

Representative of Ohio. I've watched you fight day after day to put legislation in place so that your men and women in your district can go back to work. Please wrap it up. Share with us your thoughts.

Ms. SUTTON. It is my honor and my privilege to stand up for the people of Ohio and for the veterans you were just speaking of.

I just have to say, those veterans, those men and women who were on the battlefield, they weren't just fighting for Wall Street; they were fighting for the United States of America and all that it stands for. They weren't just fighting for the top 1 percent; they were fighting for all of us. Now they're coming back, and we have an obligation. We have a promise that we have made to them, part of which would be fulfilled if we could get the American Jobs Act passed. So it is incumbent upon us to beat back.

□ 1540

We hear a lot of rhetorical terms. In the last election we heard over and over again, Oh, we could create jobs if we could get government off the backs of the job creators.

Well, look, the refrain, people don't want government on their back, I agree they don't want government on their back. But you know what? They do want government on their side. And that is not what they have been getting and that is why we have to be here, to stand up for the middle class, to stand up for those veterans, for those seniors, for those college students, for those workers, for those firefighters and those police officers, those teachers and those nurses who have suffered far less growth as, we know, Wall Street continues to flourish with record CEO bonuses and all of those profits. We just want people to pay a fair share, and we want the American people to have a fair shake.

Thank you for your leadership. You have been tremendous.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And thank you so very much for so ably representing Ohio and your constituents.

We've got work to do. We've got veterans to care for, and they need help. Americans want jobs, and the American Jobs Act is there. If we were to bring that up today or tomorrow instead of the foolish little bills that have been going on around here for the last month and a half, Americans could go back to work, and it would be fully paid for with a fair tax. We have work to do.

I ask the Speaker of the House and my Republican colleagues to give Americans a chance to go back to work. Put the American Jobs Act up for a vote; put that tax up for a vote, and let's pass it. I think we'd vote it out of here in half a moment if we had a chance. But right now we don't even have that chance.

With that and hope for the future and thanksgiving for those men and women that have been out there protecting

this Nation, the veterans, young and old, able and disabled, we thank them.

I yield back the balance of my time.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we are going to talk about a very important development here in the House of Representatives—in fact, in the entire Congress. Because of the vote this summer on the Budget Control Act, we are going to have in both the House and the Senate for the first time in about 15 years a vote on a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. The last time we did this was on March 2, 1995—actually, the House had already passed it with 300 bipartisan votes, and it was brought to the Senate floor on that day. The U.S. Senate failed by one vote to send a balanced budget amendment to the States for ratification. The amendment had passed the House by the required two-thirds majority previously, and the Senate vote was the last legislative hurdle before ratification by the States.

As we know, balanced budget amendments—in fact, any constitutional amendment is voted on by the House and the Senate, requiring a two-thirds vote in each body, and then it does not go to the President of the United States, as legislation does. Instead, it goes directly to our States, and then three-quarters of the State legislatures would be required to ratify it.

If that amendment had passed, then we would not be dealing with the fiscal crisis we now face. If that amendment had passed, then balancing the budget would have been the norm rather than the exception over the past 15 years, and we would have nothing like the annual deficits and skyrocketing debt that we must address today.

The good news is that, like 1995, this Congress is again standing at a crossroads at this very moment. The decisions we make today will steer the direction of the country for the next 15 years. We have an opportunity now to take action to ensure that 15 years from today our children will face a much brighter fiscal picture. We must not allow ourselves to miss this opportunity.

Experience has proven time and again that Congress cannot, for any significant length of time, rein in excessive spending. The annual deficits and the resulting debt continue to grow due to political pressures and a dependency on government programs. In order for Congress to be able to consistently make the very tough decisions necessary to sustain fiscal responsibility over the long term, Congress must have an external pressure to force it to do so. The most realistic

change we have today to enact this type of institutional reform is through a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution.

Many Members of Congress have introduced balanced budget amendments in this Congress. I introduced two versions on the first day of the 112th Congress.

H.J. Res. 2 is the exact text that passed the House in 1995 and failed in the Senate by one vote. This amendment requires total annual outlays not to exceed total annual receipts. It also requires a three-fifths majority to raise the debt limit. This legislation also has limited exceptions for times of war.

H.J. Res. 1, which I also introduced, goes much further. In addition to the provisions of H.J. Res. 2, it requires a two-thirds majority to raise taxes and imposes an annual spending cap that prohibits spending from exceeding 18 percent of GDP.

In the U.S. Senate, 47 Republican Senators—all the Republican Senators—have cosponsored a balanced budget amendment, which is a strong sign that the Senate is ready to engage in debate on this subject as well.

Our extraordinary fiscal crisis demands an extraordinary solution, so we simply cannot afford to succumb to political posturing on this issue at a point in time so crucial to our Nation's future. We must rise above that and move forward with a strategy that includes legislation that will get to 290 votes on the House floor.

So as we consider a balanced budget amendment, I encourage the Members of the body to devote our efforts to passing the strongest balanced budget amendment that can garner two-thirds of the House of Representatives. We're at a crossroads in the country. We can make the tough choices and control spending, paving the way for our return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, or we can allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not their own.

