

The Republicans' choice to privatize Medicare, turning more power over to the insurance companies, will result in reduced coverage and exposure to greater financial risks for our seniors.

The Congressional Budget Office determined that under the Republican budget seniors' out-of-pocket expenses for health care would more than double, and could almost triple. To put that into context, the Congressional Budget Office found out that by 2030 seniors would pay 68 percent of premiums and out-of-pocket costs under the Republican plan, compared to only 25 percent under current law. And it found that the Republican plan means seniors will pay more for their prescription drugs because it reestablishes the doughnut hole.

Even Alice Rivlin, the former Office of Management and Budget Director under President Clinton, who worked with the Republican architect of this budget on a deficit reduction proposal, said she could not support his Medicare proposal because it eliminated the traditional Medicare choice and lowered the rate of growth beyond what's defensible.

And the conservative Wall Street Journal concluded earlier this week, quote: The plan would essentially end Medicare, which now pays for 48 million elderly and disabled Americans, as a program that directly pays those bills.

Under the guise of deficit reduction, Republicans are recklessly attacking the vital supports for our seniors.

We all agree that we have to address the deficit. The issue is not whether we reduce the deficit but how we do it. We can't cut what helps us create jobs, innovate for the future, and remain competitive in the global marketplace. And we cannot balance this budget on the backs of our Nation's seniors.

The Federal budget is about more than dollars and cents. It's a statement of our values and priorities as a nation. Republicans in this budget have set the wrong priorities. They would rather cut benefits to seniors than cut subsidies to Big Oil or corporations that ship our jobs overseas. The Republican budget breaks the promise we made to our seniors to protect them in their golden years.

I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: If we can't protect our Greatest Generation, I ask you, what's next?

END THE POLITICAL GAMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, on a daily basis I listen to the people of my district, and they tell me they don't want games and they don't want the buck passed. They're sick of the status quo here in Washington. And my constituents are sick of the big spending, the big government, and the political games. They're sick of Washington doing what's easy.

Well, we're here today because last year it was easier for the Democrats in Congress to not do their job and not pass a budget. Isn't that a shame? And we're here because HARRY REID and the Senate Democrats want to play political games and defend big spending.

Yesterday, we passed a bill to protect our troops in the event that HARRY REID shuts down the government, and the President then said that he would veto this bill. HARRY REID and the President are playing games with our troops as well.

Now the House is leading, and we passed four bills to keep the government open and cut spending. And we are going to be here until we get our fiscal house in order.

I stand here today, 9 days after I first joined my colleagues outside of the Capitol demanding that HARRY REID act like a leader, and I said it then and I will say it now: HARRY REID, get your act together. Let's put this country on the right track and move forward.

STOP THE CHILDISH GAMES; KEEP THE GOVERNMENT RUNNING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, 14 hours from now it appears the doors of the Federal Government will shut. And it will happen for one reason and one reason alone—because of the Republican majority's inflexibility, callousness, and political gamesmanship.

For 3 months, they have been in charge of the people's House, but they haven't done one thing that the people want.

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They haven't lifted a finger to create the jobs Americans so desperately need. One Republican Member, in fact, said on the House floor last week that we should stop talking about the jobs. Stop talking about the jobs? They don't want to talk about jobs because they don't have a plan to create any. They've offered nothing but deep, painful, unnecessary job-killing spending cuts, and they have refused to budge an inch.

I want to cut government spending, Mr. Speaker. But I don't want to take the money from children who need early childhood education. I don't want to take the money from families that need help paying for colleges. And I don't want to take the money from seniors who need medical care.

I want to cut the gobs and gobs of money, nearly \$7 billion every single month, we're spending to occupy a foreign nation and have our servicemen killed and maimed by insurgents.

You want to eliminate wasteful government spending? I say the war in Afghanistan could be number one on our list. Ten years after we started sending our troops there we continue to be stuck in a hopeless quagmire that

doesn't doing anything to eliminate the terrorist threat or accomplish our national security goals.

But, of course, the Republican leadership won't consider cutting more spending. Instead they want to go after middle class working families who need a government that's on their side, particularly now because of how dire the economy has become.

I hope my Republican colleagues will give up this childish refusal to compromise. The American people deserve better than to have their government held hostage by an extreme ideological agenda.

Let's keep the doors of the Federal Government open. And as we look to next year's budget, instead of making seniors and schoolchildren bear the sacrifice, and instead of dismantling Medicare and cutting education, instead of threatening women's health, why don't we restore fiscal sanity by finally bringing our troops home.

AVOIDING A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. WOMACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my voice to those calling for agreement on funding the government for the remainder of this year and avoiding the consequences of a government shutdown. I don't want the government to shut down. Our conference does not want the government to shut down. No one I've talked with wants the government to shut down. And talk of such a shutdown is weighing heavily on consumer confidence in an already fragile economy, not to mention its confidence in this body. We can do better. We should do better. We must do better.

Yesterday on this floor we took yet another action that keeps our government afloat and guarantees that, in the event of a shutdown, troops and their families get paid. That's the least we can do.

And Mr. Speaker, yesterday I sat in a hearing with the CEO of Amtrak. During the hearing it was suggested by a colleague that the carrier examine the feasibility of shutting down routes that are losing, hemorrhaging money. The answer he received was that because of legal agreements mandating payments on labor and benefits and other guarantees, it would still cost them billions.

I find it incredible that we have these federally subsidized guarantees in place, but we can't guarantee the same for those men and women downrange willing to take a bullet for their country. Shame on us.

Jobs continue to be our highest priority, and it should surprise no one that fundamental to this objective is dealing with a balance sheet full of red ink. It's fundamental to business, it's fundamental to households, and it's fundamental to government. No reputable organization behaves financially the way this government behaves.

