress should reject this legislation and go back to the drawing board to produce a responsible federal budget for the American people. I support pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) budget rules to enact budget discipline and restore fairness and equity to the budget process. I want Congress and the President to work together across the partisan divide to balance the budget once again, pay down the national debt and invest in our people and our country's economic competitiveness in the 21st century global marketplace.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting against these senseless budget cuts.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, when we passed the federal budget earlier this year, Democrats offered an alternative that would have achieved a balanced budget in 10 years . . . 10 years to spread out the pain of finally paying our bills again and freeing up the future for our children.

When we passed this budget last Spring, we were told there was no fat in it—it was all bone. Well, when you cut bone, you fall down.

Today the House is striking out . . . even if this bill passes today, let it forever be known as the "3 strikes and you're out" budget.

Strike 1: It hits hard our senior citizens, who built this great country . . .

Strike 2: It squeezes our middle class that pays the taxes and struggles to pay the household bills . . . and

Strike 3: It dumps on our children and students that represent the future of this nation. Three strikes . . . congratulations, today Congress hits all 3 components of American society with these budget cuts.

But let's get to why this bill is before us today. We're not here because the hurricanes

busted the budget. . . . It's not the war . . . it's that many people in this House demand that we spend the Treasury's money on tax cuts for wealthier Americans. Period. It's about nothing more than spending this money on tax cuts—or, more appropriately: tax increases on our children.

Budgets are a reflection of who we are and what we value. The budget cuts offered in the House of Representatives today—which I oppose—simply do not represent the values that we say are important to us in this nation.

South Texans have been astounded at the depth of cuts in the federal budget, which means Texas students will be less likely to stay in school or go to college . . . Low income Texas children will be sicker with the cut in health benefits . . . Seniors will lose essential services. . . .

Today's bill will increase the deficit by \$20 billion, give more tax cuts to the wealthy, and hurt those who use student loans, who need health care and who benefit from rural programs.

We have got to come up with a budget that represents the right priorities for students, seniors, Katrina families and rural Americans. We had an opportunity to vote for such a budget last Spring, with the right priorities, that paid down the deficit—authored by JOHN SPRATT—but the House rejected it.

It is incumbent upon all of us in Congress to help all Americans, not just the wealthy few. We can do better than this—and we must.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, budgets illustrate the values of our nation. This year's budget reconciliation bill fails to live up to the values of the people I am privileged to represent in West Central Missouri.

The Republican budget opens the 2002 Farm Bill by reducing farm, rural development, and conservation programs; slashes Medicaid; diminishes financial aid programs for Missouri's college bound students; and denies low-income working families access to food and nutrition initiatives. These reductions in critical rural programs are recommended at the same time as Republicans push for more expansive tax cuts for the wealthiest in society.

Most of us in rural Missouri pride ourselves on being prudent with our money. We balance our checkbooks each month and do not dig too deep into debt. While running a family is much different than running a country, these common sense Show-Me State values ought to be replicated in Congress.

But instead, the Republicans are plunging our country deeper into debt by passing a budget that includes more tax cuts than spending cuts. The budget bill ignores our commitments to rebuild the Gulf Coast after Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. It also fails to properly account for expected future supplemental spending requests for ongoing military operations.

Our nation's fiscal house is not in order and this bill does nothing to fix that. Congressional leaders and the President need to go back to the drawing board and meet in a bipartisan fashion to create a budget plan that more adequately balances the interests—and values—of the American people. When George H.W. Bush faced a similar budget crisis, he had the courage to create a bipartisan budget summit and to implement needed budget constraints. America is better for it, and I hope that our leaders today will follow that example.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican budget reconciliation bill should be defeated. Congress must do better at representing the interests of every American, not just the wealthy few. I stand ready to work with all my colleagues in a bipartisan fashion, ensuring that the budget we prepare truly represents the values of a caring nation.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose strongly the budget reconciliation bill under consideration. Those who support this bill claim it imposes spending discipline to pay for the costs of hurricane relief; in truth, it only continues the majority's pattern of taking from the middle class and the needy to give it to the wealthiest percent.

The American people came together to respond to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Families donated record amounts to charities and opened their doors to those displaced by the storm. But now the Republicans are using Katrina to divide our Nation again. They claim that deep cuts of \$54 billion are needed in programs like Medicaid, food stamps and child support enforcement to pay for hurricane relief. These cuts will neither pay for Katrina relief nor reduce the deficit. These are being used to pay for a portion of the \$70 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans that we will be considering shortly.

Mr. Speaker, these cuts are being made on the backs of the working class, seniors and middle class families. In many cases, those who have the least are being made to sacrifice the most. For example, there are about one million Medicaid recipients in New Jersey. Almost half of them are children. This budget reconciliation bill would slash funding for Medicaid by \$11.4 billion, putting our nation's most vulnerable citizens, including those affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, at risk of losing the only health insurance they have.

