

BUDGET

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, over the last 48 hours, this House engaged in its constitutional right of creating a pathway for revenue for the United States of America. Sadly, we ended just a few minutes ago on a Republican budget that cannot claim that it will, in essence, reduce the deficit or create a surplus in any given year.

I am delighted to have supported the Democratic budget that reduces the deficit and reaches a primary balance by 2018. But more importantly, I think I am very delighted that the American people will see a heart in this budget: that we will not destroy Medicare; that we will not burden on seniors the extra \$12,000 that seniors will have to pay—that is right, \$12,000—in the Medicare program under the Republican plan; and that young people will not be prevented at the doors of colleges from going to school, and that Head Start will end and Medicaid for the disabled and seniors will end.

I do have faith in this country, and I believe we will get a budget that is both merciful and balanced the right way for the American people, not the wrong way. Today, unfortunately, we made a wrong step, but I believe together we will make it right.

BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STIVERS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, recently I have given several Special Order speeches about my view of the Constitution, making the argument for why I think it should be amended to include certain basic rights for the American people that they currently lack. These include: the right to a high-quality education, the right to health care, and equal rights for women.

Equal rights for women, alone, Mr. Speaker, would be responsible for providing an extraordinary amount of income for 51 percent of households headed by women if women in our society were simply paid at the same rate that their counterparts in the workforce are paid. Equal rights. Equal rights for women, alone, as a fundamental right, would strengthen our economy.

This afternoon, my Special Order time will be used to discuss the continuing resolution for fiscal year 2011, the Republican proposed fiscal year 2012 budget, which we just voted on, and the balanced budget amendment, or what I've taken to call the "imbalanced budget" amendment. All three of them have something in common.

In an ideal world, my colleague PAUL RYAN would support the idea of a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, but such an amendment would have extraordinary implications for our country, extraordinary implications for our Federal Government, and it would be fundamentally in the wrong direction.

And while the Republican proposed budget of fiscal year 2012 does not have the strength of the Constitution of the United States, it is clear to me that Republicans and conservatives in the Republican Party—and some conservatives within the Democratic Party—are forcing the Nation's politics into a consideration of a balanced budget amendment for the Constitution. And I want to talk about that in the context of the 2011 debate, the context of the 2012 debate, and such an amendment.

Before I begin, I want to set the framework for my Special Order.

President Harry Truman, in 1946, said, "All of the policies of the Federal Government must be geared to the objective of sustained full production and full employment."

Today, our country has unemployment that is nearing 9 percent; unemployment nearing 9 percent. Nearly 13 to 14 million Americans are presently unemployed—many of whom are chronically unemployed—and yet, in 1946, President Harry Truman said that the objective of the Federal Government must be "sustained full production and full employment to raise consumer purchasing power and to encourage business investment." There has not been a single bill in this Congress since the 112th Congress has begun to address the issue of full employment.

Secondly, I want to remind the American people, Mr. Speaker, of what William Jennings Bryan said in 1896. He said: I am in favor of an income tax. When I find a man or a woman who is not willing to bear his share of the burdens of the government which protects him or her, I find a man or a woman who is unworthy to enjoy the blessings of a government like ours.

Not long ago, Mr. Speaker, the House passed H.R. 1, a continuing resolution that would have forced middle class and working class Americans to carry the burden of spending cuts. My colleagues across the aisle simplified the impacts of this measure by describing it as "tightening our belts." They seem to be oblivious to the fact that these cuts went deep for those Americans who could least afford them.

H.R. 1—tightening our belts—slashed programs like community health centers specifically designed to provide access to basic health and dental services to underserved communities that may not be otherwise able to care for them.

H.R. 1 tightened our belts through cuts to the National Institutes of Health, setting back development of cancer treatments and cures for other diseases, the impact of which we will feel for years to come as medical professionals are forced to shut down promising research projects.

H.R. 1 tightened our belts by hacking away at training of health professions, reducing this funding by more than 23 percent. Cuts to title VII and title VIII programs that help to train primary health professionals for underserved areas would limit the access of low-income individuals to quality doctors, nurses and physician assistants in their areas.

H.R. 1 tightened our belts by severing title X family planning programs. In doing so, we stepped back in time, preventing lifesaving care from being offered to our Nation's women, specifically women who wouldn't otherwise have access to this kind of care.

The programs I've listed so far provide health services to our Nation, and especially to our most underprivileged populations.

