

aid the economic recovery. These tax breaks promote our national economic priorities and put people back to work.

But when a company's profits are \$10.65 billion in just 3 months, such as ExxonMobil's were earlier this year, who can reasonably argue that that company needs expensive incentives to stay in business and make money?

The 10 most egregious tax loopholes enjoyed by the large oil companies have helped the five largest companies make a combined profit of nearly \$1 trillion over the last decade.

The billions we spend every year on subsidies for the largest oil and gas companies are not moving us any closer to energy independence or a clean energy economy. The subsidies are not necessary and they're not useful for our economy.

In 2010, nearly 60 percent of big oil companies' profits went to stock buybacks and dividends, not job creation. With oil produced at \$11 a barrel, and sold for \$100, tax breaks for oil companies are simply wasteful hand-outs, transferring money from working families to corporate stockholders. The difference over what was sold for an average barrel of oil, \$72 average production price; average production cost, \$11.

No American family should be giving up their dinner to donate money to the millionaire next door. Removing these tax incentives will save taxpayers \$40 billion over the next 5 years with only minimal impact in the profit, not in their operations. Cutting subsidies will not raise oil prices, which are set in a global market that this year will be in the range of \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion.

Subsidies in the Tax Code, instead, should be directed toward emerging technologies like wind and solar. That's where the real jobs are. A University of Massachusetts study found that incentives for clean energy create two to four times more direct and indirect jobs compared to investments in oil and gas production.

Another obvious place to cut is the ethanol tax credit. We don't need to subsidize something that industry is mandated to buy.

We cannot ask children and seniors to bear the brunt of sacrifice while we are simply giving more money to large corporate interests that don't need it. We must make tough choices to ensure we leave a sound economy to the next generation, but we have to make those choices wisely so we leave a Nation that is competitive, prosperous, healthy, and educated.

CONGRATULATING NEW JERSEY'S TOP RANKING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate eight outstanding public high schools in New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District that were recently recognized by Newsweek Magazine as among the top

500 public high schools in America for 2011.

In all, New Jersey claimed 36 high schools of Newsweek's top 500. In the Seventh Congressional District in New Jersey, that I have the honor of representing, I congratulate the Academy For Allied Health Sciences in Scotch Plains; the Union County Magnet High School, also in Scotch Plains; Watchung Hills Regional High School in Warren; Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights; Westfield High School in Westfield; the Academy for Information Technology, also in Scotch Plains; Cranford High School in Cranford; and Jonathan Dayton High School in Springfield.

Newsweek contacted more than 1,100 high schools across the country and reviewed their graduation and college matriculation rates, SAT and Advanced Placement test scores and other information, as well as the school's ability to turn out college-ready and life-ready students.

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I congratulate all of the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other property taxpayers who help make New Jersey's Seventh Congressional District the home to so many of the top-performing high schools in the Nation. When it comes to the best education in the country, New Jersey's public school system makes the grade.

WE NEED A FAIR, BALANCED BUDGET

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, we are some 3 years into the worst recession since the Great Depression. I have heard repeated claims that these are times that call for courageous leadership and bold decisions. Well, there certainly has been no lack of audacity during recent talks on the budget.

I'm joining my colleagues on the Budget Committee here today to ask, on behalf of my constituents in New York's 21st Congressional District, for less hubris and more humility from some of our Nation's leaders as we attempt to solve a problem that impacts the lives and livelihoods of our families, our friends, our neighbors, and our constituents.

I have but two requests: first, that any budget agreement must not hurt our economy further. In 2008, the financial crisis brought this Nation to its knees. It was a crisis of our own making; and though we must not dwell on blame, we must learn from this experience to avoid the mistakes of the past.

Is there no way to encourage business growth, small and large, without wasting \$130 billion a year on tax giveaways and without gutting programs that educate our workforce? I refuse to believe that there is no smart solution to this problem. My constituents refuse to believe it. We have learned our lesson, and we know better.