Another provision in the bill cuts \$796 million from food stamps. Again, how can the majority even consider these cuts when the hurricanes cost hundreds of thousands of Americans their homes and livelihoods? Cutting food stamps for the impoverished while giving tax breaks to wealthiest America is not just bad policy, it is immoral.

New Jersey is hit particularly hard by many of the cuts in this bill. We all know that the price of heating a home, either with natural gas or heating oil will be extremely high this year because of rising energy prices. Families are bracing for higher bills. And yet, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps people pay their energy bills when it is needed most is being cut by more than \$10 million in New Jersey alone. As a result, about 20,000 New Jerseyans are expected to lose much needed assistance. I assume those well-to-do families receiving tax breaks instead will sleep in warm homes this winter. Why the majority is choosing this path baffles and sorely disappoints me.

The list of cuts goes on. In New Jersey alone 3,000 mothers will be dropped from the Women Infant Children (WIC) program which helps mothers care for their babies before and after birth by ensuring they get proper healthcare, food and training for being a parent. Five hundred children in New Jersey currently attending Head Start will be cut out of this important childhood education and development program. Two thousand, nine hundred low-income and disabled people will be cut from Section 8 housing vouchers, all in New

Jersey alone. New Jersey will lose \$11 million for cleaning water for drinking and recreation. Child support enforcement is also slashed. Mr. Speaker, I thought the majority believed in accountability and in fathers paying a fair share for the upbringing of their children. If they do, why are they cutting funding for enforcing child support collections by nearly \$5 billion?

A college education will soon get even more expensive if this bill passes. 125,000 college students in New Jersey will be affected. That's because the plan makes \$14.3 billion in cuts to federal student financial aid, the largest cut in history. The result will be nearly \$8 billion in new charges that will raise the cost of college loans—through new fees and higher interest—for millions of American students and families who borrow to pay for college. For the typical student borrower, already saddled with \$17,500 in debt, these new fees and higher interest charges could cost up to \$5,800.

It is wrong to cut financial aid for students and families struggling to pay for college in order to pay for more tax breaks for the richest Americans. Financial barriers should never prevent a qualified student from going to college, and that is why America has long since made the commitment to help all Americans pay for it. Federal support for student loans is good for our economy and world leadership. Using these funds to pay for tax breaks for people who need them least robs us of an important investment in our future.

Mr. Speaker, this budget reconciliation bill is terribly misguided. Why should we have yet another tax cut for the top one percent, paid for with cuts to investments in critical areas like health, environment and education? And why, further, should we go even deeper into debt—borrowing even more money from China—for plans that we should be ashamed to force upon our children and grandchildren? Together we can do better, Mr. Speaker. I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this reckless and misguided budget reconciliation package.

At their heart, budgets are about our priorities. And the priorities we choose reflect the values we hold dear.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe this budget represents the priorities of the American people—and it flies directly in the face of the values that have always made this nation shine.

First of all, let's dispense with the fiction that this measure is some kind of down payment on the majority's newfound commitment to fiscal responsibility. In point of fact, the net effect of these spending cuts—when paired with their accompanying tax cuts—will be to actually increase the deficit by \$20 billion. So much for fiscal responsibility.

And where are these cuts coming from? Are we scaling back the billions in excess payments to HMOs and drug companies in the Medicare bill? Or the billions in tax breaks for corporate interests in the FSC/ETI bill? Or the billions in subsidies to the fossil fuel industry in the energy bill? Of course not.

Instead, in the aftermath of a lethal hurricane, with stagnant wages and rising poverty, 45 million Americans uninsured, and unprecedented global competition, we are slashing Medicaid for the poor, food stamps for the hungry and financial assistance to families trying to afford college.

This budget is a disgrace. Parts of our Nation were recently devastated by a natural dis-

aster. Tonight, the damage being done is entirely man-made, and entirely avoidable. The wounds are self-inflicted.

Because I sit on the Education and Workforce Committee, I want to say a word about the Republicans' unprecedented Raid on Student Aid.

When the Higher Education Act was signed into law in 1965, it began a 40-year federal commitment to throw open the doors of higher education to every college-ready student, regardless of their family's income. It was the right thing to do for our students—and the smart thing to do for our country.

You see, in addition to the importance of giving every child the opportunity to reach his or her full potential, the reality is that college graduates earn \$1 million more over their lifetimes than their counterparts who don't attend college. That's an enormous return the taxpayers' original investment—an investment that is only going to get more important as we compete to win in the global marketplace of the 21st century.

Which is why it is simply astonishing that this package includes the single largest cut to federal student aid in the 40-year history of the Higher Education program. By draining \$15 billion out of student financial assistance, we are effectively tacking \$5800 onto the cost of college for today's average student. We are making college less affordable at a time when we should be doing precisely the opposite. Predictably, the result will be less people going to college.

The Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance has already projected that financial barriers will prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a four-year public college over the next decade, and another two million high school graduates from attending any college at all. This reconciliation package is going to make that statistic much, much worse.

And for what? To pay—or I should really say partially pay—for tax cuts, over 50 percent of which go to the top .2 percent of households already earning over \$1 million a year.

Mr. Speaker, the choices in our budgets should reflect the values and priorities of the American people. This budget fails that test. I am confident that if this budget was supposed to be a mirror of American values, the American people would not recognize themselves. We can do so much better than this.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Let's have a little reality check, Mr. Speaker. There are Republicans cowering in fear right now about their vote on this immoral budget bill. That's right. There are Republicans right now, huddled in their offices, who are scared to death that their hard working constituents will be furious if they vote for cutting student loans for their kids, or cutting health care for pregnant woman and little children, or literally taking food out of the mouths of hungry kids so that rich people can get tax cuts.

Mr. Speaker, those Republicans ought to be scared and I want to offer them some friendly advice. Remember, I warned them that seniors would be very unhappy with the Medicare prescription drug bill they insisted on passing, and I was right. So now I'm warning you that, no matter how sarcastic or self-righteous your leaders get tonight, your constituents get it: cuts in health care and education for them, tax cuts for millionaires, and unprecedented increases in deficits. Don't kid yourself. The American people see it.

It is very dangerous to underestimate the American people, and there are many Republicans that know that. All the fancy arguments that say "reduced spending is not really a cut" are going nowhere, and they know it. They can walk the plank for their leaders tonight, but if they think they are going to get away with it, they should think again.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4241, legislation that will require approximately \$57 billion in federal spending reductions. Deceptively titled the Deficit Reduction Act, the bill resorts to trickery—a sleight of hand in which fiscal responsibility is promised, but never delivered. H.R. 4241 could actually increase the budget deficit by \$35 billion, while instituting draconian cuts to essential federal programs, such as Medicaid and student loan.

Proponents of the bill suggest that such cuts are necessary to offset the recovery and reconstruction costs of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This assertion is curious at best. Since 2003, Congress has approved three colossal supplemental spending bills for the war and reconstruction effort in Iraq without providing any offsets as proposed by Democrats. Why are Republicans suddenly so interested in offsetting the reconstruction of Biloxi, but not the reconstruction of Baghdad?

The American people should not be misled. These long-planned spending cuts have little to do with Biloxi or Baghdad. They, instead, are a necessary prelude to another Republican effort to shepherd through Congress tax cuts that disproportionately benefit the wealthiest Americans. In fact, the so-called Deficit Reduction Act is a part of a much broader budget resolution that calls for a total of \$106 billion in additional tax cuts.

With tax cuts for the rich in the offing, Republicans propose to restore fiscal restraint by imposing cuts to federal programs that benefit the most vulnerable Americans. The bill, for example, cuts Medicaid spending by \$11.4 billion. Medicaid currently provides critical health care to 50 million low-income children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Cutting the program will force thousands into the ranks of the uninsured.

The bill would allow states to increase cost-sharing and impose new premiums on many categories of Medicaid beneficiaries. Research shows that when cost-sharing is increased significantly for low-income people, their use of health care services declines and their health status worsens. To make matters worse, H.R. 4241 allows states, for the first time, to let health care providers refuse care if a beneficiary cannot afford the co-payment. In doing so, a state can bypass an entitlement in current law that provides children with coverage of medical care and health services. This change could negatively affect more than 1/5 of children covered by Medicaid—more than 5 million children overall.

This Republican budget reconciliation bill also calls for \$14.3 billion in cuts to student loan programs. The State of California has the highest number of student borrowers at 496,822. Tuition at public universities has skyrocketed by 57 percent over the last five years, and yet the GOP proposes the largest cut in the history of student aid—resulting in the typical student borrower having to pay as much as \$5,800 more for his or her college

loans. Ultimately, cutting the student loan program compromises America's global competitiveness and the economic vitality of Silicon Valley.

H.R. 4241 also requires \$4.9 billion in cuts to child support enforcement, dramatically impairing states' ability to enforce child support orders. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the bill will lead to \$24.1 billion in reduced child support collections over the next ten years, including a \$4.9 billion loss to California's single parents that rely on child support to survive.

The Republican leadership's reprehensible cuts sadly extend to other equally important federal priorities, including \$577 million in cuts to foster care programs, \$796 million to food stamps, and \$732 million from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Millions of Americans rely on these critical federal programs as a safety net and a platform for upward mobility.

