

Additionally, Dr. Edwin Gullekson will be honored as the CAC 2005 Physician of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud these wonderful men and women for all they have done for others. Through their actions, they ensure that our children are able to enjoy healthy, productive, and safe lives, and I ask my colleagues in the 109th Congress to please join me in recognizing their heroic efforts.

HONORING CUB SCOUT PACK 88 OF
THE BSA'S DES PLAINES VALLEY
COUNCIL AND THEIR 60
YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Cub Scout Pack 88 of the Boy Scouts of America's Des Plaines Valley Council on their 60th anniversary.

In 1930, the Boy Scouts of America created a new opportunity called Cub Scouting for boys younger than Boy Scout age. A year-round, home-centered program used by chartered organizations, Cub Scouting emphasizes involvement between boys and their parents, adult leaders, and friends. In the multidimensional plan of the Boy Scouts of America, Cub Scouting is where it all begins.

For the past 60 years, Cub Scout Pack 88 has been a cornerstone of service in the Des Plaines Valley communities. They have combined fun with educational activities and life-long values. Parents and sons of Pack 88 spend quality time together going places, doing projects, talking, and reading. Pack 88 also provides a healthy, safe environment in which boys learn important values and develop self-confidence.

For these reasons, it is my honor to recognize Cub Scout Pack 88 on their 60th anniversary. I look forward to many more years of their continued service to our community and our youth.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the majority should be absolutely ashamed of the bill before us today. It is simply unconscionable that the majority is not only moving forward with reconciliation but that they are increasing cuts all under the guise of paying for Hurricane Katrina relief. Under their rules, they won't even allow amendments to this monstrosity—shutting down any meaningful opportunity of offering even slight improvements to this bill. The fact of the matter is that the irresponsible tax cuts for the wealthy have run our country's fiscal order into the red with over \$8 trillion in debt. Even before Hurricane Katrina, the budget resolution called for \$35 billion in cuts to programs for the poor to partially offset the \$106 billion in tax cuts in the same budget resolution. The math simply doesn't add up.

It is interesting that the majority continues to use terms like personal responsibility when justifying the draconian cuts to services, cruel penalties and cost sharing for the poor that will essentially block access to care while failing to exercise the same responsibility in their own fiscal disorder. The general fund of the Government of the United States is paid for with borrowed money, over \$1 billion a day. To make ends meet while continuing to pass tax cuts, we borrow heavily from China, Japan and other foreign nations, knowing full well our children and grandchildren will one day be saddled with our debt. In the meantime, they pretend we can shore up our economy with a few simple reforms that will have devastating consequences for the most vulnerable children, seniors and other impoverished people, which won't really affect the trillions of dollars of debt created by the majority's fiscal irresponsibility.

What is irresponsible are the billions of dollars in cuts the majority is making to the Medicaid program. We already have 45 million uninsured Americans. Without Medicaid and SCHIP, the percentage of uninsured Americans, including children, would be a lot higher. As we all know, health care coverage isn't meaningful unless it is accessible and comprehensive. The proposals included in this bill will undoubtedly prove to be a barrier to care as it permits States to significantly increase the amounts Medicaid beneficiaries payout of pocket for premiums and copayments for healthcare services, again, all in the name of personal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, but what about the low-income mother trying to care for her family by stretching her budget to cover housing, electricity, clothing and now increased cost-sharing and copayments for medical care? Why are we setting her up for failure when she has to make choices between her medical care and her children and her utility bills, all important to the wellbeing of her and her family? How have we fulfilled our professional responsibility if we put her in the position of making these impossible choices? I can assure you, these mothers are as familiar with personal responsibility and strapped budgets as any Member of Congress in this room.

Part of the problem that I have with these proposals are that the "reforms" are budget driven in that the solutions offered are far less important than the anticipated savings associated with them. I urge this committee to scrap these massive changes to Medicaid. While there are certainly ways to modernize, improve, and reform this program, it must be done with the compassion and thoughtful consideration it deserves.

A sensible improvement to this bill would be to permit early treatment under Medicaid to those with HIV. Under current Medicaid rules, most HIV positive people must meet both an income standard and be disabled—by AIDS—before they can receive access to Medicaid provided care and treatment that could have prevented them from becoming ill so quickly. This policy runs counter to current Federal HIV treatment guidelines which call for early access to medical care and treatment including the use of combination antiretroviral therapy. Medical costs for those with advanced AIDS are significantly higher than costs for caring for HIV positive people, and this is a burden on the States' Medicaid budgets.