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H.R. 1 also tightened our belts with cuts to job-training programs, Head Start, and after-school programs, Pell Grants, Hope VI housing programs, and high-speed rail. These programs were systematically sent to the guillotine.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR
OF H.R. 1081

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1081.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois may proceed.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. The people that they serve are not millionaires to whom we generously extended tax cuts. They are not the corporations that eagerly navigate tax loopholes, navigate the walls and the Halls of this Congress every year, costing our Nation billions in revenue. They are everyday, hard-working, middle class, public school educated, checkbook balancing, minimum wage earning mothers and fathers and grandparents who elected each of us, hoping we'd find a way to decrease unemployment and bring America back from the brink.

Mr. Speaker, thankfully our colleagues across the Capitol thought we went a few notches too tight in our belt with H.R. 1, as the Senate refused to take up these cuts. Much of our future long-term budget decisions and discussions to reduce our deficit and get America back on track remain in limbo.

Recently, this discussion had reached a fevered pitch. After multiple short-term extensions of the fiscal year 2011 appropriations legislation, the negotiations between Speaker BOEHNER, Leader REID, and the President had broken down many times throughout the week. We were faced with the threat of the first government shutdown since 1996. Agencies were planning which workers to furlough, national parks and museums were prepared to shut their doors for the weekend, and the

brave men and women in active duty and service to our Nation were prepared to continue their work without pay.

Then at the 11th hour, there was a breakthrough. The 5½-month continuing resolution agreed to by the leadership of the House and the Senate and the President included a total of \$39 billion worth of cuts.

But these cuts that were agreed to late into Friday have real consequences. There are significant cuts to programs like WIC, Women, Infants and Children, the special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children; Community Health Centers; Low-income Heating and Energy Assistance Programs, LIHEAP; international disaster assistance; and Head Start.

And after the President and congressional leadership agreed to giving \$800 billion in tax cuts to America's top wage earners last December, we turned around and cut programs that working families and seniors depend on. It just doesn't make sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

Again, while I was relieved that the Federal Government did not shut down, I am deeply disappointed in the process that has brought us this so-called "compromise," if you can even call it that. Like the negotiations that held up tax cuts for the middle class at the end of last year to hold out for tax cuts for the wealthy, our leadership has again demonstrated that they're willing to hold up programs that provide for the most vulnerable Americans. And this Congress is only just beginning.

As for next fiscal year's budget, there are a variety of solutions that have been presented—some with potential to succeed, others destined to fail.

Among the proposals lie Budget Committee Chairman PAUL RYAN's recent offering. Look at the facts. His proposal will reduce our Nation's deficit, but leaves us asking the question, At what cost?

First and foremost, Mr. RYAN intends to place the burden of ending our Nation's debt on the citizens least capable of caring for themselves, the most reliant on the help of others—our seniors. The Budget Committee's proposal will end the Medicare our senior citizens have come to know and rely on, replacing it with what can only be described as a coupon, a voucher, that, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, would leave our eldest Americans shouldering 68 percent of their health care costs in the next 20 years.

Who else pays the cost of balancing our budget within the Ryan proposal? The burden falls next to working American families. The Ryan proposal will lower tax rates for individuals with the highest income as well as corporations, relying on raising taxes for the average Americans to pay for it.

If it sounds familiar, it's because it's the same standby trickle-down failure that we placed our faith in in the past decade. Despite what Majority Leader

CANTOR says, during an economic downturn, decreasing the deficit does not create jobs. Also, cutting taxes does not create jobs. Both Presidents Bush and Obama have cut taxes so much that if Majority Leader ERIC CANTOR's theory were correct, we would have zero unemployment, which we do not have. This is what the Ryan plan aims to do.

For 10 years our economy has stagnated. The gap between the median wage and average wage is growing because the highest earners are the only ones receiving wage increases. Unfortunately, balancing our Nation's budget on the backs of the middle class does not end there.

Where else would the burden of balancing the budget fall under the Ryan plan? Education. Cuts to K-12 education are just the starting point in disadvantaging the future of America. The proposal also makes significant cuts to Pell Grants. These cuts will prevent the educated generation of young Americans our country needs to compete in a global economy. The proposed cuts to Pell Grants would return the maximum award allowable to pre-stimulus levels, impacting millions of young Americans depending on financial assistance to attend college. This will stretch the time it will take for them to earn their degrees and enter the workforce.

Finally, RYAN's budget continues to provide tax loopholes to big oil companies and cuts all Federal support for clean energy, shortsighting our economic investments in the future of energy.