Second, any budget agreement must take a balanced approach. It is the height of arrogance to sit down at a negotiating table to solve a fiscal crisis and declare an \$800 billion question off limits. Federal Government subsidies for some of the most profitable corporations on Earth, oil tax breaks that trace their roots to policy decisions made nearly 100 years ago must be on the table. Tax breaks for the wealthiest 2 percent of America must be on the table. Tax earmarks for corporate jets, for snow globes, for golf bags, these must be on the table.

America is watching. America is waiting for us to wake up, eat our Wheaties, and flex the powerful muscle of human reason to get this country on a sustainable path. Sustainability means cutting spending where it is not needed and where it offers no common good. It means cutting tax kickbacks where they are not needed. It means protecting the present and the future of Medicare in a form that provides more than a coupon to our seniors and more than an unsympathetic "so be it" to proud men and women who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. It means knowing that the Big Five oil companies can stand on their own two feet. It means playing for the same team, putting everything on the table and winning this one not for our campaigns, but for our constituents.

If I might refer to this chart using data from OMB and the Ways and Means Committee, my Republican colleagues have shown the so-called "courage" to ask America's seniors to make yet another great sacrifice for their country—giving up their hard-earned, guaranteed Medicare benefits in favor of a voucher. This will lead to thousands of dollars in new out-of-pocket expenses each year.

Certainly the \$165 billion in cuts is rivaled by the \$131 billion yearly giveaways, that \$165-billion-a-year question from the Republican budget that is on the table in these talks. I do not like it. I will not vote for it. I will fight it every time it comes to this floor for a vote, but it is on the table. It is being discussed and debated, fought for and against in a process that makes our democracy run as it was intended to. But again, we will fight any cuts and any end to Medicare.

But there's another line on this chart, and that's this \$131-billion-per-year question of giving tax breaks to wealthy special interests. Look, the two of them are comparable, giving oil companies more subsidies versus taking away Medicare. This is the question of using taxpayer-subsidized support from the Federal Government to add a few extra billion to the Herculean profits of some of the world's wealthiest corporations.

The Big Five oil companies have pocketed almost \$1 trillion in profits in the past 10 years. In the midst of our recession, they are doing just fine. They have told us, We don't need the tax breaks. So why would my colleague

from Virginia, the Republican majority leader, declare that tax reform—like cutting the \$20 billion in subsidies that these companies will receive in the next 10 years—is off the table? Why are tax write-off earmarks for corporate jets off the table? Why are hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires off the table? Why are we talking about cutting programs for nursing homes and preschools, for local cops and firefighters, for retirement security and the future of renewable energy? Why are we talking about cutting these programs without asking the Big Five oil companies to stand on their own two feet?

I have watched programs that my constituents rely on end up utterly decimated on the floor of this House this year. And yet I come before you today not asking for less sacrifice, but for more. I'm asking for those at the top to bear their fair share of both the burden and the potential triumph of this historic moment.

Again, I must merely ask for a little humility as we attempt to solve a challenge that no one woman or one man among us should attempt to tackle—or scuttle—alone. Nothing is off the table, and nothing is more important than getting every single American who wants to do a hard day's work for a fair wage back on the job site. Any budget agreement must take this balanced approach and must not hurt our economy further.

BRING THE TROOPS HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, Monday I had the honor and the humbling experience of visiting Walter Reed Hospital. I met three young men that all three have lost both legs above the knees. And actually, one of them I engaged about Afghanistan, and he, with his wife there with him, believes that we have done just about all we can do, and certainly he has done more than that: he has given his legs for this country.

That leads me to wanting to read just a paragraph of an editorial by Eugene Robinson that was in the North Carolina papers, and the title of his column is "Afghan Strategy: Lets Go." And I will read the last paragraph of his column:

"We wanted to depose the Taliban regime, and we did. We wanted to install a new government that answers to its constituents at the polls, and we did. We wanted to smash al Qaeda's infrastructure of training camps and safe havens, and we did. We wanted to kill or capture Osama bin Laden, and we did. Even so, say the hawks, we have to stay in Afghanistan because of the dangerous instability across the border in nuclear-armed Pakistan. But does anyone believe the war in Afghanistan has made Pakistan more stable?"