As an advocate for fiscal responsibility, I cannot support a proposal that will worsen the federal budget's bottom line, while giving short shrift to the needs of working Americans. I am proud to belong to the party of fiscal responsibility. In the 1990s, President Clinton and Congressional Democrats erased record deficits and ushered in an era of record surpluses. Our Nation now needs to return to the very practices that offered prosperity in the 1990s, which is what my Democratic colleagues and I sought to do earlier this year during debate on the FY2006 Budget Resolution. The Democratic plan would have instituted pay-as-you-go rules and balanced the budget by 2012.

The federal budget should embody our nation's values, not undermine them as this budget amendment does. President Bush and his allies in Congress have been poor stewards of our national finances by placing special interests above the people's interests, and now they expect working Americans to shoulder the costs of their reckless policies.

I oppose the appalling cuts required by H.R. 4241, and I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote against this harmful measure.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, while the Rule governing the pending budget reconciliation bill through a self-executing clause eliminated provisions that would have opened ANWR to energy development and enabled long-standing moratoria on OCS oil and gas drilling to be lifted, largely flying under the radar screen are provisions still contained in the pending legislation which would amount to the largest fire sale of federal lands in our Nation's history.

These provisions would turn the clock back on federal public land policy to the days of the Homestead Act of 1862, signed into law by President Lincoln, with a cruel twist.

The Homestead Act was appropriate in its era to help settle the West, transferring roughly 270 million acres of federal lands into the hands of private citizens for homes and farms. Largely as a result of that law, the West was transformed, it was populated, States were created, cities were built, and these areas became an integral and valuable part of the United States.

However, when the usefulness of this Act expired, it was repealed, and since the Federal Land and Management Policy Act of 1976 it has been the official policy of the United States not to divest public domain land holdings, allowing exceptions when in the public interest.

The provisions pending in the budget reconciliation bill before us today, however, would under the guise of reforming the Mining Law of 1872, signed into law by President Grant, and still on the books today, transform this law into a general federal lands sale program with no nexus to mining.

As the Denver Post editorialized today, "the amendments really aren't about mining; they're about real estate speculation." The editorial noted: "It's an invitation to condo developers, mini-mansion homebuilders and other speculators to snatch up federal lands that otherwise would never leave federal ownership."

With a wink and a nod, this budget proposal sells not just the minerals under these federal lands, but the pristine lands that just happen to be located near high-priced zip codes.

Because these provisions eliminate the existing moratorium on the patenting—the sale—of mining claims and dissociate the act of staking and maintaining a mining claim on western federal lands from having to make a showing that a valuable mineral deposit actually exists—under the subterfuge of a 'mining law' vast areas of federal lands would be put on the sales block for either \$1,000 an acre or the fair market value of the surface estate, regardless, and I stress, regardless, of whether there are billions of dollars worth of underlying valuable hardrock minerals such as gold and silver.

Ironically, these provisions have the potential to put on the sales block more than 270 million acres of federal lands, equivalent to what was disposed of under the Homestead Act of 1862.

And to be clear, these land sales could take place in National Forests, Wilderness Study Areas and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Further, while the legislation purports to exempt National Parks, it does nothing to stop the sale of the 900 mining claims already existing in park units to developers.

We are literally looking at the prospect of McDonalds, Wal-Mart, condos, or any other type of commercial or private developments springing up smack dab within some of America's most cherished units of the National Park System.

Incredible, simply incredible, and all being done without a single Congressional hearing on these provisions.

I am on record as having requested the Rules Committee to omit these provisions from the budget reconciliation bill or in the alternative, allow me to offer an amendment which I am certain would have garnered sufficient votes to strip these egregious provisions from the legislation.

I was not afforded an opportunity to offer that amendment. But I can guarantee one thing, as this proposed massive give-away of the public's lands become more known to the American public there will be a great hue and cry.

These provisions not only turn over many of our most cherished natural resource heritage sites to development, but will rob the public of recreational activities and tourism. They will be met with "no trespassing signs" on lands they have traditionally used for hunting, fishing and other recreational pursuits.

There are alternatives. Rather than enact these horrific provisions which CBO estimates would raise a paltry \$158 million over the next five years, we could, as I have long advo-

cated, engage in real reform of the Mining Law of 1872.

We should maintain the bipartisan moratorium on the patenting of mining claims that I advocated and which has been in place since fiscal year 1994, and impose an 8% royalty on the production of valuable minerals from mining claims which would raise \$350 million over the next five years.

For these reasons, and many others, I urge a no vote on this ill-conceived budget bill.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, the federal government is facing a serious deficit due to recession, attacks on our Nation and the ongoing war on terrorism. The good news is that the deficit is going down and, although it doesn't go as far as I would like, this legislation reduces the deficit further.

Much-needed tax relief helped boost the economy and create more than 4 million jobs since May of 2003. Following three straight years of tax relief, tax revenues are up and the deficit is down by nearly \$200 billion.