Mr. Speaker, I am not promoting constant Federal debt. I am not advocating against hoping or trying for a balanced budget. But when you look through history and the history of our Nation, we see that when Americans were in most need during war or recession, during the Great Depression, we focused on solving these problems, not just on reducing our debt.

Mr. Speaker, we are currently engaged in two wars and fighting our way out of the worst recession of the modern era. The Ryan budget is a new attempt at an age-old ploy to mandate a balanced budget for the Federal Government. Ending our Nation's deficit and returning our country to prosperity should, of course, be the goal. But we must also ask the question, At what cost? Where do our priorities lie?

The Ryan proposal, like the myriad of constitutional amendments before it, attempts to balance our budget on the backs of those Americans who can least bear the burden.

Here's the history of the balanced budget amendment. The current budget situation is most poignant when looking at the origins of the balanced budget amendment and its history. Mr. Speaker, after listening to my colleagues across the aisle present the Republican Study Committee's budget this morning, I'm apt to wonder what it is that they're actually studying

over there. Hopefully, we will be able to set the record straight.

As a reaction to FDR's New Deal, Republican Congressman Harold Knutson of Minnesota introduced the first version of the amendment in 1936. Like many constitutional amendments, this resolution did not receive a hearing or a vote.

During President Dwight D. Eisenhower's first term, the Judiciary Committee of a barely Democratic Senate held its first hearing on this amendment. It again did not receive a vote.

After these partial defeats, the balanced budget amendment supporters shifted their focus to the States. From 1975 to 1980, 30 State legislatures passed resolutions calling for a constitutional convention to propose this amendment directly to the States; that is, they sought to bypass Congress and the congressional amendment process.

The election of President Reagan and a Republican Senate in 1980 renewed hopes for a balanced budget amendment and passage by Congress. While the Senate did adopt the amendment in 1982, it failed to garner the necessary three-fifths majority in the House. This failure energized conservative groups such as the National Taxpayers Union and the National Tax Limitation Committee to refocus on State action.

In 1982 and 1983, the Alaska and Missouri legislatures passed a resolution supporting the BBA, bringing the total number of these resolutions to 32, two short of the 34 needed for a convention.

However, a growing concern about the scope of a constitutional convention led some States to withdraw their resolutions, reshifting focus to congressional action.

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From 1990 to 1994, Congress would make three additional attempts to codify this amendment. All failed to garner the necessary three-fifths majority. However, the BBA made a comeback when it was included in Newt Gingrich's Contract with America. Twenty-six days after taking office, the newly empowered Republican majority adopted the balanced budget amendment, giving conservatives their first congressional win in a decade. Disappointment awaited in the Senate, however, where two separate votes fell just short of adoption. This failure, along with the balanced budget and the budget surplus at the end of the decade, sapped any remaining congressional support for a balanced budget amendment.

There was renewed energy from Republican support for the amendment in 2000 as it was included in their party's platform. The Bush tax cuts, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the massive deficit spending created by them eventually led Republicans to sweep the idea of a balanced budget amendment back under the rug. By 2004, the Republican Party left any mention of a balanced budget out of their political platform.

Again in recent years, with the advent of the tea party and the return of

extreme fiscal conservatism in the Republican Party, there are currently 12 balanced budget amendments in the House of Representatives, and in the Senate there are three. I had my staff double-check that for me. Twelve balanced budget amendments in the House. They are all basically the same. Some have even been offered by Members of my own party. I understand these Members' frustrations. Mr. Speaker, I have been trying to pass my nine amendments to the Constitution for 10 years now, and my amendments are based on FDR's second bill of rights, which he proposed back in 1944. Today, 67 years later, here we are.

Mr. Speaker, I fundamentally believe that conservatives in Congress are pushing for this amendment, not to force a vote in Congress, but to rally States to act. Mr. Speaker, we have a troubling national debt and deficit, but the balanced budget amendment is not the solution.

The argument proponents of a balanced budget amendment make is as follows: Like families, businesses, and States, the Federal Government should balance its budget. But since it does not, we need a constitutional amendment to guarantee that it will do so.

Nearly every State in this Union has some form of a balanced budget requirement, but those States are not out of debt. Their amendments have restricted the ability of those States to care for their citizens in time of austerity or emergency, but their budgets are not balanced.