I have been joined by a number of outstanding Members of the House, and I am going to call upon them to offer some comments about the importance of a balanced budget amendment to them and to their constituents as well.

Since he got here first, I'm going to yield first to one of our new Members, from the State of Indiana, a great fiscal conservative, someone who believes strongly in limiting our government and balancing our budget, Congressman TODD ROKITA.

Mr. ROKITA. I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding me this time and for your leadership here in the Congress year after year over the years to see that we've come to this point where we again can have a vote in these Chambers about the condition of our country and about living within our means.

As I talk about the balanced budget amendment, I want to also address

what happened here on the House floor and what was said here on the House floor in the last hour. They used the term “foolish” several times. I want to describe how foolish what they said is.

Not enough dollars exist in the top 1 percent of taxpayers in this country to possibly address the debt situation we face, to possibly address our economy. There are not enough baseball players. There are not enough football coaches. There are not enough Oprah Winfreys. There are not even enough Warren Buffetts. Even if you taxed 100 percent of everything they made and assume two things, that they wouldn't leave the country and that they would continue to produce, there aren't enough of them to solve this country's fiscal problems.

So when people come here to the House floor or talk anywhere else in this Nation about how the rich aren't paying their fair share, by definition, they are going to come after the middle class. They are going to come after your property, those of us who live in the middle class. Our property being our dollars, which aren't theirs, which aren't the government's. They're ours. And that's what they're angling for; make no mistake about it.

As you may know, I happen to be a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee. A lot of talk was made here today about how we don't spend enough on our education; we have to spend more on our teachers. Let me just say this: The increase in our Federal budget for education has been well over 300 percent since the early 1970s, yet we haven't seen one bit of an improvement in our scholastic scores since the Federal Government has been involved in the education business.

□ 1550

I just find it humorous when they stand here and talk about how we need to now spend money on infrastructure, now spend money on other things that might marginally give us some more jobs. Where were they during the first stimulus when only 6 percent, almost a trillion dollars, went for infrastructure and the rest went for handouts like food stamps, unemployment insurance and other things that won't possibly grow the economy? Not to say that people didn't need help, not to say they still don't need help. But it's a falsehood to think that by giving more handouts you're going to improve the prosperity of this Nation.

You cannot tax, you cannot spend, you cannot lay debt on our kids and grandkids and expect this Nation to get stronger, expect this Nation to be better off. It doesn't work. World history is littered with examples where Nations have tried to do this very same thing; and all it has resulted in is tyranny and the opposite of prosperity.

With that, thank you again for letting me speak about the balanced budget amendment. I opposed the Budget Control Act when we had that

vote at the end of July because it wasn't a solution to our debt problem; it was another Washington deal. But as I've said and will continue to admit, there was a silver lining, and that silver lining was the requirement that both Houses at least take a vote on the exact same balanced budget amendment language, and they do it by December 31 of this year.

Our Constitution is the blueprint for our system of government. Our Constitution has only been amended 27 times, and for very good reason. It's not to change with the times. It's not to change with the political winds. It's a blueprint, a document that has outlined a process, contained in it negative rights, that has given us the best system for raising the condition of all men that the world has ever seen. And so it shouldn't be amended that often or that lightheartedly, but it should be amended in this case.

This Chamber, this House, this Federal Government in general, administrations both Republican and Democratic before us, have failed in their job to have us as a Federal Government live within our means. We need a constitutional amendment to do that now. Thomas Jefferson himself even said it: “I wish it were possible to attain a single amendment to our Constitution, I mean an additional article taking from the government the power of borrowing.”

Given our \$15 trillion debt and what's coming, the red menace, the tidal wave of debt that's coming in the near future, there is a clear need for a balanced budget amendment.

Now, there are several different ones to consider. Which one should we take up? I would love to have a balanced budget amendment that contained a supermajority vote for us to even consider raising taxes in order to balance the budget. I would love a balanced budget amendment with language that contained an indication that the Federal Government cannot exceed 20 percent of GDP. That would be spectacular. In this season of football, I'd call that a touchdown pass that wins the game. But there are other plays as well. And I'll take a 50-yard pass; I'll take a 75-yard pass that gets us so far down the field on this debt issue that it puts us in a position to win the day, “winning” meaning we save the Republic, we keep the Republic like Franklin suggested. So I would support a clean balanced budget amendment. Clean meaning a statement that simply says we will not spend more than we take in. Our expenditures will equal or be less than the revenues we take in.

Now, some of my very good conservative colleagues would say, well, you're setting us up for one day raising taxes. That may be true. But in all honesty, that's a different fight. We can have that tax fight later. Liberals love to raise taxes because their solution to everything is a bigger government, and the only way to have a bigger government is to have a more expensive gov-

ernment. That will never change. So let's not have the perfect be the enemy of the good. Let's have that fight. And if once in awhile they win, we know that the people who win that fight won't be here for long. And in the meantime, we have an amendment in our Constitution that declares each one of us, as we take the oath to uphold the Constitution, ensures that we will live within our means.

I thank the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman from Indiana for his remarks.

