

oil industry, and in the minds of U.S. policy-makers, that counts for a lot.

□ 1400

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GINGREY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KIRK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HURRICANE WILMA AND RECONCILIATION

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a crisis in South Florida.

The third most destructive hurricane ever to hit this country struck my congressional district just over 2 weeks ago. Thousands of people are still without power, thousands still have holes in their roofs that threaten to condemn their houses with every new rain.

Thousands have mobility issues and are without housing because they cannot get up and down the stairs to their apartment. The list goes on and on, and it is truly heart wrenching.

Just last week I was delivering meals to seniors in my district who could not get out of their third floor condominiums. Even though it was 5 days after the hurricane struck South Florida, the residents there said that no one had heard from FEMA, no one had seen FEMA and, worse yet, no one knew how to get in touch with FEMA to make sure things did not get any worse.

And why do I fear that things could get worse? Because of problems like this. This is a third floor apartment, that is the ceiling of the apartment, and as we can see, you can look right through the ceiling at the sky.

This is the woman's master bedroom and literally during the storm, 1 minute after she walked out of that master bedroom the ceiling came down on her bed. The roof caved in. A minute earlier and it would have caved in on her.

Obviously, this apartment is uninhabitable. However, this is a three-story building. If we delay the disaster response, if we do not get FEMA tarp distribution centers set up right away, if we wait weeks before we deliver individual assistance, then not only are we saying to the woman that lived in this unit, tough it out, you are on your own for now, but we are also making the problem worse because there are two floors below this apartment unit.

If it rains through this massive hole in the ceiling in this woman's apartment, then it will leak down onto the apartments on the second floor and possibly weaken the structure, leading to the evacuation of everyone in that part of building. And that is beginning to happen; this is what is happening. Our ineffective response is not only irresponsible, but it also costs the taxpayers more money than necessary.

Now, I have been talking about a natural disaster, which is Hurricane Wilma. But I also want to talk a minute about a man-made disaster that is coming, something that will victimize once again the victims of Hurricane Wilma, Katrina and Rita. I am talking about the Draconian budget cuts proposed by the Republican leadership in their so-called budget reconciliation package.

Last week, the papers in South Florida blared the news that over 5,000 people's homes had been condemned, much of it affordable housing. In Broward County the median price of a home is \$348,000, making many homes and even rental apartments out of reach for thousands of south Floridians.

While the loss of 5,000 homes damaged by Hurricane Wilma is terrible, I would like to point out that the budget reconciliation package endorsed by the Republican leadership eliminates affordable housing vouchers for 3,500 people in Florida alone.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, while Hurricane Wilma made 5,000 Florida families homeless last week, the Republican leadership is proposing cuts that would make 3,500 more Florida families homeless. So first we get hit by Katrina, then we get hit by Wilma and either this week or next the American people will get hit by Hurricane Republican.

Hurricanes are natural disasters, Mr. Speaker. What we will be debating in the House this week or next is a man-made disaster, a man-made disaster that not only would leave 3,500 Florida families homeless through cuts to Section 8 housing vouchers, but also, incredibly, would cut \$58.9 million in elementary and secondary education funds for Florida students, \$4.9 million in cuts for supplemental nutrition programs for women infants and children,

\$25.1 million in cuts for children and families.

These are funds that provide for the Head Start program and help abused and neglected children. Cutting funds for abused and neglected children, what are we coming to here?

I urge my colleagues to vote against a man-made disaster that will originate from this body this week and sweep across the country, displacing thousands of people nationwide. I urge them to vote against the Republican budget reconciliation package.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the upcoming special order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, there is a bill in the wings called the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, its fate yet to be determined because it is not at all clear that there are enough votes in this body to pass it.

Basically, this bill is part of the budget resolution for 2006, and what it anticipates is a three-step process except that those steps are treated very separately and in isolation. The first step is what the bill I am talking about proposes, that is, reductions in mandatory spending, so-called "entitlement spending," of about \$54 billion.

The second step to follow is a reduction in taxes in the amount of \$106 billion. That is what the budget resolution calls for. As a consequence, this bill does not achieve its stated name, which is the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Instead, by cutting taxes by more than they cut spending, it leads to a deficit that is \$52 billion bigger than would otherwise be the case. That is the second step.

And then there is a third step in this bill that is not much talked about, but it is written into the bill, written into the budget resolution for 2006, and that is an increase in the debt ceiling of the United States by \$781 billion. That is what happens when you have tax cuts that are not adequately matched by spending cuts. The deficit gets worse, and the bottom line is, \$781 billion will have to be added to the debt ceiling of the United States, the legal limit to which we bill because of the fiscal policies we have followed for the last 5 years.

Now, some supporters claim that this bill, the so-called Deficit Reduction

Act of 2005, will go to help pay for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In truth, this bill has nothing to do with paying for Katrina. It has everything to do, as I said, with facilitating further tax cuts.

This bill is part of a larger budget resolution that calls, as I have said, for a total of \$106 billion in additional tax cuts yet to come, but nevertheless called for in the budget resolution. \$70 billion will come in reconciled tax cuts, which means they will be on a fast track. They will go through the Senate without threat of filibuster. \$36 billion are in unreconciled tax cuts. The total is \$106 billion.

As I have said, this is a three-step process. The original purpose of reconciliation was to rein in the deficit. But the reconciliation bill this year, the one that is waiting in the wings, the one we are addressing today, only raises the deficits for the reasons I have just mentioned.

Now, if we do not acknowledge this, but if you take the position that these cuts are somehow going to facilitate the appropriations we have passed and will pass to pay for Hurricane Katrina and Rita, one would have to say that if we are going to do that—and I think we should somehow, over time, have a plan for paying the enormous sums we are borrowing to reconstruct the gulf coast—if we are going to do that, we should spread the cost equitably over our whole population. And that is what we want to address today, more than anything, and that is how the costs are being spread, how the costs are being allocated. Whether you take the attitude that this goes to pay for Katrina or goes to offset tax cuts, who bears the brunt? Will it be those who are able to bear the brunt or those who are vulnerable and least able to bear the brunt?