According to a Forbes analysis of the global debt crisis in January of 2010, every single State in the country is carrying some form of debt. These debts range from as little as \$17 per capita in Nebraska to \$4,490 in Connecticut. How can this be, Mr. Speaker? It's because the infrastructure of these States allows them to hide debt in capital funds. The Federal Government cannot, and I would argue the Federal Government should not follow this path. Congress should never seek to hide the fiscal realities from the public that bears the burden of the costs nor should we sell the public magic beans that a balanced budget amendment will somehow make the national debt and other problems go away.

Debt will exist just as new problems will arise. Just as there are new threats to America, unforeseen threats, just as there are future economic calamities that we cannot see, the Federal Government must play some role in addressing a national crisis. A balanced budget amendment would simply prohibit the Federal Government from exercising precisely the authority that it needs to exercise on behalf of the American people.

In fiscal year 2012, approximately 44 States will face revenue shortfalls. Many are desperately looking for ways to declare their State bankrupt. Bankrupt. I say it again, Mr. Speaker, because this proposed amendment would

place the Federal Government in a similar predicament. The effect on many States is calamitous. For instance, in Rhode Island, judges and court workers have cut pay and left 53 positions unfilled. This is still not enough to balance their budgets. As a desperate last resort, the chief justice has begun to dispose of cases on backlog, literally tossing them out. Florida is in the same predicament.

Mr. Speaker, a balanced budget amendment would force the Federal Government to deny Americans the right to seek redress and justice in Federal courts for the sake of balancing their budgets. In my home State of Illinois, mental health services have been cut by \$91 million. Human service directors are fearful that these cuts will cause a real public health and public safety crisis. Iowa, Idaho, Alabama, and Ohio are considering drastic cuts to education.

My colleagues across the aisle are so concerned about handing our children and grandchildren any amount of national debt that they fail to realize we are setting future generations up for failure. States are already cutting too many services that the American people and the American workforce need in order to remain strong and competitive. Should the Federal Government do the same, our legacy will be an America that is uneducated, ill-equipped to compete on a global level.

Mr. Speaker, as exemplified by its effects on the States, this amendment may sound good on its face, but it falls flat when examined more critically. Like an optical illusion, the image of which carries and changes as you draw closer, the balanced budget amendment masquerades as the savior of our budget; yet in reality it threatens to permanently destroy it.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Citizens for Tax Justice, and others, a Federal balanced budget amendment would do five very damaging things. It would damage our economy by making recessions deeper and more frequent. It would heighten the risk of default and jeopardize the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. It would lead to reductions in needed investments for the future. It would favor wealthy Americans over middle- and low-income Americans by making it far more difficult to raise revenues on people who can afford to pay, and easier to cut programs for people who need them most. And lastly, Mr. Speaker, it would weaken the principle of majority rule. Therefore, passing a balanced budget amendment is not prudent. It's not the right path for our Nation to follow.

So let's return for a few moments to the five faults outlined by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and Citizens for Tax Justice. These arguments will bring to light the dangers with which a balanced budget amendment would threaten our Nation.

The first fault. A balanced budget amendment would damage the econ-

omy and make recessions deeper and more frequent. Under a balanced budget amendment, Congress would be forced to adopt a rigid fiscal policy, not just under the amendment, but also under the Ryan budget, requiring the budget to be balanced or in surplus every year, regardless of the current economic situation or threat to our Nation's security.

A sluggish economy, with less revenue and more outgoing expenditures, creates a deficit, as we've seen from recent events. A deficit necessitates economic stimulation to reverse negative growth. That is why in the last session of Congress the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act invested in roads, bridges, mass transit, and other infrastructure, provided 95 percent of working Americans with an immediate tax cut, and extended unemployment insurance and COBRA for Americans hurt by the economic downturn through no fault of their own.

If Congress were forced to function under a balanced budget amendment, deficit reduction would be mandated, even more so during periods of slow or stalled economic growth, which is the opposite of what is needed in such a situation. This consistently proposed constitutional amendment risks making recessions more common and more catastrophic for middle class families, seniors, veterans, and the poor. Under such an amendment, Congress is stripped of any power to adequately respond.

The second fault. A balanced budget amendment would risk default and jeopardize the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government while simultaneously challenging the separation of powers. A balanced budget amendment would bar the government from borrowing funds unless a three-fifths vote in both Houses of Congress permitted a raise in the debt limit. Under such a scenario, a budget crisis in which a default becomes a threat is more likely because of the limits placed on the fluidity of the debt ceiling. We are about to enter into a national conversation about what to do about the debt ceiling. That default under such a scenario becomes more likely to occur.