We are joined now by a very important member of our conference, a leader, the chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee and a strong supporter of fiscal responsibility and a balanced budget amendment, the gentleman from Texas, Congressman PETE SESSIONS.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you today for your strong leadership and the leadership of other members of this conference for bringing forth a discussion about a balanced budget for the United States of America. In fact, the United States Congress has brought up this issue before, and it has been debated and discussed obviously since not just the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, but for many, many years afterwards.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to you today that every single Member of this body should recognize the times that we live in are unlike any that this great Nation has ever seen.

We find that we are in the midst of a threat of outside forces against the United States. We find ourselves in a time of war. We find ourselves in a time when we have political unrest with thousands of people encamped in our cities who are displeased with the direction that this country is going. We have millions of people, some 14 million people who are unemployed in America, some 6 million who are underemployed in this country.

We've seen out-of-control spending that has taken place from a Federal Government that is not accountable. They tax too much, they spend too much, and they listen too little. We have leaders of this country who are not honest in speaking to the American people about not only the truths of each party and what they stand for, but who I believe mislead others about the things for which they stand for themselves.

We find ourselves at a time in this country where we are faced with a \$14 trillion debt that is growing every single day. In fact, if any American looks at the debt clock, they will see that it's spinning wildly out of control.

Mr. Speaker, I did not come to this body, nor probably did others, to think that they would be here to manage our demise. We come to Washington full of hope and opportunity, with the expectations to further the dreams of the American people, to further dreams for

an experience that would allow us to enrich our lives but also to leave that that would be the best for the next generation. As an Eagle Scout I grew up scouting and understanding that you should always leave your circumstances better than what you found it.

Now, I'm well aware that the President of the United States, President Obama, keeps talking about that this is a vision that he has about a direction, but there is no end in sight to the damage and harm, the carnage that is being laid to this country as a result of economic demise. But what I would say, Mr. Speaker, is there are others who have traveled down this road ahead of us, and we are watching them today and we've been watching them for years as the very fabric of their countries becomes torn apart.

□ 1600

The essential ingredients that made those countries strong, not that put them on the map, but that gave them a heritage, a meaning and a national purpose, they are now seeing with this current generation are falling apart. I would say as my message today I stand strong with BOB GOODLATTE and RANDY HULTGREN. We have Brother ROKITA here, we have SCOTT GARRETT from New Jersey, and we have even a Member from as far south as Mississippi, STEVEN PALAZZO, who are going to come forth on this floor and talk about the need for America to gather itself with discipline and strength to add to the spirit and the resiliency of the American people, that of entrepreneurship, that of tough love and hard work that will make this country stronger and better.

I stand here, Mr. Speaker, as a result of understanding, as other Members of this body that have circumstances that are very similar to mine. I have a future that I want to leave better than what I found it. I have two sons, one that's in the top 2 percent academically of students in this country, and one that is in the bottom 2 percent of students academically. And the future of this country is very important to them, perhaps more important than mine was to me.

But on my son who is in the top 2 percent academically, Bill, the future of his American Dream is being threatened because he wants to be a physician. And physician after physician, those in the health care field, are saying, Bill, don't do that. This is his dream. On Alex's side, as a Down Syndrome young man, he is faced with a sure future where he will be competing against all of us for the needs that he should have as a disabled young man that should be the mission statement of this government. Yet, the Federal Government will be incapable and unable to perform because they are trying to take on everybody, and thus they will not do their job right.

Former Senator Phil Gramm from Texas would speak about this often

years ago when the same threat of a Clinton health care plan existed. Now it's the law. And Senator Gramm would talk about that, that little red wagon that is designed for just a few people that the Federal Government should get it right and support with government assistance—those with a physical or intellectual disability, those who are seniors like our parents, yes, my parents at 81 years old who have served this country so well, so honorably and deserve a chance to be in that wagon in their latter years and, lastly, those who are too poor to take care of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, this balanced budget will ensure that we try and create a mission statement with this Federal Government that is not about expanding itself to where it is not within a mission statement, but one where it is within a mission statement where we are going to require the Federal Government to do a few things and do them well, because we're not going to have the money unless we give it to them through economic growth. And with economic growth, people can have their own dreams and not depend on government.

So why we're all here today there could be different reasons. But it will boil down to this: that the men and women of this body, some of whom I have spoken about, including the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) who's joined us, are here for a mission and a purpose, and that is to join with Chairman BOB GOODLATTE from Virginia and say to him that we want to leave America a better place than what we found it; and we believe bankruptcy debt, misery, and loss of jobs is not the right future.

I heartily sign back up for this important effort again, which I led in '97, '98 and '99. I, once again, sign my name to that pledge. I am for a balanced budget to leave America a better place than we found it. I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Godspeed and good luck, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Thank you for your good work. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of this cause.

I want to make reference to the fact that this Special Order that we're all participating in is sponsored by the House Constitution Caucus, which is chaired by Congressman SCOTT GARRETT of New Jersey. We'll hear from him in a few minutes.

But now I want to yield to another new Member of Congress who has been very, very instrumental in working on a balanced budget amendment and has made a number of good, constructive observations and recommendations about this issue, and that's Congressman MO BROOKS from Alabama.