Unfortunately, and this is a point we will make again and again and demonstrate the facts to prove our case, unfortunately, the brunt of this bill will come to rest on the shoulders of those who are least able to bear it.

In that respect, I now recognize the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) to discuss the implications of this bill.

Mr. CASE. I thank my colleague.

Watch out, watch out, America, because the majority's and the President's spin machine is in overdrive on this bill. Yes, the majority's budget reconciliation bill brazenly and erroneously entitled the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, what a laugh, is hitting the floor, or we think it is going to hit the floor.

We will hear in coming days what a brave and revolutionary bill this is. Wrong. This is a cowardly bill, a hurtful bill, and it continues the majority's policies which, in the course of 4 short years have wrecked a once strong budget.

We will hear that this bill is the only way to go. Wrong. This is the way to go if your goal is to help the few at the expense of the rest of us and without regard to basic fiscal responsibility.

We have heard that this bill will decrease the budget. Watch the numbers on this bill. This bill does not decrease the budget deficit. This bill worsens the deficit, worsens it substantially.

This bill is really about credibility. It is a matter of credibility, of who has the best overall plan to balance our Nation's books and restore fiscal stability. Is it the same people who over the last couple of years told us that "deficits do not matter"? I do not think so. Is it the same people who are presiding over the most rapid increase in Federal spending in 40 years? I do not think so. Is it the same people who keep raiding the Social Security trust fund for non-Social Security purposes, and then turning around and saying it is okay, saying do not worry about it, but also introducing a bill to radically reduce benefits in order to make up for the stolen amounts? I do not think so.

Is it the same people who pretend that a 1-year deficit of over \$300 billion, almost \$500 billion if you are counting the Social Security trust fund monies that were raided to boost up the revenues, is it those people? I do not think so. Is it the same people that increased your debt, your total debt, from \$6 trillion when I joined Congress just 3 years ago to \$8 trillion today and now another almost \$1 trillion in this bill itself? I do not think so.

We want to balance the budget. We know that this will take careful and painful balancing of revenues and expenses. But we do not trust the majority and the administration with this bill because we do not believe that you have shown you can be trusted with America's books, that you will not put all of your sacred cows on the table just as we are willing to put our sacred cows on the table.

When you are truly ready to put everything on the table with us, then I believe that we can have a constructive discussion. Until then, your bill is junk in, junk out. When you are ready to get real about what it is going to take to truly balance our books, let us know.

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

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, more than slogans, sound bites and speeches, far more important for Members of Congress is what we do when it comes to expressing our values. What we do in this budget will say more about the values of Members of Congress than any speech given on the floor of the House this year.

It is interesting and it is sad that while last week we honored Rosa Parks as the first woman in American history to lie in state in the Rotunda of our Nation's Capitol, just a few days later, this House leadership will dishonor all that she stood for. How? By cutting child support, by cutting foster family programs, by cutting 40,000 students off of school lunch programs, by robbing \$14.3 billion from student financial aid to give our hard-working, high-achieving youth a chance for better life

through a college education, and by cutting health care programs for low-income families.

Rosa Parks did not just fight for a seat on the bus. She fought for fairness for every American, and to see that every child has a chance, a fair chance, to reach his or her highest God-given potential.

This legislation is an attack upon those high principles. The mean-spirited cuts in this bill will hurt decent, hard-working American families who are doing their best to help their children have a better life.

□ 1415

Why? Not to pay for Hurricane Katrina costs. The House leadership is doing this so that people making \$1 million a year this year in dividend income can continue to receive every dime of their \$220,000-a-year tax cut.

Mr. Speaker, if this is compassionate conservatism, where is the compassion? If this is a faith-based program, I would ask what major religion in the world preaches the values of taking the most from those who have the least and taking nothing from those who have the most?

This budget makes a mockery of the American values of fairness and shared sacrifice during time of war. Rosa Parks understood that actions speak far louder than words. The American people understand this. And I believe when the American people find that Republican leadership of this House wants to make college education less affordable for hard-working middle-income and lower-income children in this country; when Americans find out that they want to cut Medicaid health care services for pregnant women and take away school lunches from children who need a decent nutritional lunch in order to reach their highest God-given potential in school, I think they are going to be outraged.

This budget bill aptly, or should I say amazingly, named the Deficit Reduction Act, is actually going to raise the deficit as the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) said by \$52 billion.

Mr. Speaker, if there were a law against dishonesty in naming legislation before this House, anyone who votes for this bill would deserve a felony conviction. This bill is wrong for America. It does not reflect the values of the vast majority of good, decent, hard-working American citizens, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike. More than anything I have seen in my 14 years in Congress, I believe this budget bill shows that the House Republican leadership is truly out of touch with the American people.

Let us say "yes" to the future of this country. Let us say "yes" to lower deficit. Let us say "yes" to hard-working college students and to families who want to have a dream for a better life for their children by saying "no" to this unfair, unwise, ill-thought-out budget bill.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) for his leadership on this very important matter. When we talk about the cuts contained in this reconciliation bill, they sound like such large numbers. It is very hard to relate to. When we talk about cutting student loans \$14 billion and Medicaid \$11 billion, child support enforcement \$4.9 billion, food stamps \$844 million, it is very difficult to get your arms wrapped around those numbers because they seem so extraordinary that they become almost distant and nonnumbers.

But I can tell you for the people that I represent, and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) has been to Nevada, he has been to my congressional district, he knows what I am dealing with there. In real human terms, when you cut that much out of Medicaid over 200,000 Nevadans, poor Nevadans that depend on Medicaid so that they can have their basic health care needs met, they are going to be plum out of luck. And there are 18,000 students that are going to be affected by cuts in the student loan program. What does that mean?

