

through letters and phone calls and emails and thousands of one-on-one conversations throughout the greater Waterbury area, they have been able to gather over 300 signatures on the petition that I am holding right here expressing why they believe that this Congress has to start paying attention to the very real economic pressures that seniors in this economy and in this country are facing and why, in particular, we need to step up to the plate and do the right thing for seniors who are about to face a zero percent increase on Social Security in this country.

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Madam Speaker, I'm here to bring these petitions to my colleagues because I couldn't agree with them more.

This economic downturn has hit all of us, but it has hit seniors in particular. Just like many Americans, they have mortgages to pay, they've got car payments to make, and they've got grocery bills to pay. But unlike many Americans, they also face disproportionately high health care costs, unusually high prescription-drug costs, and multiple bills that seem only to be rising. Put that together with decreased retirement funds, and seniors are facing a particularly tough forecast.

Now over the past year, this Congress has tried to take some steps to pull this economy up from the depths of the recession. We've acted to make sure that our financial system didn't collapse. We've moved quickly to make critical investments in our economy to help it recover. We're working now to try to make this health care system work for both our customers, our patients and also for our economy. But in all of this, we have to remember that seniors throughout this country face economic challenges that are unique only to them, and as we continue to work on getting our entire economy to recover, we have to remember that we have to specifically target seniors, most of which are living on fixed incomes today.

Now the impetus behind these petitions is a very real sense from the senior citizens in my district, which I think is reflective of a feeling across this country, that over the past decade or so, they've watched Washington dole out special favors to the insurance companies, to the drug companies, to the oil companies and to the banks. And they're wondering where the help is for them. And in the middle of this tough economic recession, just when they're waiting for the help to come to them, they get some of the worst news of all, that they will be receiving a zero percent increase in their Social Security check.

Now that's why we need to listen to the people who have signed these petitions, because this number is 3,000 in Waterbury, Connecticut, but it would be millions across the country of seniors who want to know why a formula

designed to reflect the true cost of living increases for them gives them a zero percent increase when they know that their costs are increasing on a regular basis, and why they can't get Congress to step up to the plate and help them when it seems like over the past decade, a lot of other people with a lot more influence and a lot more power than them have been helped.

So I'm here to deliver these petitions and to say "thank you" to people like Lucille Keating, Jeannine Laliberte, Lorraine Johnston and Lida Keroski, who put these together, and assure them not only do I agree with the sentiment they and so many Americans have brought to this House, but that I believe we are going to take seriously the notion that in this very difficult economy we need to step up to the plate and do the right thing for seniors in this country.

HALLOWEEN HEALTH CARE

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the Senate's Halloween health care bill seeped out of the dark dungeons of the Capitol Building today. News reports say it's 1,500 pages long. Why is legislation drafted in the secret, dark caverns of the Capitol, where the trolls roam at night, void of public view? Is it so scary the healthcrats don't want us to know what's in it?

We need to know exactly what's in these bills and how much they really cost before we vote on anything. And why is there such a rush to pass a bill anyway? Maybe they have frightening parts that no one will see if quickly passed. One scary part is the government wanting American money now. You see, new taxes take effect immediately, but the legislation won't be in operation until 2013. That's right. American taxpayers pay 3 years of new taxes on a deal that doesn't take effect for 3 years. Now isn't that scary?

And what is the goal of this government bill? If the goal is to provide universal health care for everyone, the bill is a failure. The President told us there are 30 million uninsured. The Congressional Budget Office said the latest and greatest bill still will leave 25 million uninsured. So we're letting the government take over health care just to add 5 million people to the government system. It would be cheaper just to buy them all health insurance and then require proof of citizenship to get insurance rather than spend trillions and let Uncle Sam take care of us all.

If the goal of the Halloween health care bill is to provide better quality care, the bill is a failure. Just look at the way the government runs the Indian universal health care system. The government has been committing medical malpractice against the Indians for decades. If the goal is to make health care cheaper, the bill fails again. The bill will cost over \$1 trillion just to set it up. And the idea that government can run an entire health care system cheaper than the private sector

is a myth. The only way that government can do it cheaper is to drastically cut services to patients, ration care or both.

