

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, budgets are about values and require elected decisionmakers to balance the needs of our constituents with fiscal responsibility.

The Republican Ryan budget this Chamber deemed adopted yesterday is in no way a reflection of the American values that have shaped this Nation. The Republican budget would turn back the clock more than a century to a time when social Darwinism—survival of the fittest—was, in fact, the norm.

Through the leadership of people like Republican Teddy Roosevelt, our Nation began to realize the value in tending to the needs of the poor, the sick, the working poor, the elderly, our children and women. The Republican budget would again put us at risk by making seniors experience a slashing of Medicare and increasing their out-of-pocket costs, and it would further line the pockets of the rich at the expense of the downtrodden among us.

The cuts in discretionary spending put forth by the Republican budget would further set our students behind and create a drag on the economy by disinvesting in research and infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, these are not American values.

BIRTH CONTROL AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. For women of color, access to birth control can mean the difference between life or death. Without birth control, they face more reproductive cancers, more unintended pregnancies, and more sexually transmitted infections. And because many times they can't afford to pay for health care, such diseases have a more disproportionate effect.

Without affordable health care—and birth control being part of that health care—women's health is at risk. In fact, birth control pills prevent 200,000 ovarian deaths and 100,000 deaths overall for women. Without birth control being covered, out-of-pocket costs for women and their health care needs can be up to \$600 per year. It's like a tax on women. That's not fair.

That's why I support President Obama's decision that birth control should be part of all health care plans. Women do not have to be second-class citizens.

□ 1220

STOP STUDENT LOAN INTEREST RATES FROM DOUBLING

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sound a warning: college could become even more expensive.

While it's true that a recent report from the College Savings Plan Network put the value of a 4-year degree at \$570,000 more than a high school education would provide over a lifetime of work, paying for loans to go to school is a ticking timebomb.

On July 1, federally subsidized student loan interest rates will double for low- and middle-income families from 3.4 percent to, yes, 6.8 percent. About 8 million students nationwide will be affected by this change. For a student that takes out \$23,000 in loans over the course of a 4-year degree, this would mean paying back an additional \$11,000 over a 20-year payback period.

But it doesn't have to be this way. This body can act. It can act before July 1 to stop interest rates from doubling.

I stand here today to urge action to stop student loan interest rates from doubling overnight. Our Nation's young people face enough hurdles that range from student debt to finding a job to starting a career. They shouldn't have to worry about this body adding to the list.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, roughly 120,000 jobs were added to the economy in March, marking the 25th consecutive month of increased private sector employment.

In 2 years, American businesses have created 4.1 million jobs. Just last month, the unemployment rate was down to 8.2 percent. While the stimulus bill enacted in 2009 aided in the recovery, there is still much more that this Congress can do to close the employment gap. Instead, Republicans in Congress have insisted on either blocking Democratic job creation proposals entirely or aggressively pursuing legislation that concentrates on special interests and the superwealthy.

Mr. Speaker, as long as millions of Americans continue to struggle, we have the responsibility to engage in a meaningful way that will get our economy back on track.

WOMEN'S HEALTH WEDNESDAY

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, first let me just thank Congresswoman CHU and our colleagues for standing up for women's health today.

Between 2009 and 2010, the United States teen birthrate saw a record 9 percent decrease to 34 births per 1,000. This decrease is due in large part to increased contraceptives use in addition to sex education. Yet even as African American and Latina teens saw large birthrate decreases of 9 and 12 percent, respectively—and we know it's also

true for Asian and Pacific American women—all three communities still experience much higher rates of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and infections than white teens.

The reality is not much better for African American women, who, like teens, experience more than double the unintended pregnancy rate of white women. This is unacceptable.

Unintended pregnancy has a very real public health impact, not to mention the increased economic burden on families who are not able to adequately plan for their children. That is why access to affordable birth control is so very important for minority women.

HEALTH CARE DISCRIMINATION

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

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I'm sick of women getting the short end of the stick. On the whole, women earn less than men for the exact same jobs. In fact, compared to men, women basically work for free 3.5 months of the year since we only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

But here's something that's not free—health care for women. We pay \$1 billion more a year in health insurance premiums than men. That's astounding. And it's not because "the fairer sex" is less healthy than men. In the individual market, a woman, 40 years old, nonsmoking, in Kentucky, actually pays more for her health insurance than a 40-year-old man who does smoke. Even among 30-year-olds in Chicago, women are paying over 30 percent more for health insurance than men of the same age. In South Dakota, a 40-year-old woman pays \$1,200 more than a 40-year-old man for the exact same coverage.

The fact is, women are at the mercy of the vast majority of insurance companies which charge us significantly more than men, even with maternity coverage excluded.

Gender Rating in the individual market is wrong and must end.