I went through school on student loans. I am the first person in my family to go to college. My dad was a waiter when I was growing up and money was pretty scarce in our home. There is no way my parents could have afforded to put me through college and law school. So what did I do? I depended on those student loans. So as a Member of Congress I am going to cut the opportunity for middle-class Americans to send their kids to school? That would be the worst possible thing to do. And over the next 5 years funding in Nevada that we receive for child support collection is going to be cut by \$60 million. What does that mean? That means that we will have a whole lot of deadbeat dads in Nevada that are not going to have to live up to their responsibilities to pay child support because there will be no way to force them to do that. And that would be horrible for the families that these people, that these men are leaving.

When we talk about the school lunch program, there are going to be 40,000 children who are going to be impacted if we cut that school lunch program. Now, I am sorry to say, but there are a lot of people in my congressional district that the only meal that these kids get, the only decent, warm meal they get is the one that they get when they go to school with the school lunch program. These cuts would have devastating consequences on ordinary Americans, people that elect us to come here to protect and defend them and to give them a helping hand.

This is not a helping hand. This is a slap in the face to all Americans. And I know from my own constituents, it is going to have devastating consequences.

But there is something that I really want to talk to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) about because I am not sure that I understand, so maybe I am wrong. As you know I have got the fastest-growing senior population in the United States. We have been told, not threatened by the doctors, but we have been told by doctors because of the decline in Medicare payments for treating older Americans, senior citizens, that many of the doctors are not going to be able to treat Medicare patients. So that means that I have a whole lot of senior citizens, 65 years and above, that depend on Medicare so that they can go see their doctor.

Now, if I have got doctors and we have got doctors across this country telling us, telling us they can no longer afford to treat Medicare patients. So the other body acted responsibly and they put the requisite amount of money that they needed in order to help the doctors so that the doctors can continue treating older Americans, treating our senior citizens and helping with their health care needs. This body, the Republican leadership here does not include this in our budget reconciliation because they want to get to that \$50 billion magic number for whatever reason and they are going to do that on the backs of the doctors and the senior citizens in this country.

But here is the rub: my husband is a doctor. He is a nephrologist. He treats a lot of older Americans. He just received an alert from the American Medical Association saying that we need this desperately. We need the Medicare reimbursement fund so we can continue treating our senior patients, but the Republican leadership in the House says that they are not going to put this in the reconciliation bill. But do not worry, doctors, we are going to go ahead and we will put it in Labor HHS.

If I am not mistaken, we already passed Labor HHS and there is no reimbursement for our doctors for care for senior citizens. So I do not understand where they think this money is going to be magically coming from.

The reality is it is going to cost \$10.8 billion in order to get the doctors to where they need to be to treat senior citizens. We are doing the smoke-and-mirror thing. If we are doing a budget reconciliation thing here but we are still winking at the doctors and saying, oh, do not worry, docs, we will take care of you down the road, how are we going to do that? Where are we going to find the money? Does it not come from the same pot? \$10 billion is \$10 billion, whether it is in budget reconciliation, which would be the more honest place to put it, or whether it is down the road in a piece of legislation that we have already passed.

This is not at all fiscal responsibility. I have heard Republican after Republican come down here and talk about how they will put money in Americans' pockets and they need to

cut the Federal Government's budget. That is nonsense. They are not doing that at all. What they are doing is deferring it. They would like to have this \$50 billion pot of money so they can go back during the election and brag that they are actually saving taxpayers money.

They are not saving taxpayers. They are hurting taxpayers. They are hurting the people that we represent, and this is not fiscal responsibility. This is fantasy.

Am I wrong in this? Do I have my facts wrong?

Mr. SPRATT. The gentlewoman is not only right. She is forcefully correct. She is absolutely right, no question about it.

Ms. BERKLEY. So what should we do about this? Is this not a bit dishonest for the Republican leadership?

Mr. SPRATT. That is what we are doing now is alerting everyone to the contents of this reconciliation bill which is hanging in the wings, pretending under the name of "deficit reduction" to be about fiscal responsibility when it is anything but that.

Ms. BERKLEY. Well, I find it absolutely fascinating, and I know being married to a doctor that doctors are about the worst politicians in the world. They do not understand this political process. But they have gravitated over to the Republican side of the aisle when they were talking about tort reform, although it is my opinion as a doctor's wife, the other side never had any intentions of passing meaningful tort reform for the doctors. They just kept them hanging on a string.

This, which is the AMA's number one priority, to make sure that the doctors are getting appropriately reimbursed for treating Medicare patients, senior patients, this is so much worse for the doctors. And they are still playing games with the doctors, playing games with the seniors, playing games with the American public by saying wink, wink, we will take care of you later.

Let us take care of the docs and the senior citizens now when we should, in front of full view, in the daytime, in the light of day; and let us stop this nonsense of trying to sneak money in through the back door. It is disgusting and shameful.

Mr. SPRATT. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I appreciate the opportunity to speak out on this poorly named reconciliation bill which will expand the Federal deficit and does enormous damage to people in this country. When 8.2 million children in America do not have health insurance, cutting Medicaid is wrong. When millions of children in America are abused and neglected, cutting child protection is wrong. When millions of children do not have access to early childhood programs, cutting child care is wrong.

Let us go back over these areas. Medicaid, the House bill would allow States to charge low-income working families substantial new premiums and co-payments in order for their children to participate in the Medicaid program, access health care services, or obtain prescription drugs. While the House bill would permit States to impose costly new fees on nearly all Medicaid beneficiaries, those most likely to face significantly higher premiums and co-payments are the 6 million children who receive their health care through the Medicaid program and whose families have income just above the poverty line or above 133 percent of the poverty line for children under six. Most families with incomes just above the poverty line are working families struggling to get by.

Let us turn to child support and foster care. CBO projects that the cuts in Federal Child Support Enforcement funding will mean that an additional \$24 billion in child support will go uncollected. In this Congress we have been so proud in the past that we have finally been able to create a system in this country so that deadbeat dads will be forced to pay the child support that the courts have ordered them to pay. Now, in this Republican budget, they have decided that they are going to reduce dramatically the support for child support funding.