Mr. Robinson, you're right, it is not more stable because we are in Afghanistan. Perhaps it is useful to have a United States military presence in the region. This could be accomplished, however, with a lot fewer than 100,000 troops; and they would not be scattered across the Afghan countryside engaged in a dubious attempt at nation-building. The threat from Afghanistan is gone. Bring the troops home.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the President will say tonight, and I wish the President well. But Mr. Gates has been saying all weekend—and he did testify before the Armed Services Committee in February and said it would be the latter part of 2014, maybe 2015, before we start bringing a substantial number of our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the House of Representatives, both parties, let's come together and join in the McGovern-Jones bill, and let's start bringing our troops home and say to the President we don't need to be there until 2014-2015. As Eugene Robinson says, we're not going to change anything. History has proven you will never change Afghanistan. They don't want to change themselves. Quite frankly, the Taliban are Afghan people; it's a civil war.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I have done before, I have the poster that has a flag-draped coffin being carried by the Air Force at Dover Air Force Base. Mr. President, you're a very smart man. You can call the shots on this war in Afghanistan. Say to the American people tonight that we will be home before 2014-2015.

Mr. Speaker, I say in closing, may God bless our men and women in uniform. May God bless the families of our men and women in uniform. May God, in his loving arms, hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. And I ask God to bless the House and the Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for his people here in America. And I ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to the President of the United States, that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for his people.

And I close three times: God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

NOT SIZABLE, SWIFT OR SIGNIFICANT

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, tonight the President of the United States has

an opportunity to show the bold leadership that the American people are crying out for regarding Afghanistan. Tonight he will announce how many troops will be redeployed out of Afghanistan. This must not be, as early reports are indicating, a token withdrawal, bringing only as few as 5,000 troops home now and 5,000 troops home by the end of the year, because that number falls tragically and painfully short of what the national security and moral decency demands.

There are many interpretations, Mr. Speaker, of "sizable, swift or significant" as the requests have been for him in his drawdown, but none of those interpretations go so low as 5,000 now and 5,000 by the end of the year. "Sizable, swift or significant" is not what 5,000 troops would accomplish. Ten thousand troops doesn't even bring us to where we were before the surge.

That is not a new way forward in Afghanistan. We were promised a new way forward in Afghanistan, and it is going to take 18 months just to get even that much done. How many times are we going to move the goalposts? Anything less than a major shift in Afghanistan policy will be a huge disappointment to the Americans who are paying for it in blood and treasure.

Clear, strong majorities of our country believe it is time we finally end this awful foreign policy blunder. This is not a partisan stance. You just heard Congressman WALTER JONES from North Carolina. This is common sense. Several Republicans in this body oppose this war. Even some of the Republicans running for President have expressed concern about continuing the military occupation much longer.

It is simply not acceptable to ask for more patience and more time for this strategy to work. You mean 10 years isn't enough? How many families were missing a seat at the table on Father's Day this weekend because we kept giving this dreadful policy one more chance?

Afghanistan casualties are on the rise, Mr. Speaker, with 2011 on pace to be the deadliest year yet and 43 percent of fatalities having occurred since the surge began a year and a half ago. How many more people have to die, Mr. Speaker, both U.S. servicemembers and Afghan citizens, before we say enough? How many more lives have to be destroyed? How many more young Americans have to leave limbs behind in Afghanistan? How many more have to come home ravaged by post-traumatic stress? And how many more billions in taxpayer money do we have to waste for the privilege of having our people killed and our global credibility destroyed? For pennies on the dollar, we could fight terrorism the right way, with a civilian surge that emphasizes humanitarian and political aid and reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, it continues to pain me that we have to scratch and claw for every single dollar of Federal investment in the American people. One