Mr. BROOKS. I thank the gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, America faces a financial threat of historic proportions. It has one basic cause. We suffer from unsustainable budget deficits that

threaten America with insolvency and bankruptcy. We have seen what's been going on in Europe with Greece and with Paris from a few years ago, with Rome, with riots in Greece where there's even been fatalities. All of these relate to the financial stewardship of their governments.

I hope that with the remarks I'm about to share that the people of America will have a better understanding of the deficit situation we face, because given that understanding, I have confidence, Mr. Speaker, that the American people will cause Washington to do the right thing.

A little bit of history is in order. I've got a chart here, the United States annual deficits. The last balanced budget we had was \$128 billion, fiscal year '01, a Democrat President, Bill Clinton, a Republican House and Republican Senate. Since that time, we've had 9/11 and we've had wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. You can see how the deficit situation became worse. George Bush as President and Republicans in control of Congress to \$158 billion to \$377 billion to \$413 billion. All of those were bad, no question.

Notably, we have the Bush tax cuts in the summer of 2003; and, paradoxically, from one perspective across the aisle, things should have gotten worse, but they got better because our economy improved and our deficit declined to \$318 billion to \$248 billion to \$161 billion. We were on the right path as of November 2006.

Then we had a different mindset capture the United States House and the United States Senate. We had a different Speaker of the House, a different majority leader in the United States Senate, and a different philosophy of government and a different economic philosophy that unfortunately has failed miserably.

As a consequence, after the November 2006 elections where the Democrats captured the United States Congress, we have a \$459 billion deficit followed by a \$1.4 trillion deficit. Then we have a change in the White House. For 2 years, two budgets, two sets of expenditures and two sets of revenues were totally controlled by the other party, my colleagues across the aisle. In FY10 and FY11, the fiscal year that we just finished, we had back-to-back \$1.3 trillion and \$1.3 trillion deficits.

Ladies and gentlemen, these deficits were bad. These are unsustainable trillion-dollar deficits as far as the eye can see, and they're a great risk to our Nation. To put it into perspective, that's \$2.3 trillion in revenue last year, \$3.6 trillion in expenditures, a \$1.3 trillion deficit, and a \$14.3 trillion accumulated debt. With what happened with the Budget Control Act in August of this year, a bill that I voted against, the debt ceiling was increased by \$2.4 trillion such that it will soon hit a \$16.2 trillion debt burden in 2013.

Now, I mention trillions, and people's eyes often start to glaze over, Mr. Speaker. Let me put it down in a family sense where hopefully the American

people can better understand it. Think in terms of a family that's uncertain about their income. So they go over their finances, and they discover that over the last 3 years they've averaged \$50,000 a year in income—not too bad. And then they look at their expenses, and they've been averaging \$80,000 a year in expenses. That's scary to them, and it should be. They've been in the hole 3 straight years for \$30,000 a year. Then they pick up their Visa bill, and it's for \$320,000.

Now what do you think that family would do? Well, they'd cut their spending and they would try to balance their budget in order to avoid bankruptcy. Those analogies are exactly the same as that of the United States of America—those ratios.

□ 1610

We have to have a balanced budget constitutional amendment, I submit to the American people, Mr. Speaker, because that is the only way Washington will have the backbone to do the right thing, to protect future generations from the risk of insolvency and bankruptcy that we in America face today.

So I wholeheartedly endorse the efforts of Representative GOODLATTE and all the other members of the Constitutional Caucus who have been working so hard to come forth with a substantive, effective, and enforceable constitutional amendment that can help save our children and grandchildren from the seriousness of the financial situation that we in America face today.

As for me, Mr. Speaker, I will do my utmost to support a balanced budget constitutional amendment. I will do my utmost to ensure that it is an effective constitutional amendment, that it's not a dog and pony show, that, in fact, it will achieve the desired result.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman for his very passionate support of the cause of fiscal responsibility.

As I mentioned earlier, this Special Order is being sponsored by the Congressional Constitution Caucus. And it's now my pleasure to yield to another great champion of limited government and lower taxes and less government regulation and balancing the budget, Congressman SCOTT GARRETT of New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT. I thank the gentleman for not only managing the floor tonight with regard to this conference, but also with regard to all your great work with regard to trying to push forward the BBA, making sure we get over the goal line this time.

As the chairman and founder of the Constitutional Caucus, we rarely come to the floor to advocate for an amendment to the Constitution, but that's exactly what we're doing here tonight. It brings us here tonight because the United States Government has what? Just as the other speakers have said, overspent, overborrowed, and overtaxed, putting this Nation on the road

to fiscal ruin. Yet, as much as that is true, there are many who believe that the solution going forward is even more of the same: more spending, more borrowing, more taxation. And only here in Washington, DC, could that ever be given serious consideration.

American families are not given that luxury. American families have to do what? They have to live within their means or face fiscal disaster in their family pocketbook. So, too, here in the United States Government we should live within our means as well; but unfortunately, today, as you saw the previous chart and previous speaker, we have been incapable of doing that. And that is why we're here tonight because we know we must force ourselves to do so through a balanced budget amendment.