In addition, the House budget reconciliation bill would reduce Federal supports for children in foster care and for grandparents and other relatives who are taking care of these children. This cut comes at a time when the overall child welfare system is struggling to address the needs of over 800,000 children in need.

When you look at this package, it is beyond belief. Their food stamp cuts, reductions in food stamps, that will mean 225,000 individuals, according to the Congressional Budget Office, most of whom live in low-income working families, will be cut off the food stamp program. Basically, when you take this whole package together, you have a reconciliation bill described as a deficit reduction bill which increases the deficit. But what we are really talking about here is sacrifice.

We have been saying for years that if you do trillions of dollars of tax cuts mostly for the wealthiest people in this country, when you spend a billion and a half dollars a week in Iraq, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are simply borrowed money, finally, the Republicans say we have to sacrifice. And the people at the head of the line to sacrifice are our children, the disabled, people from low-income families, that is who the Republicans want to sacrifice to pay for the tax cuts to pay for Iraq and to pay for Katrina.

□ 1430

There is no more immoral set of priorities in this country than what we see in this bill today and what we see in the Republican agenda in the House.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I now yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) leading this discussion of what is wrong with the Republican reconciliation bill, and I agree there is devastating harm from the cuts to Medicaid, student loans, and food stamps. Cutting these programs that assist low-income and middle-income families to help pay for the tax cuts for the very wealthiest is simply unconscionable. These are all good reasons to vote “no” for this bill.

I want to talk about something else that is contained in this bill that has not gotten as much attention. That is the Republican proposal to allow new offshore oil drilling around large parts of the country, the so-called OCS provisions that have come out of the Resources Committee.

I want to direct my remarks to my Republican colleagues from coastal States. I do so because coastal-State Republicans will either stop this provision or allow it to become law.

Let us be frank. Democrats are not going to vote for this bill, and that means that coastal Republicans will decide whether or not we have new drilling off our coasts. These are Republicans in Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and New Hampshire on the East Coast. On the West Coast, Republicans from California, Oregon and Washington all need to stand up for their coastal communities.

All we need are 15 or 20 of them to tell their leadership that they are going to vote “no” on the bill unless the oil drilling provisions are removed. These provisions are not included in this Senate bill, and if they are taken out of the House bill, then we will not see them in the final conference report. It is really that simple.

I know that some Members are tempted to buy the argument made by proponents of lifting this ban. Governor Jeb Bush and others are saying that this gives States control over their coasts and that new drilling everywhere is inevitable, but those arguments just do not hold water. Here is the straight story.

Among its many provisions, the bill ends the annual congressional moratorium immediately, including the one we just passed and was so recently signed into law.

Section 6515 of the bill states: “All provisions of existing Federal law prohibiting the spending of appropriated funds to conduct oil and natural gas leasing and preleasing activity for any area of the OCS shall have no force or effect.”

This provision permanently removes Congress from any future decisions about offshore oil drilling. Theoretically, the bill leaves the Presidential moratorium in place until 2012, but

this President or whoever follows him could end that whenever he or she wants.

Section 6509 of the bill specifically gives the President the authority to partially or completely revoke the existing Presidential moratorium before 2012. I am not a betting person, but I would wager that if Congress ends this moratorium, President Bush would quickly follow suit. That would mean the immediate end to the ban now in place on new offshore drilling off Florida, New Jersey, and all the other coastal States.

In addition, after expiration or revocation of the Presidential moratorium, States lose all control over drilling conducted beyond 125 miles offshore. That is 75 miles closer than current law. To be fair, it does allow the States that support drilling to have some control, but this at the expense of their neighbor. For example, the bill completely rewrites the Coastal Zone Management Act’s Federal consistency review authority.

Section 6503 of the bill replaces the definition of “affected State” under the OCS Lands Act with a new, weaker definition for adjacent States. That means if Virginia wants new oil drilling off its coast, North Carolina, Maryland or Delaware would have no say in the matter, even though drilling off Virginia would clearly affect those States. The same holds true if Alabama or Georgia wants to drill and Florida does not.

Supporters of the bill say that the bill helps States that oppose new drilling as well, but that is just wrong. If President Bush repeals the moratorium, a State can supposedly petition to extend the moratorium off its shores for 5 years, but that requires repeated action and complex steps. Even if a State makes the request, the Federal Government could simply say “no” and drilling would begin off Florida or New Jersey or any other of these States.

Under the current administration, I do not think it is hard to imagine that that would happen.

Even if the Feds grant the extension, the protection would only be temporary for 5 years, with one-time renewal. After that, no more moratorium on new drilling anywhere.

Under this bill, we would literally see the push for new drilling on the entire United States coastline almost immediately upon enactment.

So this is what we are left with if Republicans allow this bill to become law: No congressional moratorium on new drilling; a Presidential moratorium that can and would likely be withdrawn immediately; no limits on drilling in neighboring States that might want to drill; and a cumbersome process for States that do not want new drilling and one that could simply be ignored by the Federal Government. It does not sound like protection for coastal States to me.

Coastal State Republicans can stop this. I urge them to stand up for their

communities and tell their leadership to take these OCS provisions out; and if the new drilling provisions are included in the bill, I urge them, along with us, to vote ‘no.’

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her statement, and I now yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY).

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn this fiscally irresponsible and morally offensive budget proposal which violates every principle of responsible government.

This budget reconciliation bill, as presented by the majority leadership, is a pathetic attempt to disguise their real intentions to pass another bloated windfall for the wealthiest Americans at the expense of millions who are already suffering great hardships.

It is shameful that the same leaders who spend much of their time talking about morality and family values would attempt to finance another tax cut for millionaires by cutting food stamps for the hungry and slashing \$12 billion from Medicaid.