The growing economy makes a difference, but Congress must also take action on the spending side of the equation. For the first time in more than 20 years, we are on track to reduce discretionary spending by almost one percent. However, more than half of federal spending takes place through programs with budgets that essentially run on auto-pilot. Until we address the runaway spending growth in these programs, which is outpacing growth of the economy, Congress will never be able to balance the budget.

Republicans in Congress have developed a plan that will reform these auto-pilot programs and save taxpayer dollars in order to reduce the deficit. The Deficit Reduction Act includes program reforms totaling nearly \$50 billion in net savings over the next five years. To put this in perspective, this slows the rate of growth in the automatic portion of the budget by one-tenth of a percent. No, this is not nearly enough to close the deficit gap, but it is an important start that will have positive effects.

Although I support the savings in this bill, I am extremely disappointed that the portion of our plan that would reduce dependency on foreign oil by allowing exploration in a small portion of the Arctic Refuge was struck from the bill. Raising \$3.678 billion over five years through oil and gas leases would not only help reduce the deficit but would also increase our energy security. The House has overwhelmingly voted to open ANWR in the past, and there is no good reason why this bill should not include it.

All areas of government must contribute to the savings in this bill, and agriculture is no exception. However, with high fuel costs, the last thing our producers need is to bear a disproportionate burden of the deficit-reducing effort. I worked to ensure that agriculture's contribution treats farmers fairly, protects the core policies of the 2002 Farm Bill, and looks at all areas of spending within USDA. Our plan reduces farm program direct payments by just one percent for the next four years and delays elimination of the Step 2 cotton competitiveness program until August, 2006.

I support the reforms we are making in the food stamp program to help ensure that benefits are going to those who are truly eligible and in need. Despite the claims to the contrary, we are not reducing nutrition assistance for a single U.S. citizen who meets the eligibility requirements. Rather, our reforms will direct benefits to U.S. citizens and discontinue



the practice of automatically granting enrollment to certain groups of recipients without first determining their eligibility. This irresponsible practice has resulted in millions of dollars of benefits going to those who are not eligible.

Our plan strengthens Medicaid, which has helped many low-income Americans gain access to healthcare. Federal Medicaid spending has increased 97 percent since 1995 and will continue to grow by an unsustainable seven percent each year if no reforms are made.

Because Medicaid also represents a large share of state budgets, provisions offered by a bipartisan coalition of governors are included in our plan. These provisions include requiring more accurate prescription drug pricing and closing loopholes that have allowed wealthy Americans to deplete their assets and collect benefits intended for those who truly need them. We also require states to better enforce current laws and prevent illegal immigrants from getting Medicaid. These reforms will save \$12 billion through the end of this decade.

Some in Congress, and their allies outside these halls, attack this plan and willfully misrepresent the effects it will have on Americans. Let's be clear: Congress is not cutting programs. What we are doing is taking a step to slow the unsustainable growth rate of these programs and reform them to prevent waste and abuse.

Those who criticize this effort have offered no alternative of their own. Because they are bereft of new ideas, they are content to carp from the sidelines. But left to their own devices, they would increase taxes on hardworking American families to grow the size of an already massive and wasteful government. The bottom line is that real solutions and responsible leadership are needed to balance the federal government's checkbook. By reforming government and renewing our commitment to hardworking American taxpayers, our plan will continue to reduce the deficit and expand the economy.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Deficit Reduction Act.

In recent weeks, much public and media focus has been placed on one potential provision in this legislation that called for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I respect all those who have called my office and otherwise expressed their opinion about this important issue.

While I am well aware of the "pros" and "cons" of domestic drilling, I regret that this "hot button" issue has allowed some to lose focus on the basic legislation before Congress: how to reduce the federal budget deficit. This debate should be about the tough choices we are making to reduce the deficit.

Over the past several years, our fiscal priorities have reflected a historic convergence of events: a recession that began in the year 2000; the 9/11 terrorist attacks; the need to seriously upgrade security for our homeland; a multi-front war against terrorism, including Iraq and Afghanistan; AND natural disasters in South Asia and along our Gulf Coast.

At the same time, we have maintained a commitment to strengthening our economy. As a result, millions of new jobs have been created, unemployment is down, and Americans have more money in their pockets. Still, we can—and must—do better. And I am pleased that this Congress is serious about making our government more efficient.

The Fiscal Year 2006 budget resolution calls for significant reductions in federal

spending. This year, the House Appropriations Committee on which I serve, passed all of its FY 2006 spending bills by July 4th—on time and under budget—holding domestic discretionary spending below last year's levels for the first time in a generation. Further, the committee eliminated 98 programs for a savings of \$4.3 billion.

The Deficit Reduction Act mandates more restraint and less spending. By slowing the growth of spending and reforming and eliminating wasteful programs, the House is reducing the deficit.

