

protect a mouse in San Francisco. And that is just to name a few.

Taxpayers have had enough. Across our State and across this country, they are gathering together to voice their outrage. Inspired by our Nation's early patriots, thousands of taxpayers are gathering at hundreds of modern-day tea parties to protest Washington's wasteful spending, the Democrat-written stimulus package, the housing bailout, and President Obama's budget. A recent tea party in Greenville, South Carolina, attracted more than 2,000 participants, and a similar rally in Cincinnati drew more than 4,000 dissatisfied taxpayers.

I want to let the people know that I hear what they are saying, and, Madam Speaker, I am doing something about it. Today I am introducing the Taxpayer Empowerment and Advocacy Act, the TEA Act.

Over the next 5 years, the TEA Act will save taxpayers over one-half trillion dollars by reducing spending, restricting the growth of government, and strengthening the definition of emergency spending to close loopholes and prevent abuse.

Across South Carolina, around kitchen tables and behind the small business counters, individuals are making tough decisions about their budgets. But Congress has refused to do the same, and it is time for that to change. I believe the TEA Act is a start to setting Congress on a new, more accountable course, and to protect the taxpayers' best interest. Enough is enough.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill and protecting the American taxpayer.

THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the Republicans are at it again. It would be funny if we weren't in such dire financial straits as the government is, thanks to a number of years of Republican rule.

During the Bush era, George Bush inherited a balanced budget, he inherited projections of a surplus for years to come, and paying down the debt of the United States substantially. Well, he went to work busily, and using restrictive legislative rules the Republicans passed massive tax cuts favoring the wealthiest of us. Those with estates over \$5 million, those who earn over \$250,000 a year got huge largess from the Republican Party.

Now, in a time of surplus, it didn't hurt too much. But then, George Bush launched an unnecessary war in Iraq and decided to pay for it off the books; i.e., he did not score it in the budget, and just every year declared it as an emergency as much as it might cost. So far, close to \$700 billion has been spent on George Bush's war in Iraq.

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Of course George Bush's tax cuts and his off-the-books spending and a mas-

sive expansion of government under total Republican rule, took us from a time of surplus to a time of massive deficits. George Bush set record after record with deficits during his Presidency, and he managed in 8 short years to double the debt that it had taken us more than 200 years to accumulate as a Nation. And the Republicans were all for it.

But now they would have us believe that their born-again fiscal conservatives, with a 19-page document with no specifics—and guess what it contains, this is how we are going to balance the budget, folks—more tax cuts for rich people. Oh, what a surprise. That will solve everything. They do have this cockamamie theory, and it is that if we give all of the money to the rich people, the rich people will go out and invest that money. When they invest that money, the little people will get jobs, and the little people will pay taxes because the rich people shouldn't. That is their budget, plain and simple.

Eliminate the estate tax. That would mean that if Bill Gates died tomorrow, and God forbid, I hope he is healthy and he won't, but if he did, the unrealized capital gains of his stock would then become nontaxable. No taxes would have ever been paid on that stock, passed on to his kids. If his kids invest it for a living under the Republican plan, they would earn capital gains and under their plan investors don't pay taxes. So you can have multi-generations of people accumulating more and more wealth who haven't paid a penny in taxes. But don't worry, the Republicans tell us, they will invest that money in America and put the little people to work. Well, no, maybe they will invest that money in China where labor is cheaper, or Mexico where labor is cheaper, or who knows where. Who knows how they will waste it. Who knows what new, speculative instruments they will come up with. Their so-called alternative would be funny if it wasn't so serious. But this is deadly serious.

President Obama is trying to dig us out of an incredibly deep hole and a very difficult time in the American economy. The radical deregulation of the Bush years and all of that wealth creation on Wall Street, which has now tanked, many people's pensions and their 401(k)s, it is killing jobs, we are trying to fix that, and we are trying to re-instill a sense of fiscal responsibility here in Washington, DC. It will not be easy. And particularly it won't be easy if the Republicans continue to play the clown on their side of the aisle and say eliminating taxes for rich people will solve all of the problems confronting the American people. Maybe it will provide them health care; I'm not sure how that works. Maybe it will help educate their kids in public schools; I don't quite get that part. Maybe it will rebuild our infrastructure; hmm, it won't do that, either. But it will make the rich richer, and that's all they are about.