I offered an amendment in the Energy and Commerce Committee markup for Medicaid

reform to give States the OPTION of amending their Medicaid eligibility requirements to include uninsured, pre-disabled low-income people living with HIV. ETHA, which has been introduced by Leader PELOSI in prior Congresses and Senator SMITH and Senator CLINTON in the Senate, is modeled after the successful Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act, BCCA, that allows States to provide early access to Medicaid to women with cancer. Forty nine States have implemented the BCCA, designed to preserve health and prevent unnecessary and high-cost medical interventions. As with the BCCA, ETHA includes an enhanced Federal match rate of 65 percent to 83 percent to encourage States to participate in offering the services.

Although my amendment failed in committee, Senators CLINTON and SMITH successfully offered a demonstration version of the Early Treatment for HIV Act on the Senate floor. I tried to offer that amendment on the House floor but the Republican leadership would not permit any amendments. It is my fervent hope that this provision survives conference.

Outside of the jurisdiction of the Energy and Commerce Committee, on which I serve, are even more cruel cuts to working families and vulnerable populations. Billions in cuts to student aid programs, child support enforcement, foster care and SSI disability payments. They cut food stamps, eliminated nutritional school lunch and breakfast programs for hundreds of thousands of families and children—the list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, you should be ashamed to allow our Congress to even consider such proposals, let alone vote on them, while continuing to promote tax cuts for the wealthy. I vote "no" on this monstrosity and urge my colleagues to do the same.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Budget Reconciliation Bill, H.R. 4241, reported on a partisan basis by the House Committee on the Budget.

My colleagues have already highlighted many of the harsh cuts that would be made in this bill. These include, but are not limited to, cuts in Medicaid spending of nearly \$12 billion, cuts in the student loan program of more than \$14 billion, \$840 million in cuts in the food stamp programs, \$4.9 billion in cuts to the State child support enforcement programs, \$577 million in cuts to the foster care program and \$470 million in cuts to the Federal housing rehab program.

Let's be very clear on this point. These cuts will do nothing to reduce our growing deficit and, despite what many Republicans have tried to claim, they will not offset the costs we will rightly incur to recover from the catastrophic devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

In fact, while cutting almost \$50 billion in much needed social programs for the most needy, the bill "reconciles" another \$70 billion

in tax cuts for the absolute least needy—adding another \$16–20 billion to the Federal deficit. So I ask, what sense does this heartless bill make?

While I am glad the manager's amendment tries to soften the blow to the vulnerable by making sure that children who currently receive school lunches will not be cut off, as well as by making other small vote garnering changes to the Medicaid and food stamp programs, these are small pluses that do very little to outweigh the many minuses of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, to achieve this deficit increase, the budget reconciliation bill before us today would cut precisely those programs that help the poor, the sick, the weak, and the young so that the wealthiest among us can receive additional tax cuts.

Let me review for a moment what the tax cuts already enacted have done to our Nation.

According to the Urban Institute-Brookings Institution Tax Policy Center, as a result of the tax cuts implemented by the administration and by the Republican leadership in Congress to date, households with incomes exceeding \$1 million can expect to receive tax cuts this year that will average \$103,000.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, after adjusting for inflation, the after-tax income of the 1 percent of tax filers with the highest incomes rose by nearly \$49,000 in 2003 while the lowest 75 percent of tax filers saw their incomes decrease in 2002.

Not surprisingly, as income disparity has grown, the poverty rate in this Nation has increased from 11.7 percent in 2001 to 12.7 percent in 2004, and there are now more than 37 million Americans living in poverty in this Nation, including 13 million children.

Further, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, last year there were more than 38 million individuals living in households that at some point during the year were food "insecure," meaning that they were unable to afford to buy enough food to feed themselves.

On September 16, President Bush traveled to New Orleans to announce a bold and ambitious plan to rebuild the gulf coast region following the hurricanes. During his speech, the President acknowledged that poverty and indifference had left so many of our fellow Americans vulnerable to the hurricanes in the gulf region.

Unfortunately, the budget reconciliation bill before us illustrates in the starkest possible terms that as the storm and its revelations about our society begin to fade from the front pages to the back pages, the Republican leadership of this House has chosen to repudiate the President's commitment to address poverty.

Rather than embrace the President's call for action, the Republican leaders of this House have put forward a bill that will continue policies of neglect and indifference in service to what they see as the greater good: continued tax cuts for the wealthiest in this Nation.

The budget reconciliation act before us presents a stark choice for all Members of the House of Representatives—between supporting tax cuts for the wealthiest among us or opposing reductions in our already thin social safety net.

