

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to support this fiscally responsible budget plan.

For the past few weeks, Congress has been occupied, arguing over a continuing resolution because the previous Congress failed to put in place a spending bill for this year. We cannot afford to make the same mistakes that they did in the last Congress. We are facing a record \$1.6 trillion deficit, a \$14 trillion debt, and we need a plan to get spending under control—a plan, not a campaign speech and not partisan bickering. We've taken positive steps in the right direction. However, we must move from saving billions to saving trillions, and this budget will let us do just that.

At the same time, we must fulfill our promises to our constituents and pass policies that will spur job creation and economic growth to strengthen and preserve Medicare and Medicaid. The proposed budget would create nearly 1 million new private sector jobs next year. Additionally, according to the studies, it would bring the unemployment rate down to 4 percent by 2015. It would spur economic growth by increasing the GDP by \$1.5 trillion over the next 10 years. It does this by creating a less burdensome Tax Code for families and small businesses and by incentivizing job growth and investment.

We will get out of debt only when we focus on pro-growth policies and budget-tightening plans. This plan will do that by reforming Medicare and Medicaid to ensure that those programs are still available for our children. It is the safety net that we have promised. Without reform, those programs are unsustainable and will cease. The plan we will vote on tomorrow represents a fundamental shift in how the government does business—a shift back to fiscal sanity. The budget proposal saves \$6.2 trillion compared to President Obama's plan. If a person spent \$1 million a day, every day, since the first day of year 1 A.D., he still would not have spent \$1 trillion by today. We will save six times that amount in 10 years.

Mr. Chairman, I was taught a valuable lesson as a kid. If you weren't responsible with your allowance, you didn't get it again. No taxes. Save money.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I just want to go back to the point that was raised again with respect to what Members of Congress have in terms of health insurance plans. We have what's called a "premium support plan." The idea behind a premium support plan is that the employer and employee share the premium, and the employer—in this case, the U.S. Government—pays a certain percent. I have right here the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program handbook, and it reads: The government's share of premiums paid is set by law.

So Members of Congress have protected themselves by law. For most employees, the government contribution equals the lesser of 72 percent or

75 percent of the total premium for the particular plan. In other words, the Member of Congress/Federal employee has 72 cents for every premium dollar paid for. Whenever premiums go up, 72 percent of the cost of that premium is picked up by the government.

The Republican plan gives seniors a raw deal. It does not give seniors the deal that Members of Congress give to themselves, and that should be put to rest right now. Just look at the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program handbook.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Chairman, the vote on the Republican budget is one of the most important votes that I and my colleagues will cast as Members of Congress. The vote will tell the story of two distinct visions for America: how we reduce our debt, our economic future, and what we value as Americans.

The Republican plan to destroy Medicare, to replace it with a voucher system, and to saddle our older neighbors and hardworking families with nearly the entire burden of reducing the Federal deficit betrays our American values. Medicare has allowed our parents and grandparents and our older neighbors to live in dignity in their retirement years. Medicare has kept families out of poverty for decades. It has worked well. With the baby boomers coming, we need to be mindful of necessary reforms.

The Republicans should not use these difficult economic times as a reason to destroy Medicare. After all, the Republican plan will not save any money. It will simply shift the cost to older Americans and their families. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office released an analysis, which reads: In 2022, with an increase of nearly \$7,000 per year, the Republicans would double the cost per person. Not \$1 of that increase in beneficiary cost goes to reducing the deficit. It all goes to cover the higher costs of private plans that the Republicans would force you to join.

□ 1800

The President said yesterday this debate over budgets and deficits is about more than just numbers on a page. It is about the kind of future that we want. It is about the kind of country that we believe in, and I agree. Each one of us deserves some basic measure of security and dignity. He said that we recognize no matter how responsibly we live our lives, hard times or bad luck or a crippling illness or a layoff may strike any one of us. There but for the grace of God go I.

And let me say, back home in Florida under this Republican plan to end Medicare, life will be very different. We need to reject this pessimistic Republican plan. On this most important vote, I urge my colleagues to save Medicare and keep the promise of health security and dignity for older Americans.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Let me say a couple of things. Let's look at current law that was passed here not too long ago, the President's health care law. We've all done town hall meetings where people have said: Why do you keep raiding the Social Security trust fund? Stop the raid of Social Security. We agree; that was wrong. We shouldn't have done it, and now we're out of surplus.

Well, guess what, the current health care law raids Medicare. The current President's health care law takes \$682 billion out of Medicare to spend on the ObamaCare entitlement. We're ending the raid of Medicare. We're making sure that those savings go to making Medicare solvent. It only gets it to 2021.

More to the point, Mr. Chairman, we believe that seniors should be in charge. We believe that the best way to make Medicare better is to give seniors more choices. Give them the ability to make choices and have providers compete against each other for their business.

Here's the difference: The President wants 15 people to make the choices in Medicare. We say let 40 million seniors have choice, have power, and have those providers compete against each other for their business so they're in charge of their Medicare.

The President's law, the law today, has him appoint 15 people to ration Medicare, and Congress can't even do a thing about it. Their decisions go right into law. That's the future of Medicare under the current law. The President said, let's throw another trillion on top. So here's what happens: When the President is coming up with a need for more savings, what does he do, he calls up his Medicare rationing board and says, go find another \$480 billion.

That is not the future we want for Medicare. There's a difference between us. We don't want to have government ration health care. We want people to be in charge of their own health care.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. YODER). The Committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TERRY) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Secretary of the Senate is directed to inform the House of Representatives that the Senate failed to agree to the resolution of the House (H. Con. Res. 35) entitled "Concurrent Resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 1473."