At the State level, hundreds of thousands of hard-working Americans are already losing their Medicaid benefits. In Missouri alone, in my State, the Republican legislature and governor have managed to knock 90,000 Medicaid recipients off of the rolls and another 30,000-something children off of CHIPs. We are pushing these people into the army of the uninsured, which now numbers more than 45 million in this country.

On top of this travesty, the majority leadership is trying to reward big oil and big gas companies with a get-into-ANWR-free card as part of the budget reconciliation. These same companies made \$27 billion in profits during the last 90 days, and they still want more?

I appeal to my Republican colleagues to rediscover their humanity and to return to fiscal sanity. The courageous communities along the gulf coast who survived the hurricanes and people of goodwill across this country are counting on Congress to do the right thing. The very last thing we should do is to punch more holes in a safety net that is already badly damaged.

Mr. Speaker, poverty and food insecurity in the United States are on the rise and Hurricane Katrina just made things worse. The number of Americans in poverty is rising steadily, from 32 million in 2000 to 37 million in 2004. More than one in six U.S. children lives in poverty. Food insecurity in the United States increased in 2004 for the fifth straight year, affecting 38.2 million people or 11.9 percent of our households. Children fared even worse; 19 percent of them were food insecure in 2004, meaning their families did not have enough money to provide sufficient food.

The combination of stagnant wages and sharply rising costs for essentials such as health care and energy has

forced more struggling families to skimp on food in order to pay their bills. This year, Hurricane Katrina left hundreds of thousands of families with no homes and no jobs. This reconciliation bill cuts \$7 billion from programs serving working families and vulnerable individuals. Over 5 years, the House bill cuts child support by \$4.9 billion; cuts food stamps by \$844 million; cuts foster care assistance by \$577 million; and cuts Supplemental Security Income to the elderly and disabled by \$732 million.

These cuts are likely to generate more poverty and economic insecurity among families and individuals struggling to get by. We must defeat this resolution and then renew our bipartisan commitment to restoring balance, fairness and common sense to the budget process.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his statement, and I now yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to strenuously object to tucking the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Act reauthorization into this budget reconciliation bill.

What this does is masquerade the Draconian policy changes of TANF that impinge on what we claim to be our priority, to help working families, particularly women, get back into the workforce. How can we do that, create productive workers in view of slashing the work supports so desperately needed by these marginal families?

How can we cut \$11 billion from the Medicaid program and say we want these women to go to work? How can we cut \$4.9 billion from child support enforcement and say that we want you to go to work? How can we not even provide an inflationary increase in child care funding, while we increase those work requirements and say with a straight face that we are trying to help people reach self-sufficiency? How can we claim to try to raise women up and families up from their conditions, when we slash educational opportunity, reduce educational opportunity into oblivion?

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are people who are prepared to tell me that we are increasing TANF benefits by almost \$1 billion, but when you look at what we are doing, the \$926 million over 5 years, scored by CBO, because they must include extensions of supplemental grants, which they are excluded by law from not projecting, if you look at that, and adjusting for this scoring factor, what we are actually seeing is a TANF spending reduction of \$239 million. Yes, I said it, \$239 million reduction in TANF services.

This basic block grant is frozen. It increases work requirements, but it does do one thing that I approve of. It eliminates two performance bonus pro-

grams, saving us \$1.1 billion, but it plows that money, \$349 million, back into marriage promotion programs.

Do we have any concern about the kind of domestic violence that this may spawn, or another \$409 million for, quote, unquote, ‘new research projects,’ researching and studying the poor, rather than providing the poor with the needed services like Medicaid, like child care, like educational opportunity? Instead, we are continuing to make this a windfall for what we call poverty entrepreneurs.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her statement, and I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURU).

□ 1445

Ms. DELAURU. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me and for his hard work and energy, his effort and commitment to the people of this Nation.

I consider it a privilege to serve on the House Budget Committee, helping to lay out a fiscal blueprint for the Nation to work toward crafting a document that reflects the values and the priorities of the American people.

Budgets are just not numbers on a page, Mr. Speaker. They live and they breathe. They are about human beings and what is happening in their lives. As this House prepares to consider \$54.2 billion in a budget package, I find it hard to believe that the American people’s priorities would include denying food stamps to 300,000 Americans and 40,000 children. I find it hard to believe their values tell them that we should respond to the skyrocketing health care costs by charging children from poor families for doctors’ visits; that their answer to unaffordable child care costs would be denying child care assistance to another 270,000 children of working parents, cutting food stamps, charging poor families for visits to the pediatrician, denying child care to a quarter million working parents.

Those are not the values or the priorities of the American people; but it is becoming increasingly clear that they are the priorities of the Republican Party, the Republican House leadership, the Republican administration, and the party that controls all three branches of government right now.

Let us take a look. What other priorities do the Republicans bring to bear with this reconciliation package?

One, let us make it harder for people to attend college. If you attended college in the last 50 years, you received financial aid from the Federal Government. Following World War II, you had the benefit of the GI Bill. Eight million veterans were given education vouchers at the same time it doubled the number of homeowners.

Thirty-five years ago, Congress passed the Higher Education Act and said that the Federal Government was going to open the doors of colleges, regardless of family wealth; that, in fact, education was the great equalizer in

this country, that because of your God-given talent you could succeed. Federal student aid has helped millions of people go to college who otherwise might never have had that opportunity.

This bill turns its back on that commitment. It leaves the typical student borrower, and I say to young people and their families today, understand this, you are already saddled with \$17,500 in debt and you are going to pay an additional \$5,800 in interest and taxes over the life of your loan if this bill is passed.

At a time when our Nation faces unprecedented competition from the likes of China and India, this majority puts up financial barriers that prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a 4-year public college over the next decade; 123,000 students in my State of Connecticut alone will not be able to attend college. This when the United States is projected to face a shortage of up to 12 million college-educated workers by the year 2020.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation impacts children and families. It also strips protections which would guarantee more than 5 million children who receive the medical services they need no longer receive them: medical health services, optical care, hearing aids, cuts to child support enforcement by 40 percent, eliminating the federally funded foster care benefits for grandparents and relatives of abused and neglected children. This bill goes out of its way to make the lives of Americans already living on the margins even more difficult.