The Deficit Reduction Act provides \$50 billion in budget savings over the next five years. And for those who claim this goes too far, let's be clear that this represents just one half of one percent of the \$7.8 trillion in "entitlement spending" anticipated over the next five years. If American families are making sacrifices and "tightening belts," the federal government can too.

Clearly, some are also concerned with the form and size of some of the budget reforms in Medicaid, Medicare, student loans, food stamps, and other programs. In reality, the Deficit Reduction Act takes great care to protect our most vulnerable citizens while continuing to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent as wisely and efficiently as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the budget decisions we make today are tough but they are also long overdue. The hardworking American taxpayers are watching. They want us to put this federal government on a "crash diet."

The Deficit Reduction Act is a necessary step toward renewed fiscal responsibility, and it deserves the House's full support.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, as one who has long urged my colleagues to cut spending, and who has consistently voted against excessive and unconstitutional expenditures, I am sure many in this body expect me to be an enthusiastic supporter of H.R. 4241, the Deficit Reduction Act. After all, supporters of this bill are claiming it dramatically reforms federal programs and puts Congress back on the road to fiscal responsibility.

For all the passionate debate this bill has generated, its effects on the federal government and taxpayers are relatively minor. H.R. 4241 does not even reduce federal expenditures. That's right—if H.R. 4241 passes, the federal budget, including entitlement programs, will continue to grow. H.R. 4241 simply slows down the rate of growth of federal spending. The federal government may spend less in the future if this bill passes then it otherwise would, but it will still spend more than it does today. To put H.R. 4241 in perspective, consider that this bill reduces spending by less than \$50 billion over 10 years, while the most recent "emergency" supplemental passed by this Congress appropriated \$82 billion to be spent this year.

H.R. 4241 reduces total federal entitlement expenditures by one half of one percent over the next five years. For all the trumpeting about how this bill gets "runaway entitlement spending" under control, H.R. 4241 fails to deal with the biggest entitlement problem facing our nation—the multi-billion dollar Medicare prescription drug plan, which will actually harm many seniors by causing them to lose their private coverage, forcing them into an inferior government run program. In fact, the Medicare prescription drug plan will cost \$55 billion in fiscal year 2006 alone, while H.R.

4241 will reduce spending by only \$5 billion next year. Yet, some House members who have voted for every expansion of the federal government considered by this Congress will vote for these small reductions in spending and then brag about their fiscal conservatism to their constituents.

As is common with bills claiming to reduce spending, the majority of spending reductions occur in the later years of the plan. Since it is impossible to bind future Congresses, this represents little more than a suggestion that spending in fiscal years 2009 and 2010 reflect the levels stated in this bill. My fiscally responsible colleagues should keep in mind that rarely, if ever, does a Congress actually follow through on spending reductions set by a previous Congress. Thus, relying on future Congresses to cut spending in the "out years" is a recipe for failure.

One provision of the bill that would have undeniably benefited the American people, the language opening up the ANWR region of Alaska and expanding offshore drilling, has been removed from the bill. As my colleagues know, increased gas prices are a, if not the, top concern of the American people. Expanding the supply of domestically produced oil is an obvious way to address these concerns; yet, Congress refuses to take this reasonable step.

Mr. Speaker, some of the entitlement reforms in H.R. 4241 are worthwhile. For example, I am hopeful the provision allowing states to require a copayment for Medicaid will help relieve physicians of the burden of providing uncompensated care, which is an issue of great concern to physicians in my district. Still, I am concerned that the changes in pharmaceutical reimbursement proposed by the bill may unfairly impact independent pharmacies, and I am disappointed we will not get to vote on an alternative that would have the same budgetary impact without harming independent pharmacies.

I also question the priorities of singling out programs, such as Medicaid and food stamps, that benefit the neediest Americans, while continuing to increase spending on corporate welfare and foreign aid. Just two weeks ago, Congress passed a bill sending \$21 billion overseas. That is \$21 billion that will be spent this fiscal year, not spread out over five years. Then, last week, Congress passed, on suspension of the rules, a bill proposing to spend \$130 million on water projects—not in Texas, but in foreign nations. Meanwhile, the Financial Services Committee, on which I sit, has begun the process of reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank, which uses taxpayers' money to support business projects that cannot attract capital in the market. Mr. Speaker, the Export-Import Bank's biggest beneficiaries are Boeing and communist China. I find it hard to believe that federal funding that benefits Fortune 500 companies and China is a higher priority for most Americans than Medicaid and food stamps.