And if you want maternity coverage? Forget it.

How's this for family values?

For women who do want maternity coverage in the individual market it's an uphill battle to find it and an even greater challenge to pay for it.

Maternity coverage is only covered by 6 percent of insurance companies unless it is mandated by the state. And the cost can be astronomical. Deductibles could be as high as \$10,000.

Some companies offer special maternity coverage riders. In Kansas a rider could cost over \$1600 a month—well over the cost of a normal health insurance premium.

And some of the riders require long waiting periods before the coverage goes into effect.

Insurance companies call being a woman a pre-existing condition.

And they get away with charging women more for the same coverage as men unless there are laws in place to prevent Gender Rating.

Thirteen states, including California, ban gender discrimination in insurance coverage. Fortunately, in 2014 when the Affordable Care Act goes into effect, the same will be true for the whole country.

This is a long overdue step for women's equality and a key moment for health care.

GENDER DISPARITIES IN COMPENSATION

(Mr. POLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in observation of Equal Pay Day, a day that signifies, to a degree, how far we've come with regard to breaking the glass ceiling and providing opportunities for all Americans, regardless of gender, but it also reminds us how far we have to go, how far we have to go before parity is reached.

For every dollar earned by a man, for the same job, women continue to earn only 77 cents. That extra difference—thousands of dollars a year of income for working families—constitutes a lot of groceries or a lot of gas money that men can buy for the same work that women are undercompensated for.

I was proud that one of my first votes in the United States Congress in the 111th Congress was to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

But we are not yet there in reaching gender parity in this country and ensuring that every American, regardless of their gender, has access to the same opportunity and the same compensation. That's why I introduced the Women WIN Jobs Act, along with ROSA DE LAURO, which helps train women for high-paying jobs.

I ask my colleagues to continue to address the disparities in compensation among the genders.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4348, SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2012, PART II

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 619 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 619

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4348) to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a multiyear law reauthorizing such programs, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee

on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHAFFETZ). The gentlewoman from North Carolina is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. House Resolution 619 provides for a structured rule providing for consideration of H.R. 4348, a bill which extends the Federal highway, transit, and highway safety programs through the end of fiscal year 2012 and establishes program funding levels consistent with the fiscal year 2012 appropriated levels. The highway trust fund taxes and expenditure authority are also extended through fiscal year 2012. The Federal surface transportation programs and highway trust fund taxes and expenditure authority are currently authorized through June 30, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the underlying bill today extends the authority of the government to fund highway programs through the end of this fiscal year.

□ 1230

In addition, the bill provides for the approval of the Keystone XL pipeline by giving the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission 30 days to approve the Keystone XL pipeline expansion, and also includes language contained in H.R. 3096, the Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States, or RESTORE, Act which would establish the Gulf Coast

Restoration Trust Fund and dedicate 80 percent of penalties paid by the responsible parties in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to the restoration of the gulf coast ecosystem and economy.

Mr. Speaker, our constituents are feeling great real pains at the pump, and their pains are being ignored by the President and his liberal extremist enablers in Congress.

Recent polls indicate that 63 percent of Americans say increases in gas prices have caused financial hardship for their families. My Democratic colleagues may be well served to ignore their Occupy Wall Street handlers for a moment and recognize that, as gas prices increase, it costs more to transport food and other essential goods and services, which lowers the standard of living for all Americans.

The simple truth is that when President Obama was sworn into office in January 2009, the price of a gallon of gasoline was \$1.84. Today, in many parts of our country, it's over \$5 a gallon. My guess is this is not the kind of change that most Americans were expecting or wanted when President Obama promised change.

Maybe since the President doesn't fill up his own gas tank, he does not fully appreciate this reality.

These steeply rising gas prices have major ripple effects. Higher energy costs destroy jobs and leave families with less money to meet their basic needs.

One of the most well-known precepts of economics is the principle of supply and demand, and the price of gasoline is not immune to this basic principle. That's why we need to increase the supply of all American energy sources to get us to American energy independence.

Republicans have crafted and passed legislation that would not only lower the price of gas, but create jobs at the same time. Unfortunately, the liberal Democrat-controlled Senate stubbornly refuses to move these bills through the process.

It's better to produce our own American energy and create American jobs rather than rely on unstable, hostile foreign regimes for critical energy resources.

It seems that Democrats subscribe to the wisdom of President Obama's Energy Secretary who proclaimed that "we somehow have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe."

Mr. Speaker, in Italy gas prices exceed \$9 per gallon. The Obama energy policy consists of ignoring the needs of Americans and pleasing his liberal base, rather than working for all Americans.

Congressional Democrats persist in their claim that increasing domestic oil and natural gas production will not immediately decrease the price of gasoline. For decades, this argument has been used as an excuse to continue stalling. We can no longer delay and