After a default of only a few days, the long-term impacts would quickly appear. Confidence in the ability of the U.S. to meet binding financial obligations would erode almost immediately. The government pays relatively low interest rates on its loans because it pays its debts back in full and on time. A default would mimic an earthquake, shaking confidence in the United States on a global scale, resulting in exploding interest rates and aftershocks felt in our national economy.

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The international economy would also succumb to the rumblings of this potential disaster, and our deep connection to it would cause even further chaos here at home.

Other balanced budget proponents argue that since States have to balance

their budgets, so should the Federal Government. Indeed, many States are required to balance their operating budgets but not their total budgets. No such distinction is made by a balanced budget amendment.

Rainy day, or reserve funds, which States can draw on to balance their budgets, are prohibited by a BBA. Many States operating under a BBA require the Governors to submit a balanced budget, but do not require the actual achievement of it. Some States allow Governors to act unilaterally to cut spending in the middle of the fiscal year. This condition of the BBA would violate the Federal Constitution's separation of powers.

The Founding Fathers were deliberate in their construction of our government, and the separation of powers serves as a cornerstone in our democracy. Each branch has certain powers and limitations. Congress, the courts, and the President worked together but in distinct ways to move America forward. The threat of judicial involvement in matters of the budget is a real problem under the balanced budget amendment. The BBA would weaken the balance of power. It diminishes the authority of Congress, as the elected representatives of the people, to have the final say on taxes and spending.

Mr. Speaker, what purpose does this body serve if this amendment passes? Should we broaden the scope of judicial review granted to our Federal courts? By subverting the balance of power between the branches, this body steps onto a slippery slope of reassigning authority and moving away from the values inherent in our Constitution.

The third fault. A balanced budget amendment would lead to reductions in needed investments for the future.

Since the 1930s, our Nation has consistently made public investments that improve long-term productivity growth in education, in infrastructure, in research and development. All of the Federal highways in this country are paid for by this Congress. They have helped build a more perfect union between the States, within States.

When we take off from O'Hare airport in Chicago or from Reagan airport, all of the airports are Federal facilities run by the Federal Aviation Administration. When you visit your Nation's Capital and you take off from an airport, because airports function under the rigid guidelines of the FAA, there is a reasonable assurance, when your plane takes off from one airport and lands at another airport, that the length of the runway that you take off from and land on are reasonably the same. States don't determine the lengths of runways.

If we are going to build a national government, if we are going to build one country, if we are going to form a more perfect union, only the Federal Government has the power to do that. It simply cannot be done one State at a time. In a global economy and in a global economic environment, we must

move as one Nation to challenge Europe, to challenge the Japanese, to challenge the Chinese, to challenge cheap labor and cheap labor markets abroad.

We must have one national standard, not 50 individual State sovereign standards to move our Nation—our education system, our infrastructure and our research and development—forward. These efforts encourage increased private sector investment, leading to a surplus and a thriving economy.

A balanced budget amendment, which requires a balanced budget each and every year, would limit the government's ability to make public investments, thereby hindering our future growth and thereby hindering our ability as a Nation to be competitive nationally and internationally—a very important point, Mr. Speaker, for which I want to deviate from my prepared remarks.

You see, it is just simply impossible to go one State at a time or to assume that the private sector, acting on its own, has the capacity to address the question of sustained full production and full employment on their own. President Truman made it perfectly clear: All of the policies of the Federal Government must be geared to the objective of sustained, full production and full employment, to raise consumer purchasing power and to encourage business investment. In the 112th Congress, unemployment is at 9 percent, and not a single piece of legislation considered by the 112th Congress has done anything to address 13 million unemployed Americans.

A few short weeks ago, I came to the House floor after having purchased an iPad, and I said that I happen to believe, Mr. Speaker, that at some point in time this new device, which is now probably responsible for eliminating thousands of American jobs—now Borders is closing stores, because why do you need to go to Borders anymore? Why do you need to go to Barnes & Noble? Buy an iPad and download your book, download your newspaper, download your magazine.

At Chicago State University in my congressional district, in the freshman class, they are not being given textbooks any longer. They are all being given iPads as they enter school. President Wayne Watson hopes to have a textbook-less campus within 4 years where at this State university they no longer have textbooks.

Well, what becomes of publishing companies and publishing company jobs? What becomes of bookstores and librarians and all of the jobs associated with paper?