DEMOCRATS REWRITING HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, it is very interesting to come and listen to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. It is clear they are living the book "1984" by George Orwell because they are constantly rewriting history to suit their purposes. I want to say that if there is anybody out there who hasn't read "1984" by George Orwell, or hasn't read it in a long time, I strongly urge you to do so because we are obviously living through what Orwell predicted. We are just a few years later than he suggested it would be.

I love the attitude of my colleagues, too, who say we are going to give all of the money to the rich. It displays their approach to our country. Their attitude is that the government owns all of the money and if money is not taken from citizens, then it is being given to them by the government.

Our country is the greatest country in the world, founded on capitalism and founded on Judeo-Christian beliefs, and founded on the rule of law. The money doesn't belong to the government, it belongs to the hardworking people who earned it. I think that in a nutshell sums up their attitude: The government should be in charge of absolutely everything, and we are seeing that play out with the proposals coming out of this administration and out of this Congress. Again, they are doing their best to make excuses for it by rewriting history.

Our economy was doing very well under the Bush administration until January 2007 when the Democrats took control of the Congress. They like to ignore those 2 years they were in control of Congress and President Bush was still President. We had 55 straight months of job creation. Suddenly that ended in January 2007 when they took over. Gas prices started going up, and they reached their peak under this Democratically controlled Congress. And I think it is very, very important that people be reminded of that.

They have said that President Bush created the largest deficit in our Nation's history. That simply is not true, and it isn't true that President Obama has inherited the largest deficit in history. But we are going to do our best to straighten out that issue.

They also like to say that the Republicans have no alternatives to what the Democrats are proposing. That also is not true. We have always had alternatives. This session in particular we have brought forth very specific alternatives. Last week we presented a 16-page document primarily of principles. This week we are releasing our balanced budget resolution, and we will have a balanced budget and it does the kinds of things that the American people expect to be done. It will be balanced, unlike the Obama budget which puts us greater and greater into debt

and creates a deficit. Our budget improves every single year and achieves a surplus in 2019 which is when the Obama budget has a huge deficit and a huge debt.

Under our budget, the national debt will decline by more than \$6 trillion, compared to the President's budget which averages deficits of more than a trillion dollars a year. It is true that we give tax relief, but that is important. Again, we want the American people who earn their money to keep more of their money rather than turning it over to the government under duress and allowing bureaucrats to spend that money.

We will also fully fund defense which is the number one role of the Federal Government. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle constantly forget to talk about that. The Federal Government is the only government in our country that can provide for our defense. We suffered a terrible situation on September 11, 2001, and we have not had another episode since then because the administration kept us safe.

We also create a zero-growth baseline for nondefense spending, and we assume repeal of most of the provisions in the so-called stimulus bill. We make no changes in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. However, we do clamp down on wasteful and low-priority mandatory spending. We are also going to assume savings from an earmark moratorium, something that the American people desperately want to see.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I was just listening to my good friend from North Carolina, and she and I are friends. We serve on committees together. We agree on a lot of things, but we couldn't disagree more on how we got into this place and what it is going to take to get out.

We had an administration and a Republican Congress that said America, it's okay to give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country and have wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and go into debt.

Well, it turned our country from a very prosperous Nation into one that was borrowing money from all across the globe, something that can't go on forever. And it finally came home to roost about 6 or 7 months ago when the banks had trouble, the automakers had trouble, everybody saw our economy just crunch like we hadn't seen it in generations. That's what we are faced with today, ladies and gentlemen. That's what we are faced with today, Madam Speaker.

So what are we going to do about it? Well, in the past month we passed the stimulus bill which is designed to do at least five things to get our country back on track.