Now, step back. Amending the Constitution is a difficult process. It should not be entered into lightly. The process reflects the Founders' commitment to republican self-government while protecting what? The integrity of the supreme law of the land.

And so in the spirit, then, of the Founders' vision for an amendment to the Constitution, we support tonight a balanced budget amendment as the only solution to excessive and irresponsible spending that we've seen go on for far too long. And yet we hear from the other side of the aisle and the other House—Senate majority leader called the balanced budget amendment a radical new idea. But how radical is it really? Radical? Well, 49 States in this country have some form of a balanced budget amendment, and they realize they must abide by it to live within their means.

A new idea? Well, indeed, Thomas Jefferson is the intellectual forefather of the balanced budget amendment. So we can go back some 200 years. Back in 1798, when Jefferson wrote to Virginia Senator John Taylor that the solution to then-extravagant spending was a constitutional amendment eliminating the power of the Federal Government to incur debt, he went on to say:

I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government to the genuine principles of its Constitution; I mean an article, taking from the Federal Government the power of borrowing.

Now, the balanced budget amendment is the Jeffersonian solution, therefore, to today's debt crisis. And yet, when you think about it, the amount of spending and overspending that they had in Jefferson's time pales in comparison to the reckless spending that we have today and the reckless and fiscal ineptitudes that we see going on in Washington.

According to CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, the government will spend nearly—get this—\$1.5 trillion this year more than it takes in. And if we refuse to balance our budget, as

your amendment would do, what will happen over the next 10 years? Almost \$9.5 trillion in additional red ink will be added to the bottom line.

So, in conclusion, the choice I think is clear: Either we continue down the same road with blissful disregard of the warnings of financial catastrophe that we've seen, or we do what? We amend the Constitution to require a balanced budget and put the United States back on the road to sustainability and also prosperity.

So let's make the balanced budget amendment the 28th Amendment to the Constitution.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, and I like the sound of that 28th Amendment to the Constitution.

Let me just say that, as I mentioned at the outset, because of the vote by the Congress—the House and the Senate—signed into law by the President, we will have a vote in both the House and Senate on a balanced budget amendment before the end of this year, before December 31. And if either body passes a specific balanced budget amendment, the other body has to vote on the same one so that we have the greatest possibility that if we can reach that kind of consensus, we can actually send a balanced budget amendment for the first time to the States for ratification. It would require 38 States to ratify it. But as the gentleman from New Jersey just noted, 49 out of 50 States have a requirement in their constitution that they must balance their budgets.

I believe that with the public supporting this by numbers northward of 80 percent—and it's very bipartisan support. I saw a recent poll that showed that 74 percent of Democrats support this, as do a great many Democrats here in the House. In fact, to pass a constitutional amendment with 290 votes, it has to be bipartisan. So we are working across the aisle to make sure that we build the kind of support that we need to pass the strongest possible amendment to our Constitution requiring that the government lives within its means.

I yield to another great supporter of that concept, another new Member who came here to reform the way things are done here in Washington, DC, and who has joined us in this effort, the gentleman from Illinois, Congressman RANDY HULTGREN.

Mr. HULTGREN. I want to thank my good friend and colleague for the amazing work that you've done over the years fighting for structural change in how Washington does its business. Thank you, Congressman GOODLATTE, I really appreciate it. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak for a couple of minutes today.

Mr. Speaker, since the people of the 14th Congressional District of Illinois sent me to be their Representative in Washington, DC, last year, I have fought to bring accountability and responsibility back to Congress. Time

and again, I voted to cut spending and reduce the size of Federal Government, and I haven't been shy about going against and opposing colleagues from the Republican side of the aisle when I felt like they weren't doing enough to get our fiscal house back in order.

With every vote, I'm guided by the belief that Washington, like our families and small businesses across the country, needs to live within its means. I know that the path to renewed and future prosperity lies through a return to fiscal sanity and not by saddling our kids and our grandkids with more debt.

Our job-creating bills—that have been sent over to the Senate and are stuck in the Senate right now—along with less spending and less debt will help give small business owners and job creators the confidence they need to hire and expand, putting Americans back to work again and getting our economy moving again.

Unfortunately, this Congress' efforts to cut spending are, on their own, insufficient. More importantly, any cuts we make today could be reversed by future Congresses. Long-term deficit reduction and spending restraint can only be accomplished through real structural changes to the way that Washington operates. And I believe, as many of you do, that a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution is exactly the change that we need.

I have been an outspoken advocate for a balanced budget amendment even before being elected, and one of the first things I did after being sworn in was to cosponsor a balanced budget amendment. A balanced budget amendment would force the Federal Government to spend only what it takes in—a novel concept—but it is the surest path to fiscal sanity, less spending, and a brighter future for our kids and our grandkids.

Support for the balanced budget amendment is gathering momentum in Congress and across this great Nation. In fact, as Congressman GOODLATTE said, the House and Senate are required to vote on a balanced budget amendment very soon. But Congress has been here before. In 1995, they nearly passed a constitutional amendment mandating a balanced budget amendment but fell one vote short in the Senate. Imagine the difference of this Nation if that would have passed at that time than the situation that we're in right now. Sixteen years later, we have the chance to finally get it right.