Well, in the not-too-distant future, such jobs simply will not exist. Steve Jobs is doing pretty well. He created the iPad. Certainly it has made life more efficient for Americans, but the iPad is produced in China. It's not produced here in the United States. So the Chinese get to take advantage of our

First Amendment value, that is, to provide freedom of speech through the iPad to the American people, but there is no protection for jobs here in America to ensure that the American people are being put to work.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Congress and the direction of this Congress, in its obsession with debts and deficits, is heading in the opposite direction of sustained full production. Again, iPads are made in China, and full employment. There are 13 million unemployed Americans counting on this Congress to do something.

They certainly can't count on the State of Illinois; it's broke. They can't count on the State of Idaho; it's broke. They can't count on the State of Alabama; the State of Alabama is broke. They can't count on Mississippi; Mississippi is broke. Louisiana is broke. The States are broke.

So the Federal Government is under an obligation to sustain full production and full employment to raise consumer purchasing power and to encourage business investment in the United States, not in China.

The third fault of the BBA would lead to reductions in needed investments for the future. Since the 1930s, our Nation has consistently made public investments that have improved long-term productivity growth in education, in infrastructure, and in research and development.

These efforts encourage increased private sector investment, leading to a budget surplus and a thriving economy. A balanced budget amendment, which requires a balanced budget each and every year, would limit the government's ability to make public investments, thereby hindering future growth.

For years, conservatives have abused the debt and the deficit as a springboard from which to argue for smaller government and cuts to programs that serve as social safety nets for American families. Although we must consider the debt and the deficit, the larger and more significant issue is the nature of the debt that we create.

If you invest \$50,000 in a business, in a house or in your education, you can expect future returns on your investment. If you "invest" the same \$50,000 in a gun collection or ammunition, what are the future investment returns? Both investments result in \$50,000 of debt, but only one results in returns that can transform that debt into long-term gain. Social investments provide the potential for greater returns in the long run in the same fashion as personal investments. Even small expenditures on social programs lay a foundation for great wealth in the long term.

If the Nation chooses to invest \$1.5 trillion over a 5-year period in the building of bridges and roads and airports and railroads and mass transit and schools and housing and health care, we could create some debt.

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But the increased ability of companies to interact and to ship their goods over well-paved and planned roads, the new businesses that would sprout around the freshly built or newly expanded airport, the higher wages of a student who is well-educated and able to attend college, resulting in more tax revenue, and the improved productivity of employees at their healthiest would eventually result in greater returns for our country.

The extension of the Bush-era tax cuts for corporations and the rich brought about some short-term stimulus of consumer spending. But similar to Reagan's tax cuts, which resulted in record government deficits, the long-term damage outweighs the immediate effects. Reagan's tax cuts for the rich came at the expense of investing in our Nation's need for long-term balanced economic growth. The Reagan administration neglected and cut back on our Nation's investment in infrastructure, education, health care, housing, job training, transportation, energy conservation, and much more.

The inclination of most conservatives in both parties is to cut the debt by cutting programs for the most vulnerable among us—our poor, our children, our elderly, and our minorities. This approach, however, has been proven false too many times. A balanced budget amendment would take us back to this archaic and ineffective system permanently.

The fourth fault. A balanced budget amendment favors wealthy Americans over middle- and low-income Americans by making it harder to raise revenues and easier to cut programs.

Again, a BBA ultimately favors wealthier Americans over middle- and lower-income Americans. Under current law, legislation can pass by a majority of those present and voting by a recorded vote. The BBA requires, however, that legislation that raises taxes be approved on a rollcall vote by a majority of the full membership of both Houses. Thus, the BBA would make it harder to cut the deficit by curbing special interest tax breaks of the oil and gas industries, and it would make it easier to reduce programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, veterans' benefits, education, environmental programs, and assistance for poor children. Wealthy individuals and corporations receive most of their government benefits in the form of tax entitlements while low-income and middle-income Americans receive most of their government benefits through programs.

As evidenced by the cuts that both parties agreed upon recently, it is far easier to cut social welfare programs than to cut spending for our military or to increase taxes. As long as spending is a political issue, cuts to those programs that assist those with the smallest voice in our government will always happen first.

Raising taxes, the only option to address a budget deficit aside from cutting programs, is already a burdensome

political issue. The additional requirements of a BBA further complicate the process of raising taxes. This means that the richest Americans will likely keep the benefits they receive from our government via tax cuts. Meanwhile, the poor lose the programs that provide them with housing, with food, with job training, with health care, and the very means to survive. This will further reinforce the growing gap between the rich and the rest of our society, middle class, working poor, and the destitute alike.