Madam Speaker, has there ever been a government program that costs less than projected? I don't think that has happened in the history of the Republic.

If the goal is to make government-run Halloween health care more efficient, the bill fails once more. The government is almost always more inefficient because it has no competition, has no accountability, and when it runs out of money, it just spends more money and taxes the taxpayer.

However, if the real goal of this legislation is to have government take control of our health care, the bill is a total success.

The Halloween health care nightmare on Capitol Hill is this specific provision—government takeover of health care. So rather than let the government take care of us all, Congress should reform specific problems under our current system. Allow insurance to be purchased across State lines, provide for a safety net for catastrophic injury or illness, have a method to allow people with preexisting conditions to obtain insurance, allow for health savings accounts so people can take care of themselves and get a tax break, provide tax incentives and tax breaks for businesses who take care of their employees rather than more taxes on small businesses, which taxes them to death, and eliminate the fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicaid system.

And, Madam Speaker, there are many other specific things Congress should do. But turning over America's health to the Federal Government is unhealthy for the American people. Such an idea is truly a Halloween nightmare and a trick on the American people.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

U.S. DEFICIT BIGGEST SINCE 1945

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

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I would like to share with the House tonight some writings from the October 16, 2009, CNNMoney.com. The title is, "U.S. Deficit Biggest Since 1945."

"The Obama administration on Friday said the government ran a \$1.42 trillion deficit in fiscal year 2009. That made it the worst year on record since World War II, according to data from the Treasury and the White House Office of Management and Budget. Tax

receipts for the year fell 16.6 percent overall, while spending soared 18.2 percent. Consequently, the annual deficit rose 212 percent to the record dollar amount of \$1.42 trillion, from \$455 billion a year earlier."

I continue to read from this article:

"As a result, the country is very near to breaching its so-called "debt ceiling," currently set at \$12.1 trillion. Lawmakers, however, are expected to vote to raise that ceiling this fall."

I further share with the House:

"In August, the OMB projected a 10-year deficit of \$9 trillion, assuming President Obama's 2010 budget proposals are put in place. A deficit of that magnitude means the debt held by the public would approach 82 percent of gross domestic product. That's double the 41 percent recorded in 2008.

"The 10-year forecast as well as the longer-term outlook are considered unsustainable. The GAO further cautioned that the yawning deficit problems should be addressed sooner rather than later. The longer action to deal with the Nation's long-term fiscal outlook is delayed, the larger the change will need to be, increasing the likelihood that they will be disruptive and destabilizing."

Madam Speaker, I wanted to share that tonight with the House because whether you be a Republican, which I am, or a Democrat, this country needs to understand that no longer can it take care of the world, because we can't even take care of our own Nation.

I want to make reference just briefly to a book that I read a couple of years ago that I would recommend to each Member of Congress. And if I could buy it for each Member of Congress, I would, but I cannot. It is called "Day of Reckoning" by Pat Buchanan. The book "Day of Reckoning" reminds America what has happened to other great nations, whether it be England, Spain or France. These nations went down the road where they believed in building empires around the world and making everybody be like they are. They all collapsed in a matter of years. Rome is probably the best example of a nation that felt that it could go and create other entities around the world, and they failed, as well.

So, Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to ask unanimous consent to put the entire article from CNNMoney.com into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I thank you very much. And I hope that we in Congress, as we debate not only the health bill, but other bills, determine how we're going to pay for it. Is it fair for our grandchildren to pick up the debt of those of us today who are irresponsible to our responsibility of maintaining a frugal government?

And with that, Madam Speaker, as I always do, I want to ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform. I

want to ask God in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And Madam Speaker, I want to ask God to please give wisdom, strength and courage to the President of the United States. And I ask three times, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

[From CNNMoney.com, Oct. 16, 2009]

U.S. DEFICIT BIGGEST SINCE 1945

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION CLOSES THE BOOKS ON FISCAL 2009: FALLING REVENUE PLUS SOARING SPENDING LEADS TO A \$1.42 TRILLION DEFICIT

(BY JEANNE SAHADI)

The Obama administration on Friday said the government ran a \$1.42 trillion deficit in fiscal year 2009.