The time is now. It is our responsibility and our duty to support a balanced budget amendment and bring accountability back to Washington.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman. I very much appreciate his comments and would note the fact that we have, speaking here tonight, Members from many corners of the country: Indiana, Alabama, Texas, Illinois, Mississippi, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and Virginia.

□ 1620

In fact, Members of Congress from about 46 or 47 States have indicated their support for at least one version of the constitutional amendment. If we can bring all of them together, and they can bring just a few more Members together, we can get to that 290 votes, because this is not a regional issue, this is not a partisan issue.

This is an issue that transcends the country. It's reflected in the fact that this is an issue we can communicate directly with our constituents about, and they understand exactly what we're talking about because they live with the concept that they can't spend more than they take in year after year after year. The businesses that they work for, they can't spend more than they take in year after year after year. Local governments, State governments are all bound by this principle that you cannot live beyond your means. That principle should be enshrined in the United States Constitution.

I yield to another Member who joins us in this effort, another new Member—and it's the new Members who have helped to bring this issue back to the fore, who really want to see a vote on this for the first time in 15 years—Congressman REID RIBBLE from Wisconsin.

Welcome.

Mr. RIBBLE. Thank you very much. It is an honor to come down to the floor of the House and work with you, Representative GOODLATTE, on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the balanced budget amendment. I came down to the floor of the House this afternoon with some prepared comments, spent some time putting it together and wanted to make sure that it was right, had help from my staff, but I'm going to go a little bit off script today.

As I've listened to my colleagues speak on this very important issue, they've covered much of what we want to say with the historical context, with what Thomas Jefferson, our Founder said, what Abraham Lincoln talked about—about government being by the people.

Instead, I think I'm going to talk about my experience here in Congress. As my friend just mentioned, I'm a new Member. As a matter of fact, right around this day today I've been here 10 months. I've never served in Congress before, never served in an elected capacity before. I ran a small roofing company in Kaukauna, Wisconsin.

I have to tell you that I'm struck that we're at this place in history. When I look at our national debt, and you look at it on a chart and on a curve from 1787 to 2011, from about 1787 to 1940, 1945, that line is almost indecipherable from zero. Then as you go on and you get to the late 2000s, that line begins to turn up. And now in the last 3 years, that line is nearly vertical as our national debt continues to explode. And that debt has to be paid.

I've told high school students and college students back in Wisconsin where I'm from that there's a reckoning coming for them. There will be a date and time certain that this bill will have to be paid.

And yet, as I've worked here I've just discovered that, for whatever reason, whether it's partisan bickering or pure ideological differences, that we cannot, it seems, find agreement on controlling our national debt and our deficits, annual deficits.

Just a few years ago the deficit was only \$160 billion. As we heard from my colleague from Alabama, the last 3 years it's been over \$1 trillion each and every year. Something clearly has changed, and we would like to say that it's changed in our economy. I would propose to you, sir, that maybe it has changed in our government.

At some point, I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, my friends that are Republicans and Democrats alike, it is time to put the sword down. We cannot, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we must not allow this type of spending to continue so that our children, my grandchildren, your children and grandchildren, will have to pay this bill, a bill that they did not make and a bill that they should not owe.

So I stand before you today challenging my colleagues to consider a better path forward, one that we use in our families, one that we use in our businesses, one that 49 States use in their State governments, and that is a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.

Just the other day I was standing right over where my colleague was and is standing right now, and I had a copy of the Internal Revenue Code. It's nearly 10,000 pages of fine print. An amendment to the Constitution will be just a few words, and it's a simple thing.

But most importantly, the amendment to the Constitution that would call for a balanced budget allows the American people, not just through their Representatives here in Congress, which we clearly have seen is not going to solve the problem, but allows the American people to finally have a say through the ratification process.

I had a telephone town hall recently, Mr. Speaker, with 15,000 Americans on the line. I did a poll and I asked them, how many of you would support a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution requiring the government to live within its means? Over 80 percent of those respondents said that they would support this.

I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that millions of families and businesses every day live under the constraint of a balanced budget. As a father, as a former small business owner, and now as a Member of Congress, I have a different perspective on this whole thing, and the perspective is that we must, must move forward with this.

As a father, I tried to teach my children the value of hard work, the importance of saving for the future and not

spending more than they earn. As a business owner, I operated my company that same way. And now, as a Member of Congress, I recognize that these ideas that many of us, I would dare say the majority of Americans, hold true, is just as good for their government. And so if a balanced budget in your family, in your business, in your church and in your community and your State makes sense, it clearly makes sense here.

The reckless spending will never stop, I believe, without it. There will neither be the political will nor the courage to do so. Since Washington has proven itself incapable of doing this job, it's time that we let the people, the citizens of America have a voice so that they can force their government to act responsibly.