A final point. Food stamps, a program which goes straight to the heart of the government's responsibility, a moral responsibility to people, 25 million people in this Nation rely on food stamps. It is a program of efficiency and competence. The cuts result in 300,000 food stamp recipients losing eligibility. That includes 40,000 children. When you cut food stamps, which is the direct measure for eligibility for the school lunch program, that means 40,000 kids will no longer be eligible for a school breakfast program or a school lunch program.

Why? Why are we doing this? Let us lay it on the table. It is about tax cuts, tax cuts for those who need them least. Fifty-three percent of the tax cuts go to the upper 1 or 2 percent of the public making over \$1 million a year. \$70 billion of tax cuts, capital gains, and dividend tax cuts go to Americans who are living lives of comfort and lives of leisure. And paying for these tax cuts will be 40,000 kids going hungry.

The majority is effectively saying, so much for morality, so much for values, so much for the common good. These are Republican priorities. They are not mine. They are not my constituents. I think we will all learn over the course of the next year they are not the American people's. This Nation must understand what is potentially going to befall them if this bill is passed. I urge you to stand tall and say "no" to these

cuts which will do nothing but ravage the good people of this Nation.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding to me and allowing all of us to come to the floor today to talk about what is really meaningful in the budget. There is no one in this House that knows every paragraph and every decimal point in this budget reconciliation bill better than the gentleman from South Carolina, and no one who knows better, too, the pain and the suffering that you can read between the lines.

Besides the U.S. Constitution, there is no document more defining of our priorities and our values and our morality than budgets. Yes, budgets. Even though we have pages of numbers, it is a moral document. I want to read from an article written by the religion writer for the Chicago Sun-Times paper last Friday. This is what Cathleen Falsani had to say.

She wrote: "This week, as Republican leaders try to force a monstrous \$50 billion budget cut designed allegedly to offset the mounting costs of hurricane-related aid through Congress, it is clear that the Bush administration's moral compass has been lost.

"The proposed budget cuts, part of the so-called budget reconciliation, would have devastating effects on the poorest, most vulnerable Americans, while allowing tax relief for the rich.

"The massive budget reductions would include billions of dollars from pension protection and student loan programs." She goes on to list them.

Then she says: "Maybe Republican leaders should consider proposing an open season on the homeless, or the resurrection of debtors' prisons while they're at it. Is this the kind of leadership the majority of voters who, according to pollsters at the time, cast their ballots in the 2004 based on moral values? Is this what they had in mind?" she asks.

"Is this what faith-based compassionate conservatism looks like? Is our Nation more moral, more secure, or spiritually healthy than it was a year ago? And, to address my fellow Christian voters specifically," she asks, "has the Good News been advanced in any way? No, absolutely not," she says.

She goes on to describe "all 65 bishops at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have signed a letter to Members of Congress vehemently opposing the proposed budget cuts, saying in part 'The biblical record is clear. The scriptural witness on which our faith tradition stands speaks dramatically to God's concern for and solidarity with the poor and oppressed communities while speaking firmly in opposition to governments whose policies place narrow economic interests driven by greed above the common good.'"

That is what the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America said. She

goes on to say: "The Evangelical Christian theologian and leader, Jim Wallis, founder of Sojourners, a national network of progressive Christian peace and justice activists, led an ecumenical gathering of religious leaders in a protest at the Capitol building last Thursday, calling the proposed cuts 'a moral travesty.'" This is quoting Jim Wallis: "Instead of wearing bracelets that ask, 'what would Jesus do,' perhaps some Republican should ponder, 'what would Jesus cut?'"

The author writes: "The immorality, by any religious tradition's measure, of the proposed \$50 billion budget reconciliation package, is brazen. If enacted, it would prove only to increase the suffering of the already struggling poor, including tens of thousands who lost everything along the gulf coast. Maybe immoral isn't the appropriate word," Kathleen Falsani says. "Maybe immoral isn't the appropriate word. Downright evil is a better description."

I thank my colleague for allowing me to read this article. I think it is instructive to all Members of Congress and all people of faith as well.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her presentation, and I yield now to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania.

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the budget reconciliation process has been used since 1974 as a vehicle to set priorities, enact fiscal discipline, and reduce deficits. The last three budget reconciliation packages, which were passed in 1990, 1993, and 1997, each attempted to reduce the deficit by an average of \$367 billion over 5 years.

However, this year, the Republican majority has decided to split the budget reconciliation package into two parts. The first, which will come before this Chamber this week, likely on Thursday, will make deep cuts to vital government initiatives that directly improve the lives of millions of average Americans. The second, which may not come to the floor until after Thanksgiving, would further extend tax cuts to corporations and to individuals in the very highest income brackets.

When taken together, the Republican reconciliation package will add \$35 billion to the Federal deficit over the next 5 years, a fact that should disprove the other side's claim that this is an attempt to enact fiscal discipline or restore our budget to balance. It does not.

The fact that we are handling this process in piecemeal does not hide the majority party's preference for providing tax cuts that benefit only a limited number of people and corporations rather than making the investments in our future that will enable hard-working families and our communities to meet their obligations.

For example: instead of repairing tomorrow's workforce by helping more Americans, including tens of thousands of young people striving to be prepared for jobs of the future to obtain college

degrees, the Republicans are slashing \$9 billion from government-sponsored student loans.

Instead of working to expand access to health care, even in the face of a major flu epidemic, the Republicans are working to restrict access and to limit eligibility for Medicaid, the very program that ensures that mothers and children and working people with special health needs get the care that they require.

And the third example: instead of fully equipping our public safety officers, our police officers, firefighters, and transit personnel with the needed communication equipment, the Republicans would continue to underfund important homeland security initiatives.