First, it rebuilds our infrastructure, our roads, bridges and waterways. It builds a new energy grid so we can get power throughout our Nation in a cheaper and more efficient way.

Second, it creates a new energy economy. If we want to keep sending tons and tons of money across the waters to the Middle East, then we should do nothing, keep the status quo. That's what our friends on the Republican side of the aisle would like us to do, just vote no, we like the status quo. But I don't like the status quo. I don't like sending our hard-earned dollars to the Middle East year after year after year, and we are creating a new energy economy within the stimulus bill.

We are helping our States which have found themselves to have lost lots of revenue over the last 6 months, so they can continue to employ teachers and firefighters and policemen. So we are helping our States continue to provide the services that we so desperately need right now.

There are tax cuts within the stimulus bill and within the budget for almost every American, but not the wealthiest 5 percent, so that each one of us gets a little bit of a break, but we are not giving it to the top people who have had the break for the last 8 years.

The last thing it does is it provides assistance to people who have been laid off and need assistance with unemployment or with their COBRA health insurance so they don't just run into a wall, to get us through this difficult period.

President Obama inherited a budget deficit that was \$1.3 trillion. It is a lot of money. It is more than any of us can comprehend being in the red. When President Clinton left office, we had a budget surplus. We were paying off the debt, and we got just the opposite when President Bush left office.

We are doing three things in particular to get us out of this predicament. First is to provide a new energy economy, similar to the stimulus, but the budget moves this forward another 4 years.

Second, it deals with health care which is something that everybody has talked about for years but really little has been done. And for each company out there, for each individual, we have seen our health care costs going up. We have to come at it a whole different way, and that is what the budget proposes.

The third thing is to make sure that our education system, our kindergarten through 12th grade, and then our higher education system is the best in the world so we continue to be able to compete globally, so that business comes here and stays here and doesn't go overseas like it has been doing.

It is a very ambitious agenda, but it is one that is going to take us into the 21st century, something we didn't do during the last eight years of a Republican Administration. We just lived on borrowed time and borrowed money. And now it is time to move forward.

The budget that has been proposed reflects those particular values. At the same time, it maintains for middle America, for 95 percent of Americans, smaller taxes. But it is a difficult predicament we are in now. This President has provided to the Congress a budget that is going to get us out of this ditch, and it is going to take the work of each and every one of us to move forward.

BUDGET DECIDES AMONG PRIORITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, this week the House will consider the budget resolution for fiscal year 2010. As with any budget, whether it is a household budget or the U.S. Government, the process involves deciding among priorities. And in the case of the Federal Government, it is deciding among priorities, all of which have legitimate public benefits.

Last week, the Budget Committee marked up the resolution. One of the amendments offered by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle proposed one of those decisions. Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. MCHENRY proposed to strip \$50 million of funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and direct those funds to be spent for veterans' health care facilities. I applaud them very much for their interest in veterans' health care.

And I am happy to remind them and everyone else who is watching that over the past 3 years, the Democratic Congress increased funding for veterans' health care by \$17 billion. And that is following 6 years under their party's rule where the number of vets actually receiving care declined.

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Unfortunately, the debate on their amendment the other night left a lot to be desired as it actually became an opportunity for somebody to take cheap shots at arts funding that are not borne out by logic or facts. We just heard a little earlier the gentleman from South Carolina say arts funding is wasteful spending. Well, this day by fortuitous coincidence is Arts Advocacy Day, and I'd like to make the case for NEA funding, because, although that amendment was defeated in the Budget Committee, it may rear its head this week as well.

Mr. HENSARLING supported his amendment by juxtaposing the health care needs of one of his constituents, a legitimate American military hero from Palestine, Texas, against funding for the arts. He implied that he didn't represent constituents who would benefit from arts funding. Well, I represent some legitimate American heroes as well, but I also represent Actors Theater of Louisville, a world-renowned institution; the Louisville Ballet; the Louisville Orchestra; the Kentucky