The message from the electorate is simple: Live within your means.

The reason we're facing a potential government shutdown is simple: No budget for 2011. And Democrats don't see our spending issues with the same degree of urgency as we do.

I said it just a few days ago on this same floor, and it's worth repeating. We have kicked this can down the road so long, so often and so far, that America and this Congress has a chronic case of turf toe.

Message to America: If you want to remove uncertainty and create jobs, fix the balance sheet. Cut spending. It's as simple as that.

This Republican-led House has done its job. We've attempted time and time again to fund government in a responsible way, prevent a government shutdown, and restore fiscal integrity. I join my colleagues in urging the Senate to act and to act now so that we can turn our attention to the far more important and substantive work that lies ahead.

MASSIVE PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday on the floor of the House, STENY HOYER, Minority Whip, offered the Republicans the time, by unanimous consent, to work out the details in terms of getting the numbers right because, regardless of the pontification, it's very clear that urgent negotiations have gone forward, and the difference between the two parties is very small. This could be worked out in a day or two.

But this offer was rejected because our Republican friends are no longer interested in the money. It's about the ideological agenda, the riders, the change to policy for EPA, or dictating their ideology on the people in the District of Columbia, for instance.

It is also about a much larger agenda going forward. I spent most of Wednesday listening to the Republican budget road map that is on its way to the floor of the House. It is so extreme that before the election, when my good friend, PAUL RYAN, unveiled it, very few Republicans would sign on. They knew that in the heat of an election, if people knew what Republicans had in store, they wouldn't get elected. So they were counseled, stay away.

Well, it's unveiled now. The election is held and this agenda is back with a vengeance.

I invite any American to look at independent appraisals of what's in it. There is nothing new or reforming about vouchers for health insurance companies or block granting Medicare to the States. Under this proposal, total health care costs are going to go up. But the cost to the government of the voucher is going to go down. And

230 million Americans, 55 and under, are going to pick up the tab.

Oh, and yes, they're going to keep, for 80 million Americans, Medicare that's going to be limping on in its current form. In 2050 there will be 8 million people still covered.

There are massive cuts, but not for defense. That's more or less off limits. There's talk of reform, but in the area of reform where I have worked with PAUL RYAN for years, agriculture, no. We're going to leave that until reauthorization takes place.

Health care for the poor is on the chopping block. They are going to block grant aid to the States so that it can be reduced over time. Bear in mind that the cost per person for Medicaid is the lowest in this country, at a time when private health insurance premiums have doubled in the last 10 years, and overall private health care spending has gone up faster than government health care spending.

Now, in these troubled times, we should be looking at reform. In the Health Care Reform Act passed last session, we have an opportunity to actually change those health care cost curves. Every significant advance to restrain accelerated health care costs are embedded in that legislation. But rather than accelerating it, our friends want to delay it.

I strongly urge the American public to take the time to look at what's in this proposal because that's what's coming down the line, and not be distracted by the shutdown that Republicans are insisting upon.

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GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I want to add my voice to the growing number of Members not only here in this body but also in the Senate that are calling on Senator REID to take action.

Last week, on Wednesday, 30 freshmen and myself wrote a letter imploring Senator REID to pass a long-term continuing resolution so that we could address the bigger issue of our fiscal year 12 budget. We said simply: We the undersigned call on you and the Senate to pass a long-term continuing resolution, a resolution that hears the calls of the American people and makes reasonable, responsible spending cuts. We have received nothing from the Senate except denials of the dire straits of our Nation's fiscal health.

Mr. REID, we are letting you know that we will rally on the Senate steps every day until you pass a long-term continuing resolution.

And that's exactly what we've done every day for the past week. In fact, today will be the 8th day, in just a few minutes, that we step over to the Sen-

ate steps and call on him once again to be a leader.

On Wednesday of this week, we sent another letter asking Senator REID, if he wasn't willing to lead, to step down and allow someone in who would lead. Ninety Members signed that, and we were joined by Members of the Senate in that call asking Mr. REID, simply: Your lack of action and absence of leadership is irresponsible.

Let's take a look at the costs that we face as we are literally hours away from a government shutdown. We spend \$69 billion a week in spending, of which \$27 billion is borrowed. We are asking for \$61 billion in cuts—2 percent. Any small business that I know of in this economy, if you ask them can you cut 5 percent out of your budget and the other option is closing the doors, what do you think they're going to do? They're going to find the 5 percent and stay open, keep the doors open and stay in business. That's all we're asking at this point, a small down payment for the bigger picture that's coming up in fiscal year 2012.

Not to mention our troops. I got a call this morning from a young sergeant with four children, serving in a National Guard unit in my district that's being deployed in just weeks. And he said, Congressman CRAWFORD, we are frustrated. We're angry. We're upset. What's going to happen to my family as I go to Afghanistan and they rely on my paycheck? And yet the Senate says, no, we're not interested in funding the troops for the balance of this year.

Yesterday, this body took responsible action in funding the troops for the balance of this year and funding our government for another week until we could address the bigger picture, the balance of fiscal year 2011. It is time for Senator REID to lead, as his title suggests. We passed a bill to fund the government. We're asking for leadership on the Senate side.

Mr. REID, please pass a bill.

THE REPUBLICAN ROAD TO RUIN BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, the Republican road-to-ruin budget, if enacted, will end Medicare. It will end the program that 46 million seniors and disabled individuals depend upon for their health care. This gross injustice is made immeasurably more egregious and offensive by the fact that this is being done not to balance the budget, but to expand and permanently guarantee even bigger tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires and to give new tax breaks to some of the world's most profitable companies.

Rather than the path to prosperity, this budget is more like the road-to-ruin, a road paved in gold with lavish handouts for special interests, paid for and built with dollars from senior citizens who will see their hard-earned