The Republicans, through the reconciliation process, have made clear that they prioritize tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans and to very few large corporations at the expense of creating opportunities for hard-working Americans and helping Americans meet their responsibilities. Moreover, they have chosen political rhetoric over honest budgeting by failing to consider both aspects of their proposals, the spending cuts and the tax breaks, at the same time in the same bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to urge Members on both sides of the aisle who believe in fiscal responsibility, who believe in sound budgetary principles to oppose this reconciliation measure that we will be considering in the coming days and weeks.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her statement, and I yield now to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), and I would remind the gentleman that we have about 6 minutes left. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). The gentleman is correct.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) for allocating this time to me.

We began this session with an idea and a plan that would privatize Social Security. I thought that was the worst idea that we would encounter. But now that that argument is at last behind us, now we can see the reality of the President's budget process. This proposal that we are about to entertain on Thursday is a fiscal disaster. It not only forces painful cuts to programs that serve regular people; it awards large new tax cuts to people who already are the most privileged in our society.

When President Clinton left office, the country was running a \$236 billion surplus. We were on track to have a \$5.6 trillion surplus over the next 10 years. Now, let me tell you what that would have done. That would have allowed us to fix Social Security, to fix Medicare, to pay down the debt, and to provide modest tax cuts for middle-income Americans. Instead, we have cut

taxes five times while we are fighting two wars.

And what is the result? Well, a month and a half ago to 2 months ago, the Humvees just arrived in Iraq. The body armor has just begun to arrive in Iraq. For those men and women who serve us honorably every single day in the American military, the equipment is just starting to arrive.

□ 1500

But what do we have time to do here? Let us cut Medicare. Let us chop Medicaid. Let us go after student loans. Let us cut back on home heating oil for the most vulnerable among us in the Northeast; and, with a straight face, let us cut taxes by \$70 billion over the next couple of weeks.

Think of this Congress, what it did with the Clinton surplus: \$5.6 trillion of surplus projected over 10 years, and this Congress cuts taxes and yanks \$1.3 trillion out of the budget and then declares Social Security has a problem after they have taken that money away.

You hear from the Members of this body on the other side of the aisle about supply-side economics. I do not know any primary supply-side economists left who are accepted in the academy. Nobody buys that argument any more based upon the budget deficits the Nation is running.

We were on a sterling course of fiscal responsibility in this body. Just when people said it could not be done, we got it done. We balanced the budget, projected large-term surpluses, and we had this grand opportunity to take on some of the issues we would all like to address. But what has happened now? Is there anybody here who believes that we are not going to need a lot more money for Iraq? A lot more money for Afghanistan? Those dollars are going to be necessary. The same institution that voted to send us there, this Congress, I hope will not dare to cut back on what these men and women need. But I can tell you this: the budget they have put in front of us takes us precisely there. You cannot have it both ways, and we have learned that the hard way. But I will say this about the majority in this body, they will keep going.

Most conventional political figures see a stop sign and they stop. Not here, they will keep going. Cut programs for the neediest and cut taxes for the strongest. I am reminded of Matthew when he said it is our goal and our job to clothe the naked and to feed the poor; and the Republicans here would add, and to take care of the wealthy and to take care of the strong.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina.

In our pledge every day, we pledge one Nation under God with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. Speaker, with this reconciliation package, this is not one Nation, one liberty and justice for all. If you look at those students, this is not liberty and justice for all. For students today, only 10 percent of children from working-class families graduate from college by the age of 24 as compared to 58 percent of upper-middle-class and wealthy families. This is not liberty and justice for all.

If you are disabled, mentally retarded, poor, hungry or a foster family, this is not liberty and justice for all. This reconciliation package slams the door on those with disabilities trying to gain a foothold in society. It cuts the Medicaid program, taking away opportunity from those with intellectual difficulties. It takes food out of the mouths of the poorest children in our society. And it goes after those that are trying to make an opportunity for themselves in this society by getting an education when an education is more important than at any other time in American history.

Today, our economy is about an economy of ideas. If we do not provide education for every single American, we are consigning those without an education to second-class status. This reconciliation bill consigns millions of Americans to second-class status by cutting aid to education that opens up the doors of opportunity for millions of Americans.

Franklin Roosevelt said the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance to those who have much; it is whether we provide enough to those who have too little. This reconciliation package fails that test as well.

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his leadership on this issue.

After 5 years of record debts and deficits, the other side of the aisle is demanding cuts to the programs that help Americans most in need. We showed in the 1990s that this government can be fiscally disciplined and compassionate to our neighbors most in need at the same time. The cuts before us now will not restore fiscal sanity; and they certainly are not compassionate, not even to the people who are suffering now from the recent hurricanes.

After five years of record debt and deficits, the other side of the aisle is demanding cuts to the programs that help Americans most in need.

We showed in the 1990s that this government can be fiscally disciplined and compassionate to our neighbors most in need at the same time.

The cuts before us now will not magically restore fiscal sanity, and they certainly are not compassionate, not even to the people devastated by recent hurricanes.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle may be selling these cuts as a matter of budget principle, but the fact remains that their

budget will still increase the deficit by more than 100 billion.

Even more outrageous is that these cuts would make our government—which is meant to be of the people and for the people—less responsive to the people who need its help most.

Fewer food stamps. Reduced student loans. Less aid for foster care. Reduced Medicaid access.

And we all saw how Katrina disproportionately devastated low-income Americans.

Those Americans already lost their homes and their livelihoods, now they are in line to lose the federal aid that could help them the most.

It isn't surprising—this same Congress that gives no-strings aid to Iraq also demands that residents of the Gulf Coast repay emergency disaster assistance.

I urge my colleagues to vote “no” on the budget reconciliation—it's an uncompassionate and misguided bill.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. SPRATT, for yielding and for his superb leadership in presenting the case against the spending cuts contained in the first half of this misguided budget reconciliation package.

When the final budget resolution passed by a margin of only three votes back in April, who would have guessed that the Republican leadership would want to re-visit this legislation by actually making deeper cuts to health care, student loans, and food stamps—particularly in a time of national crisis?