H.R. 4241 fails to address the root of the spending problem—the belief that Congress can solve any problem simply by creating a new federal program or agency. However, with the federal government's unfounded liabilities projected to reach as much as \$50 trillion by the end of this year, Congress can no longer avoid serious efforts to rein in spending. Instead of the smoke-and-mirrors approach of H.R. 4241, Congress should begin the journey

toward fiscal responsibility by declaring a 10 percent reduction in real spending, followed by a renewed commitment to reduce spending in a manner consistent with our obligation to uphold the Constitution and the priorities of the American people. This is the only way to make real progress on reducing spending without cutting programs for the poor while increasing funding for programs that benefit foreign governments and corporate interests.

□ 0115

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Pursuant to House Resolution 560, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on passage of H.R. 4241 will be followed by a 5-minute vote on suspending the rules and agreeing to House Resolution 546.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 217, noes 215, not voting 2, as follows:

[Roll No. 601]

AYES—217

Aderholt	Davis (KY)	Hayworth
Akin	Davis, Jo Ann	Hefley
Alexander	Davis, Tom	Hensarling
Bachus	Deal (GA)	Herger
Baker	DeLay	Hobson
Barrett (SC)	Dent	Hoekstra
Bartlett (MD)	Diaz-Balart, L.	Hostettler
Barton (TX)	Diaz-Balart, M.	Hulshof
Bass	Doolittle	Hunter
Beauprez	Drake	Hyde
Biggart	Dreier	Inglis (SC)
Bilirakis	Duncan	Issa
Bishop (UT)	Ehlers	Istook
Blackburn	Emerson	Jenkins
Blunt	English (PA)	Jindal
Boehlert	Everett	Johnson, Sam
Boehner	Feeney	Keller
Bonilla	Ferguson	Kelly
Bonner	Fitzpatrick (PA)	Kennedy (MN)
Bono	Flake	King (IA)
Boozman	Foley	King (NY)
Boustany	Forbes	Kingston
Bradley (NH)	Fortenberry	Kirk
Brady (TX)	Fossella	Kline
Brown (SC)	Fox	Knollenberg
Brown-Waite,	Franks (AZ)	Kolbe
Ginny	Frelinghuysen	Kuhl (NY)
Burgess	Gallely	LaHood
Burton (IN)	Garrett (NJ)	Latham
Buyer	Gibbons	LaTourette
Calvert	Gilchrest	Lewis (CA)
Camp	Gillmor	Lewis (KY)
Cannon	Gingrey	Linder
Cantor	Gohmert	LoBiondo
Capito	Goode	Lucas
Carter	Goodlatte	Lungren, Daniel
Castle	Granger	E.
Chabot	Graves	Mack
Chocola	Green (WI)	Manzullo
Coble	Gutknecht	Marchant
Cole (OK)	Hall	McCaul (TX)
Conaway	Harris	McCotter
Crenshaw	Hart	McCrery
Cubin	Hastert	McHenry
Culberson	Hastings (WA)	McKeon
Cunningham	Hayes	McMorris

Mica	Pryce (OH)	Smith (TX)
Miller (FL)	Putnam	Sodrel
Miller (MI)	Radanovich	Souder
Miller, Gary	Regula	Stearns
Moran (KS)	Rehberg	Sullivan
Murphy	Reichert	Tancredo
Musgrave	Renzi	Taylor (NC)
Myrick	Reynolds	Terry
Neugebauer	Rogers (AL)	Thomas
Northup	Rogers (KY)	Thornberry
Norwood	Rogers (MD)	Tiahrt
Nunes	Rohrabacher	Tiberi
Nussle	Ros-Lehtinen	Turner
Osborne	Royce	Upton
Otter	Ryan (WI)	Walden (OR)
Oxley	Ryun (KS)	Walsh
Pearce	Saxton	Wamp
Pence	Schmidt	Weldon (FL)
Peterson (PA)	Schwarz (MD)	Weldon (PA)
Petri	Sensenbrenner	Weller
Pickering	Sessions	Westmoreland
Pitts	Shadegg	Whitfield
Platts	Shaw	Wicker
Poe	Sherwood	Wilson (SC)
Pombo	Shimkus	Wolf
Porter	Shuster	Young (AK)
Price (GA)	Simpson	Young (FL)