Aside from this already distressing point, when the baby boom generation retires, Mr. Speaker, the ratio of workers to retirees will fall to very low levels. This poses difficulties for Social Security since Social Security has been a pure pay-as-you-go system, with the payroll taxes of current workers paying for the benefits of current retirees. This was acceptable as long as today's workers could pay for today's retirees. But in the future, when there are fewer workers to pay for more retirees, the system is going to be out of balance.

So in 1977 and 1983, the Social Security Administration took important and prudent steps towards addressing this issue. It allowed the accumulation of reserves to be used later when needed. These changes were akin to what families do by saving for retirement during their working years and then by drawing down on their savings after they reach retirement. The balanced budget amendment insists that total government expenditures in any year, including those for Social Security benefits, not exceed total revenues collected in that same year, including revenues from Social Security payroll taxes. Thus, the benefits of the baby boomers would have to be financed in full by the taxes of those working and paying into the system then. This undercuts the central reforms of 1983. Drawing down on any part of accumulated reserves under a BBA, required under present law, means that the trust funds were spending more in benefits in those years than they were receiving in taxes. Under a BBA, that would be impermissible deficit spending.

The fifth fault. A BBA weakens the principle of majority rule and makes balancing the budget more difficult.

Most balanced budgets require that unless three-fifths of the Members of Congress agree to raising the debt ceiling, the budget must be balanced at all times. They also require that legislation raising taxes must be approved on a rollcall vote by a majority of the full membership of both Houses, not just those present and voting.

Currently, this provision weakens the principle of majority rule, and that's exactly what the tea party and my conservative colleagues want. Why do they want it? Because a three-fifths requirement empowers a minority, 40 percent plus one, in any given year. It creates a small group of people willing to threaten economic turmoil and disruption unless they get their way, i.e.,

the Republican freshmen, with the ability to extort concessions or exercise unprecedented leverage over our national economic and fiscal policy. Mr. Speaker, haven't the last few weeks demonstrated how difficult it already is to reach a compromise on a budget? This provision will simply make it impossible.

The final argument, Mr. Speaker, is what I'm calling the Ezra Klein argument. There is a final fault which is not on my list, but it is significant enough to mention. Ezra Klein of The Washington Post cleverly points out in a recent article, entitled "The Worst Idea in Washington," that under a balanced budget amendment, not a single budget of the Bush or Reagan administration would have qualified as constitutional. In fact, the only recent administration which would not violate the requirements of a balanced budget amendment would have been President Clinton's, and that would have been for only two of his budgets. Mr. Speaker, if President Reagan's budgets wouldn't qualify, is this something we should even be considering in this Congress? I don't think so.

I have listed a few, and certainly not an exhaustive list, of the arguments against the balanced budget amendment. The truth is the Federal budget is quite unlike fiscal practices of businesses, families, and States even though we keep hearing the argument: The Federal Government needs to balance its budget like I do at home. The Federal Government needs to balance its budget like our families do. The Federal Government needs to balance its budget like the States do. But contrary to popular myth, except in times of war and recession, the country has a conservative record of keeping deficits actually in line. It's when the States fail, it's when there are wars that we are fighting, and it's when we are looking at unforeseen economic calamity that we need a Federal Government that can reach into the deep recesses of her bounty to bring about a more perfect Union and keep the Nation moving forward. Without the Federal Government, the States cannot do it on their own, and the private sector has shown a reluctance to do it without regulation from the Federal Government to make the Union more perfect.

Let me add one final quote, Mr. Speaker. In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., stood not very far from this auspicious location and delivered a speech at the feet of Abraham Lincoln, at the feet of Abraham Lincoln's memorial at the end of our Mall. He began by saying, today I stand in the shadow of a man who 100 years ago set the slave free. But 100 years later, they find themselves still trapped and still isolated in the ghettos and the barrios and the rural areas of our Nation. He said, Mr. Speaker, today we have come here, in a sense, to cash a check. Now imagine that. Martin Luther King, Jr., at the other end of this Mall, is looking in the direction of Democrats and Republicans in the Congress of the United

States. And he says, Mr. Speaker, we've come here to cash a check, a check that should give us upon demand the riches of security and of freedom and justice. But America, Dr. King says, has issued us a bounced check. It keeps coming back marked "insufficient funds." But I refuse to believe that there are no funds in the great vault of opportunity of this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I am 46 years old, and I've had the privilege of serving in this Congress for nearly 16 years. I remember on September 10, 2001 when we stood here on the floor of this Congress, my dear colleagues, and this Congress declared that it was broke, that it couldn't find money for anything. We took a vote on September 10, 2001, to defund education programs for the most vulnerable children in our Nation.