I call on my colleagues to pass a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution through this Chamber, the United States Senate, and then send it back to the people, where they will finally have their voice heard.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

As I indicated earlier, this is an issue that has to have a bipartisan solution. It simply is not possible to pass constitutional amendments that require two-thirds of the House, or 290 Members, and two-thirds of the Senate, 67 Members, without Members reaching across the aisle and working together to come up with language that is agreeable and can be supported on both sides of the aisle.

And quite frankly, the nature of the problem that we are confronted with is one that past Congresses controlled by both parties, Presidents of both parties have contributed to, and the solution is going to have to require also that same kind of bipartisan working it out on a year-to-year basis balancing the budget.

It won't be easy. There will be tremendous differences of opinion about whether we should do this by cutting spending or raising revenues, or doing other things that can grow our economy and cause more revenues to come in. But it cannot get to the first stage of having future Congresses live by this without it being bipartisan. That's why I'm so pleased that so many members of the Democratic Party have signed on to support this effort. They've been led by an outstanding Member who has championed a balanced budget amendment for a long time, and that's Congressman PETER DEFAZIO from Oregon.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his leadership on this issue over almost a couple of decades. It's been a long struggle. I hope the time is here.

I was one of 73 Democrats in 1995 to support a balanced budget amendment which was basically silent on the issue of whether we would get there with additional revenues and reforms that would raise revenues, or with spending

cuts, or a combination of both. Ultimately, in the nineties, by a combination of revenue increases and reforms and spending cuts, we did reach a balance in the year 2000, and actually paid down debt. And had we passed that amendment in 1995, we wouldn't be looking at a \$14-plus trillion mountain of debt today.

As the gentleman before me spoke, that's not the legacy that I want to leave to our kids and grandkids and great-grandkids, given the magnitude of that debt. We have a responsibility to act, and anyone who is observing Washington these days can see that it's hard, it's really hard for Congress to come together and decide on issues that are extraordinarily important to our Nation.

□ 1630

We really need a little bit of forced discipline, I would say; and that's the way I look at a balanced budget amendment, that H.J. Res. 2 would force us over a relatively short period of time to make very difficult decisions on, yes, the potential for revenue increases or spending cuts with virtually everything on the table to get to a mandatory balance of the budget within a short period of time.

Then to begin to pay down the debt, which will take, if we aren't running surpluses and we merely balance the budget into the future, including our payments of interest and principal on the debt, it will be some 30 years before our country could be debt free.

But that would at least be a point in time in which we knew that our grandkids and others to follow would not be inheriting that debt.

So I'm very hopeful that when we have a vote some time, I understand, perhaps in the next month, that we have an opportunity to bring up what I believe is the version of the balanced budget amendment, most likely to be able to engender a majority as it did in 1995, and that would be H.J. Res. 2.

With that, I thank the gentleman for the time, and I look forward to continuing to work with his leadership on this issue.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman.

In the next few weeks, as we anticipate a vote coming up quite soon, we have a lot of work to do to make sure that we are giving every Member of this body an opportunity to speak out for fiscal responsibility and not just speak but put their vote on the line and say, yes, we think we should send to the States an amendment to the Constitution to require a balanced budget.

We are also joined by another new Member who has been a very strong advocate for cutting government spending and having government operate more efficiently and believes strongly in requiring that our government do what everyone else in our society has to do, and that is live within its means, balance its budget, and that's Con-

gressman MARLIN STUTZMAN from Indiana.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. STUTZMAN. Thank you, Mr. GOODLATTE, and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time that we can come to the floor and talk about this important issue.

I think it's an opportunity for us here in Washington to do something that changes the direction of our fiscal condition in Washington, D.C., and our Federal Government.

As we all know, the economy has been very difficult for families across this country in so many different ways. And people have realized and have made tough decisions within their own budget, whether it's a family budget, whether it's a business budget, and realize that the economy and the difficulties that we face today are forcing decisions to be made that are sometimes difficult, are not sometimes the choices that we'd like to make.

But as the Federal Government continues to spend and spend money that we don't have, money that we're borrowing—40 cents for every dollar that we spend is borrowed money—I believe that this is a time for us to let the people speak, let the American people speak on an issue that is a principle that is so foundational for our family budgets, our business budgets, what should be a very basic principle for our government in the way that we operate, and that is a balanced budget amendment.

This is a historic opportunity. It could also have historic consequences. I believe that if we do not rein in Federal Government spending and save the American Dream, we will, in effect, determine the future of our great country. It is just very simple, and I believe that as we take this time to talk about the balanced budget amendment, whatever version people support in this Chamber and across the Hall in the Senate, I believe that we have to have some basic principles, basic concepts that we can all agree on.

How can we not agree on saying that every year Congress passes a budget it's going to be balanced? It is just common sense.

I come from a State that has a balanced budget amendment, Indiana. And we have a balanced budget. And now I know the temptations that have come across the State legislature in Indiana to pass budgets that are out of balance.

But if we have that anchor here in Washington that says we have to pass a balanced budget, that we cannot continue to borrow and spend, that is what's going to keep Washington in check.

Our Constitution is the bedrock of our experiment in self-government. It is a remarkable document. Libraries have been written on its importance and its legal application, but we cannot forget that the wisdom our Founding Fathers built in the Constitution is timeless and they're very simple truths.