I urge my colleagues to make the moral choice today. Budgets reflect the moral compass of a nation. This budget reconciliation package is devoid of humanity and compas-

sion and would take our Nation far off course of helping its neediest citizens. I urge my colleagues to stand with the children, the elderly, and the vulnerable of our Nation by voting against this reconciliation act.

If its passage occurs, I implore the conferees to be compassionate and fair and to restore and maintain the social safety net for our neediest citizens.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my opposition to and concern about the devastating cuts to essential services passed in this House today as part of the budget reconciliation package.

The cuts this body adopted today will have disastrous impacts on the western New York communities I represent. The unnecessary cuts to health, education and children's programs will be particularly hard felt in and among the working families of Erie and Chautauqua Counties.

The ranks of the uninsured continue to swell in this country, and more and more Americans are concerned that someday they may find themselves without health insurance and unable to afford needed care. In fact, over 45 million Americans are currently without health insurance. Medicaid represents this government's promise to provide health care to Americans who can least afford it. Over 4 million New Yorkers are enrolled in this quite literally life-saving program, including 1.8 million children. I voted against the bill today because it will cut Medicaid spending by more than \$11 billion. That's an \$11 billion cut from caring for children suffering from leukemia, from pregnant mothers struggling to survive and from mentally disabled men and women trying to make a place for themselves in our communities; we should not make our budget cuts on their backs. Instead, we should be increasing health care access to more Americans, not fewer. If Medicaid is expanding, it's because fewer Americans can afford health insurance, let's not deny them the only access to care available to them.

I am also concerned that this legislation cuts over \$14 billion from successful Federal student loan programs—the largest cuts ever to student aid. This is the wrong cut at the wrong time, because college costs continue to skyrocket with no end in sight. In fact tuition at 4-year public colleges has increased 46 percent since 2001. Children from working families in Erie and Chautauqua Counties, and over 470,000 students across the State, depend on these loans to afford college and they depend on college as the key to economic opportunity. These cuts will needlessly deny that opportunity to young people in western New York who want to go to Medaille, Canisius, the University of Buffalo, my alma mater, Buffalo State, and others.

The reconciliation package is also an abdication of our responsibility to children. The bill cuts child support enforcement by almost \$5 billion, abandoning single parents and rolling back the progress our society has made in

this field. Children are not responsible for divorce or for parents abandoning their families. Let's not turn back the clock and make them carry that responsibility. The bill cuts \$577 million from foster care programs. And perhaps most troubling, it cuts \$796 million from food stamps, which represent our promise that amid this country's great wealth, no American child, whether in the cold winters of Erie County or the sun baked mountains of Arizona, should starve.

What is perhaps most objectionable about this process is the doubletalk used to sell these cuts. While we have been told that these spending cuts are necessary to reduce the deficit, they do nothing of the sort. Instead, the \$50 billion in spending cuts are coupled with \$106 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. That means that all of these cuts, all of them, will be used to pay for irresponsible tax cuts that we can't afford and that do not put money back in the pockets of my hard-working constituents in Buffalo; not one dime will actually go to reduce the deficit.

In fact, this reconciliation process will increase, not decrease, the deficit. I agree that it is well past time for Congress to put our fiscal house in order, but to call this package a deficit reduction measure at best makes no sense, and at worst is patently dishonest. We need to do better by the American people and I pledge to do better for the people of Western New York. Frankly, they do not deserve this bad budget.

Mr. Speaker, I object to the cuts this House adopted today, and I object to the slight of hand used to sell them.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, most Americans watching their televisions looked on in horror at the extent of the poverty and desperation among the victims of Hurricane Katrina. President Bush and congressional Republicans apparently looked at these pictures with indifference and disdain.

I am forced to believe this because their budget bill—the so-called Deficit Reduction Act—aims to cut more than \$50 billion from nearly every poverty program this country offers for the sake of later passing approximately \$60 billion in tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

Sadly, their recent actions fit neatly with their track record. Since the Republicans gained control of both the White House and Congress in 2001, 1.7 million more Americans live in poverty, average median income has declined \$1,700, and the minimum wage—which has not been increased since 1997—has its lowest purchasing power since 1990.

This budget continues the Republican trend of failing the American people in every possible way.

The Republican budget requires poor mothers with children under age 6 to double their weekly work hours from 20 to 40 in order to remain eligible for job training and vocational education. Yet, it fails to provide \$10.5 billion for childcare funding which the non-partisan