□ 1520

Every Member of Congress, mostly from conservatives, and many conservative Democrats, came and made the argument that we could no longer afford to provide high-quality education for your children, that we could no longer afford to provide health care for all of the American people, that we could no longer afford it. And just 24 hours later, the tragedy, the great tragedy of the 20th century, terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and flew a plane into the ground in Pennsylvania and landed a plane on our Nation's defense system at the Pentagon. Just 24 hours later, the Congress of the United States that did not have the money to provide for education for our children, the Congress of the United States that did not have the money to provide health care for all of the American people, suddenly it found an unlimited amount of money to chase down Saddam Hussein. And we are spending an unlimited amount of money, just 24 hours later, to find Osama bin Laden in a cave in Afghanistan. Ten years later, we haven't found him yet. Yet we continue to spend billions and billions and billions of dollars.

So on one day the government is broke. Twenty-four hours later, Dr. King says the Nation has issued us a promissory note, and it keeps coming back marked "insufficient funds" for priorities that matter to the American people.

Our government, Mr. Speaker, needs the flexibility to respond in times of economic downturn or in war in a way that businesses, that families, and that States never have to consider.

I have been in the House long enough to know now that when my colleagues on the other side of the aisle came into the majority with large deficits and debt, I knew their first response would be to cut social spending, to weaken government regulation and underfund protection of workers' rights and civil rights and environmental protections. You name it.

I wish I could say I didn't see this coming, but conservative politicians

want to get government off the backs of finance, off the backs of finance and industry. They are willing and ready to use the current economic situation to do it, and they intend to place the burden on the backs of the middle class, of seniors, of children, of veterans and the poor.

The Republican budget that we voted on today does just that. The balanced budget amendment aims to make it a permanent fixture.

Mr. Speaker, I know we can do better. We cannot balance the budget on the backs of middle class Americans. We need to achieve the America of everyone's dreams. The burden of that dream must rest squarely on the shoulders of every American that can carry it.

I find it offensive that some of the most profitable corporations in this country pay no taxes and some even get a refund. I find it offensive that the richest 400 people in this country who have more wealth than half of all Americans combined have an effective tax rate of only 16.6 percent.

In the words of William Jennings Bryan: "When I find a man who is not willing to bear his share of the burdens of the government which protects him, I find a man who is unworthy to enjoy the blessings of a government like ours."

With those wise words, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 2 of the Civil Rights Commission Amendments Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 1975 note), the order of the House of January 5, 2011, and upon the recommendation of the minority leader, the Chair announces the Speaker's reappointment of the following member on the part of the House to the Commission on Civil Rights for a term expiring December 15, 2016:

Mr. Michael Yaki, San Francisco, California.

The Chair announces that the term of appointment of Mr. Todd Gaziano to the Commission on Civil Rights expires on December 15, 2013.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 216. An act to increase criminal penalties for certain knowing and intentional violations relating to food that is misbranded or adulterated; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce; in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill

of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1308. An act to amend the Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission Act to extend the termination date for the Commission, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RUNYON. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 43, 112th Congress, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until Monday, May 2, 2011, at 2 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1285. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — U.S. Honey Producer Research, Promotion, and Consumer Information Order; Termination of Referendum Procedures [Document Number: AMS-FV-07-0091; FV-07-706-FR] (RIN: 0581-AC78) received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1286. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Organic Program; Amendment to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (Livestock) [Document Number: AMS-NOP-10-0051; NOP-10-04FR] (RIN: 0581-AD04) received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1287. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Walnuts Grown in California; Decreased Assessment Rate [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-10-0060; FV10-984-1FIR] received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1288. A letter from the Assistant Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Revision of the Salable Quantity and Allotment Percentage for Class 3 (Native) Spearmint Oil for the 2010-2011 Marketing Year [Docket Nos.: AMS-FV-09-0082; FV10-985-1A IR] received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1289. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Country of Origin Labeling of Packed Honey [Document No.: AMS-FV-08-0075] (RIN: 0581-AC89) received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1290. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Blueberry Promotion, Research, and Information Order; Section 610 Review [Document Number: AMS-FV-10-0006] received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1291. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Avocados Grown