That made it the worst year on record since World War II, according to data from the Treasury and the White House Office of Management and Budget.

Tax receipts for the year fell 16.6% overall, while spending soared 18.2%. The rising unemployment, the economic slowdown and the extraordinary measures taken by lawmakers to stem the economic meltdown that hit in fall 2008.

Consequently, the annual deficit rose 212% to the record dollar amount of \$1.42 trillion, from \$455 billion a year earlier.

As a share of the economy, the deficit accounted for 10% of gross domestic product, up from 3.2% in 2008. As breathtaking as that may be, it's still not in the same stratosphere as the 1945 deficit, which hit 21% of GDP.

PERFECT DEFICIT COCKTAIL MIX

Fiscal year 2009, which ended Sept. 30, had all the right ingredients for a recordbreaking deficit.

While tax revenue overall took a big hit, corporate receipts led the way, falling 55%. Individual income tax revenue fell 20%.

At the same time spending jumped in large part because of the various economic and financial rescue measures undertaken. The Treasury and the OMB noted that the \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program and the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, not all of which has been used, accounted for 24% of the deficit total.

As a result, the country is very near to breaching its so-called debt ceiling, currently set at \$12.1 trillion. Lawmakers, however, are expected to vote to raise that ceiling this fall.

At the end of September, the country's total debt—which is an accumulation of all annual deficits to date plus other obligations—stood at \$11.9 trillion.

THE LONG-TERM VIEW

In August, the OMB projected a 10-year deficit of \$9 trillion, assuming President Obama's 2010 budget proposals are put in place.

A deficit of that magnitude means the debt held by the public would approach 82% of gross domestic product. That's double the 41% recorded in 2008.

Most budget experts blanch at the thought, especially given that the country's fiscal future was already a source of concern before the economic crisis because of expected shortfalls over time in funding for Medicare and Social Security.

The financial and economic meltdowns of the past year have accelerated the strain on federal coffers. So much so that now the 10-year forecast as well as the longer-term outlook are considered unsustainable, according to deficit experts William Gale and Alan Auerbach.

In a report this week, the Government Accountability Office noted that the deficits

born from the financial crisis are not the biggest crux of the problem.

"While a lot of attention has been given to the recent fiscal deterioration, the federal government faces even larger fiscal challenges that will persist long after the return of financial stability and economic growth," the GAO said.

The GAO further cautioned that the yawning deficit problems should be addressed sooner rather than later.

"The longer action to deal with the nation's long-term fiscal outlook is delayed, the larger the changes will need to be, increasing the likelihood that they will be disruptive and destabilizing."

The Obama administration is promising to put a plan in place to lessen the deficit when the economy recovers.

"It was critical that we acted to bring the economy back from the brink earlier this year. As we move from rescue to recovery, the president recognizes that we need to put the nation back on a fiscally sustainable path," said OMB director Peter Orszag in a statement. "As part of the FY2011 budget policy process, we are considering proposals to put our country back on firm fiscal footing."

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

(Mr. STUPAK 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 New York (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

HONDURAS

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

Ms. ROSLEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to once again express my strong support for the elections scheduled to take place in Honduras on November 29. Though much of the recent news coming out of Honduras has been focused on the current round of talks between the representatives of Manuel Zelaya and the current Honduran Government, one thing has remained constant through it all: The Honduran elections that are scheduled to take place on November 29.

The most recent talks began with both sides agreeing that the elections should proceed ahead as planned. Predictably, however, now that Zelaya is realizing that he won't be able to jump back into his throne of power as easily as he expected, he and his supporters have started to call for boycotts and nonrecognition of the elections. Not surprisingly, Zelaya's ALBA fan club, headed by Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, got together this weekend in Bolivia. The ALBA league of oppressors and dictators-in-waiting issued a statement stating that neither the Honduran electoral process nor its outcomes should