People give the government its power is one of those. Government exists to protect our God-given rights. Men are not perfect, so neither is our government. So it must be limited, checked, and balanced.

Our great Nation rests on these principles. If we still believe in those principles, we must recognize another simple but profound truth: good government must live within its means.

So that's why I believe the balanced budget amendment to our Constitution is crucial at this time. When we face \$15 trillion of debt, we're handing off and saddling our children and every person in this country \$48,000 of debt per individual. Unemployment has held steady at historic high rates. Confidence is declining, and Washington, like a spoiled child, continues to talk about tax increases and stimulus programs that just do not work.

I believe we owe it to our generation, to future generations, to pass a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution that requires the Federal Government to live within its means just like every American family and just like businesses across this country that are going to move this economy forward.

I thank the gentleman from Virginia for his efforts with the balanced budget amendment, and I am proud to stand here today and support it; and I believe this is a great opportunity for Congress to stand with the American people. This is our opportunity, and we must not fail.

Mr. GOODLATTE. I thank the gentleman.

I have to say that we've seen support from all across the country, from east coast States like New Jersey and Virginia all the way to the west coast to Oregon. We've heard from Members from States along the Canadian border, and Members from States on the gulf coast.

This amendment has broad, broad support in the Congress, but it has a high hill to climb in needing 290 Members to vote for it. We're continuing to work to find that support. It's not a new idea. It's been around for almost as long as our Constitution.

Thomas Jefferson has been cited, and I'll read that again here. He said, "I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government. I mean an additional article taking from the Federal Government the power of borrowing." He said that in 1798. That's the only thing he said.

Later in his life he said, "There does not exist an engine so corruptive of the government and so demoralizing of the Nation as a public debt. It will bring on us more ruin at home than all the enemies from abroad against whom this Army and Navy are to protect us." Thomas Jefferson said that in 1821.

And about our future generations, which several Members have com-

mented on here tonight, Thomas Jefferson said in 1789, the year that our Constitution went into effect, "Then I say, the Earth belongs to each of these generations during its course fully, and in its own right. The second generation receives it clear of the debts and encumbrances of the first, the third of the second, and so on. For if the first could charge it with a debt, then the Earth would belong to the dead and not to the living generation."

Thomas Jefferson wrote that to James Madison in 1789, and how prescient was that as our new Nation was starting work under a new Constitution that he would observe that we are where we are today where we are passing on to future generations debt that is unsustainable.

How ironic it is that we borrow money today to pay for programs today and put that burden on the backs of our children and grandchildren and those not yet even born with the likelihood that if we do not change from this course, we will find that those very children and grandchildren will not have these programs when they need to depend upon it. They will only have the debt.

□ 1640

This is what Thomas Jefferson meant when he said the Earth would belong to the dead and not to the living.

Finally, let me give you one more quote:

"To preserve the independence of the people, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty or profusion and servitude."

Mr. ROKITA. Just a quick note to the gentleman from Virginia.

As we're talking about "why this hill"—and I think you mentioned the hill being so high and so hard to climb—there might be people at home watching right now, maybe even some in this Chamber right now, who are wondering: Why would this be so difficult? We had others come up and say they had a telephone town hall where over 80 percent of their constituents were in favor of this. Why is this so hard?

We have to think of it this way:

There are two groups of constituents, and we can't appease both sets all the time. There is a constituency that's the here and now that will ensure that, if we do things they want, they'll give us another election; they'll let us serve longer. Yet there is another constituency that doesn't even exist yet. No matter what we do, we won't be around for them to reward us. I would just suggest that everyone here in this House of Representatives serve that latter constituency: our kids, our grandkids, those who don't even exist yet. Vote for them to make sure that we keep the Republic.

For those of you who are watching, make sure you tell your Representatives, Hey, I want you to vote, not for me, not so that I can have more on my

plate now; I want you to vote for our future.

If the people of this country demand that of their Representatives and their Senators, we will keep the Republic as Franklin demanded.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, that's an excellent note on which to close.

I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana and everyone else who has participated and the other gentleman from Indiana.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PALAZZO). Members are reminded to address the Chair and not the viewing audience.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2930, ENTREPRENEUR ACCESS TO CAPITAL ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2940, ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR JOB CREATORS ACT

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules (during the Special Order of Mr. GOODLATTE), submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-265) on the resolution (H. Res. 453) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2930) to amend the securities laws to provide for registration exemptions for certain crowdfunded securities, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2940) to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to eliminate the prohibition against general solicitation as a requirement for a certain exemption under Regulation D, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. PAULSEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For the next few minutes, some of us who are members of the Medical Technology Caucus are going to share some of our thoughts about some of the recent troubling developments that are threatening this American industry. I will tell you, as cochair of the Medical Technology Caucus, in Minnesota, I get a chance to tour these companies. We all know the big names of the big titan companies; but nearly every week, I get a chance to tour one of these small companies that might have five employees, that might have 10 employees—companies that are not yet profitable.

They're working on these really innovative and neat technologies that are there to help patients improve their lives and save their lives. In fact,