NOES—215

Abercrombie	Green, Gene	Moran (VA)
Ackerman	Grijalva	Murtha
Allen	Gutierrez	Nadler
Andrews	Harman	Napolitano
Baca	Hastings (FL)	Neal (MA)
Baird	Herse	Ney
Baldwin	Higgins	Oberstar
Barrow	Hinche	Obey
Bean	Hinojosa	Olver
Becerra	Holden	Ortiz
Berkley	Holt	Owens
Berman	Honda	Pallone
Berry	Hooley	Pascarell
Bishop (GA)	Hoyer	Pastor
Bishop (NY)	Insee	Paul
Blumenauer	Israel	Payne
Boren	Jackson (IL)	Pelosi
Boucher	Jackson-Lee	Peterson (MN)
Boyd	(TX)	Pomeroy
Brady (PA)	Jefferson	Price (NC)
Brown (OH)	Johnson (CT)	Rahall
Brown, Corrine	Johnson (IL)	Ramstad
Butterfield	Johnson, E. B.	Rangel
Capps	Jones (NC)	Reyes
Capuano	Jones (OH)	Ross
Cardin	Kanjorski	Rothman
Cardoza	Kaptur	Roybal-Allard
Carnahan	Kennedy (RI)	Ruppersberger
Carson	Kildee	Rush
Case	Kilpatrick (MI)	Ryan (OH)
Chandler	Kind	Sabo
Clay	Kucinich	Salazar
Cleaver	Langevin	Sánchez, Linda
Clyburn	Lantos	T.
Conyers	Larsen (WA)	Sanchez, Loretta
Cooper	Larson (CT)	Sanders
Costa	Leach	Schakowsky
Costello	Lee	Schiff
Cramer	Levin	Schwartz (PA)
Crowley	Lewis (GA)	Scott (GA)
Cuellar	Lipinski	Scott (VA)
Cummings	Loftgren, Zoe	Serrano
Davis (AL)	Lowey	Shays
Davis (CA)	Lynch	Sherman
Davis (FL)	Maloney	Simmons
Davis (IL)	Markey	Skelton
Davis (TN)	Marshall	Slaughter
DeFazio	Matheson	Smith (NJ)
DeGette	Matsui	Smith (WA)
Delahunt	McCarthy	Snyder
DeLauro	McCollum (MN)	Solis
Dicks	McDermott	Spratt
Dingell	McGovern	Stark
Doggett	McHugh	Strickland
Doyle	McIntyre	Stupak
Edwards	McKinney	Sweeney
Emanuel	McNulty	Tanner
Engel	Meehan	Tauscher
Eshoo	Meek (FL)	Taylor (MS)
Etheridge	Meeke (NY)	Thompson (CA)
Evans	Melancon	Thompson (MS)
Farr	Menendez	Tierney
Fattah	Michaud	Udall (CO)
Filner	Millender-	Udall (NM)
Ford	McDonald	Van Hollen
Frank (MA)	Miller (NC)	Velázquez
Gerlach	Miller, George	Viscosky
Gonzalez	Mollohan	Wasserman
Gordon	Moore (KS)	Schultz
Green, Al	Moore (WI)	Waters

Watson	Weiner	Woolsey
Watt	Wexler	Wu
Waxman	Wilson (NM)	Wynn

NOT VOTING—2

Boswell

Towns

□ 0141

Mr. GUTIERREZ changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

Mr. GILCHREST and Mr. LaTOURETTE changed their vote from “no” to “aye.”

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONDEMNING TERRORIST  
ATTACKS IN JORDAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 546, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 546, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 409, nays 0, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 602]

YEAS—409

Abercrombie	Burgess	DeFazio
Ackerman	Burton (IN)	DeGette
Aderholt	Butterfield	Delahunt
Akin	Buyer	DeLauro
Alexander	Calvert	DeLay
Allen	Camp	Dent
Andrews	Cannon	Diaz-Balart, L.
Baca	Cantor	Diaz-Balart, M.
Bachus	Capito	Dingell
Baird	Capps	Doolittle
Baldwin	Capuano	Doyle
Barrett (SC)	Cardin	Drake
Barrow	Cardoza	Dreier
Bartlett (MD)	Carnahan	Duncan
Barton (TX)	Carson	Edwards
Bass	Carter	Ehlers
Beauprez	Case	Emanuel
Becerra	Castle	Emerson
Berkley	Chabot	Engel
Berman	Chandler	English (PA)
Berry	Chocola	Eshoo
Biggart	Cleaver	Etheridge
Bilirakis	Clyburn	Evans
Bishop (GA)	Coble	Everett
Bishop (NY)	Cole (OK)	Farr
Bishop (UT)	Conaway	Fattah
Blackburn	Conyers	Feeney
Blumenauer	Cooper	Ferguson
Blunt	Costa	Filner
Boehlert	Costello	Fitzpatrick (PA)
Bonilla	Cramer	Flake
Bonner	Crenshaw	Foley
Bono	Crowley	Forbes
Boozman	Cubin	Ford
Boren	Cuellar	Fortenberry
Boucher	Culberson	Fossella
Boustany	Cummings	Fox
Boyd	Cunningham	Frank (MA)
Bradley (NH)	Davis (AL)	Frank (AZ)
Brady (PA)	Davis (CA)	Frelinghuysen
Brady (TX)	Davis (FL)	Gallely
Brown (OH)	Davis (IL)	Garrett (NJ)
Brown (SC)	Davis (KY)	Gerlach
Brown, Corrine	Davis (TN)	Gibbons
Brown-Waite,	Davis, Tom	Gilchrest
Ginny	Deal (GA)	Gillmor