The message also announced that the Secretary of the Senate is directed to inform the House of Representatives that the Senate failed to agree to the resolution of the House (H. Con. Res. 36) entitled "Concurrent Resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 1473."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

The Committee resumed its sitting.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK), a member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his heroic work on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, history walks with us as we debate this budget. History offers us not a single example of a nation that has ever spent and borrowed and taxed its way to prosperity, not one. But it offers us many, many examples of nations that have spent and borrowed and taxed their way to economic ruin and bankruptcy.

And history is screaming this warning at us: that nations that bankrupt themselves aren't around very long because before you can provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare, you have to be able to pay for it, and the ability of our Nation to do so is now in grave danger.

Yesterday, the President attacked this budget because he says it lowers taxes on the rich while raising Medicare costs for seniors. In fact, this budget ends many of the loopholes that have allowed some of the wealthy to pay less than their fair share of taxes, while it lowers the overall rate for those who have paid more. And since 82 percent of small business income is affected, economists tell us that the tax relief provided by this plan will produce a million new jobs next year. I say to the gentleman from Maryland, that's the healthy way to produce new revenue.

The President apparently believes that by taking more money from small businesses, somehow they will create more jobs. That is the economic folly that misguides this administration.

As my friends to my left know, Medicare and Medicaid will collapse if we continue business as usual. This budget saves those systems by putting them on a sound financial foundation. It reverses the growing trend of doctors refusing to treat Medicare patients, and it assures future seniors a far wider choice of physicians and plans than is available today.

This budget brings Federal spending back under control, and it places our Nation on a path so that when my children retire, their retirement systems will be safe and secure and their Nation will be debt free and prosperous.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I remind the gentleman that what we're saying is that the top 2 percent income earners should go back to the

same rates they were paying during the Clinton administration, a period of time when the economy was roaring and 20 million jobs were created. When we moved to the current rates for the folks at the very top, we saw at the end of 8 years, 2000 to 2008, a loss of over 625,000 private jobs.

Let me just say something about this Medicare issue because what the Republican plan does will result in rationing by income. Let me be clear. Seniors, you will no longer be able to choose to stay in the Medicare program. You've got to go into the private health insurance market. You're going to be given a voucher, premium, whatever you want to call it, that doesn't keep pace with rising health care costs. That means that the plan you may be able to afford may not cover the very benefits you need, and your doctor certainly may not be on that plan. So you lose your choice of doctor if you can't happen to afford the plan that they're on, or you lose your benefits. This Republican plan is rationing by the insurance industry.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, the best way to balance any budget for our country is to get everyone back to work who wants to work. The President's bipartisan fiscal commission also shows any responsible effort requires a balanced approach that addresses both spending and revenues. By contrast, this budget from the Republicans fails the simple test of addressing both programs—program spending as well as tax break spending—and it fails it badly.

The Republican budget increases tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires while ending the Medicare guarantee for seniors, doubling their out-of-pocket costs for their insurance premium. And at the same time Republicans are doling out a trillion dollars of tax breaks over the next 10 years to the wealthiest people in our country, to multinational corporations and to those on Wall Street who pay as little as 11 percent of taxes.

Meanwhile, the Republican budget will end Medicare as we know it, and it will throw America's seniors at the mercy of insurance companies. Seniors love Medicare, and their families love Medicare. Social Security and Medicare are compacts of trust between generations, and I would not want the next generation to have any less than our generation has had, and I disagree with the Ryan proposal because it divides generations.

The Democratic alternative stands in clear contrast. It reduces the deficit while preserving the social safety net. In fact, the plan of House Democrats would cut the deficit by an additional \$1.2 trillion more than the President's budget. It achieves primary balance as early as fiscal year 2018, and puts our economy on a full path to recovery.

The Ryan budget fails to say the reasons for the deficit we face—the \$1.4

trillion in the cost of the Afghan and Iraqi wars and the billions and billions spent on Wall Street in bailing them out and all of the costs of unemployment and housing foreclosure that has gone with it.

The Republican budget gives up on jobs and working Americans and caters mainly to the upper 1 percent. And, frankly, it gives up on America's future. The Ryan budget is the roadmap to ruin. It won't create jobs. In fact, it will cause more job loss. It's a dead end budget for America, and I ask my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds to simply say that it is well known that our budget doesn't touch Medicare, change it for people in or near retirement, 55 years old or above. But under the President's plan, if the 15-person board says your doctor can't give you the care he wants to, or your hospital can't do it, then they can't. That's the government doing this, unelected bureaucrats, to current seniors; and we oppose that.

□ 1810

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from the distinguished State of Wisconsin (Mr. RIBBLE).

Mr. RIBBLE. Mr. Chairman, as a member of the House Budget Committee and former small business owner, I rise today in strong support of the Budget Committee's 2012 budget resolution.

I would like to begin today with a quote from a famous American:

"At what point can we have a serious conversation about Medicare and its long-term liability, or a serious conversation about Social Security or serious conversation about budget and debt where we aren't simply trying to position ourselves politically? That's what I'm committed to doing."

Mr. Chairman, that was President Barack Obama just last year. As we debate this budget, I would urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to heed the words of our President. Let's stop the demagoguery and the political jockeying and actually work toward a solution together. Our children—my grandchildren—deserve no less.

Even most Democrats agree that our current spending is on an unsustainable trajectory. So wouldn't you agree that finger-pointing and making false claims to scare seniors while offering no solutions of your own is counterproductive?

This budget has real solutions and real ideas. We cut spending by \$6.2 trillion and shrink the size of government to historically normal—historically normal—levels. We start to get our deficits under control and put our budget on a path to prosperity.

As a small business owner, I know what high taxes mean to job creators in this country. That's why our budget calls for a flatter, fairer tax—now wait for it—that closes loopholes and increases the incentives of corporations to keep jobs right here in America.