And given that Congress has not enacted budget reconciliation since 1997, you would have thought that the Republican leadership could have put forward a more fair and balanced set of spending adjustments after preparing for eight years between reconciliations.

When you think about it, budget reconciliation is not much different than balancing a checkbook, unless, of course, you are referring to the way Congress balances its books.

On one side of the ledger, we have spending cuts—ostensibly to pay for rebuilding the Gulf Coast, but in reality to pay for the tax cuts that this leadership insists on passing despite three consecutive years of record-breaking deficits and \$3 trillion in new debt.

Still, this reconciliation package doesn't even pay for the tax cuts. The net result is actually an increase in the deficit of at least \$50 billion.

And in the other column, even after the tax cuts are in place, there won't be a dime left over to pay for reconstruction in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita or Wilma.

Like the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts—and like the class action, bankruptcy and needless tort reform on the Republican agenda—this Administration's failed economic policies and misplaced priorities are on display again this week in the form of the “Reconciliation Spending Cuts Act of 2005.”

Championing the values and priorities of the wealthiest at the expense of the middle class—and by punching holes in the safety net—are hallmarks of this Administration but not the solution we need today to alleviate the misery in the Gulf Coast or ease the squeeze on the middle class.

As we build new universities in Baghdad, schools across the United States are falling apart. How can we in good conscious cut student loans after the College Board recently re-

ported tuition continues to rise faster than the rate of inflation?

To illustrate this point, consider that under this legislation, someone earning over \$1 million stands to gain a tax break of \$19,000—on top of the average \$103,000 tax cut they already receive—whereas the typical student borrower, already saddled with \$17,500 in debt, would face new fees and higher interest charges that could cost up to an additional \$5,800.

And yet, no one in this Administration has suggested putting Iraqi reconstruction money on the table. We simply cannot afford the continuing sacrifices and investments there at the expense of our priorities here at home. Nor has there been any hint that the tax cuts should be suspended for those earning more than \$400,000 or that we should scale back the estate tax cut, which has no impact on nearly 98 percent of American families.

None of this is on the table, even though federal spending has grown by a third and record surpluses became record deficits since President Bush took office. With the most expensive tax cuts not yet fully phased-in, these policies threaten to expand the deficit beyond what we and future generations of Americans can afford.

Common sense tells us that when you're in a hole, stop digging. But not only are we still digging, we are falling deeper into new fiscal depths with this budget.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina was a tragic reminder that too many American families are struggling in today's economy. Squeezing them harder, as this reconciliation legislation would do, is not the answer. It takes our nation in the wrong direction, and I urge my colleagues to defeat it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Key Points About Reconciliation:

1. All of these spending cuts will be used to offset tax cuts, not the costs of hurricane response or deficit reduction.

2. Spending cuts threaten vital services, including services for hurricane victims.

3. Even with these spending cuts, the Republican budget resolution still increases the deficit by more than \$100 billion over five years.

4. Republicans reveal a double standard in proposing to offset hurricane costs but not war costs or tax cuts.

Summary of Cuts: The \$53.9 billion in cuts is \$14.8 billion higher than the reconciliation cuts that the Senate is considering.

The \$53.9 billion in cuts marks a 56 percent increase from the \$34.7 billion in reconciled spending cuts included in this year's budget resolution.

The budget cuts do not offset spending for hurricane reconstruction—they go towards offsetting \$106 billion in tax cuts.

Why does republican leadership insist on offsetting the cost of rebuilding damage from Katrina, but not the cost rebuilding Iraq?

The objectionable cuts threaten vital services that people depend on:

1. Medicaid—The bill cuts Medicaid spending by \$11.9 billion.

a. \$8.8 billion will fall upon beneficiaries in the form of increases in cost-sharing and premiums.

b. “Flexibility” that will allow states to cut benefit packages for certain individuals.

c. Provisions that will make it harder for some seniors to access needed long-term care.

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

a. Primarily through increases in the interest rates and fees that students pay as well as some reductions in subsidies to lenders.

b. At a time when college costs are rising faster than inflation, the Committee is making the largest cut in the history of the student loan programs.

3. Food Stamps—The legislation imposes cuts to food stamps of \$844 million over five years (2006–2010).

a. Savings are achieved by adopting the President's proposal to limit categorical eligibility for food stamps to TANF recipients and increasing the in-country waiting period for legal immigrants to seven years. Under current law, 44 percent of those eligible for food stamps do not participate in the program. Changes such as these may mean even fewer vulnerable children and working families who qualify for nutrition benefits will actually receive them.

4. Children—

a. The legislation cuts \$4.9 billion from child support programs over five years.

i. This cut will reduce states' capacity to establish and enforce child support orders. Custodial parents will receive \$7.1 billion less child support over five years and \$21.3 billion less over ten years.

b. The Committee cut \$397 million from foster care over five years by limiting children's eligibility for federally funded foster care payments.

i. The committee saved another \$180 million by limiting circumstances under which states can receive federal funding for services provided to children.

CORRECTING AMERICA'S IMBALANCED TRADING RELATIONSHIPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the heels of President Bush's failed trade trip to Latin America to discuss our Nation's trade policy, a policy that continues to ship out American jobs, a policy that opens our doors to imports while other markets remain closed to us. Markets like Japan, markets like China, they keep their doors shut tight.

This is a policy that is hurting our country, not just today, but for tomorrow. It hurts our workers. It hurts our farmers; and, indeed, it truly hurts our future.

Our latest trade deficit numbers released last month for the month of August show yet another increase in America's trade deficit. The trade deficit for the month of August alone was \$59 billion. For every billion dollars of deficit, we incur another 20,000 lost jobs. In a year, the loss to us is over three-quarters of a trillion dollars of more imports coming in than exports going out.

Last year our trade deficit was \$668 billion; and in the first half of this year, this number clearly was increasing. This chart summarizes what has