

Cicilline	Honda	Peterson
Clarke (MI)	Hoyer	Pingree (ME)
Clarke (NY)	Inslee	Polis
Clay	Israel	Price (NC)
Cleaver	Jackson (IL)	Quigley
Clyburn	Jackson Lee	Rahall
Cohen	(TX)	Rangel
Connolly (VA)	Johnson (GA)	Reyes
Conyers	Johnson, E. B.	Richardson
Cooper	Kaptur	Richmond
Costa	Keating	Ross (AR)
Costello	Kildee	Ruppersberger
Courtney	Kind	Rush
Critz	Kissell	Ryan (OH)
Crowley	Kucinich	Sánchez, Linda
Cuellar	Langevin	T.
Cummings	Larsen (WA)	Sanchez, Loretta
Davis (CA)	Larson (CT)	Sarbanes
Davis (IL)	Lee (CA)	Schakowsky
DeFazio	Levin	Schiff
DeGette	Lewis (GA)	Schrader
DeLauro	Lipinski	Schwartz
Deutch	Loebach	Scott (VA)
Dicks	Lofgren, Zoe	Scott, David
Dingell	Lowey	Serrano
Doggett	Luján	Sewell
Donnelly (IN)	Lynch	Sherman
Doyle	Maloney	Shuler
Edwards	Markey	Slaughter
Ellison	Matsui	Smith (WA)
Engel	McCarthy (NY)	Speier
Eshoo	McCollum	Stark
Farr	McDermott	Sutton
Fattah	McGovern	Thompson (CA)
Frank (MA)	McNerney	Thompson (MS)
Fudge	Meeks	Tierney
Garamendi	Michaud	Tonko
Gonzalez	Miller (NC)	Towns
Green, Al	Miller, George	Tsongas
Green, Gene	Moore	Van Hollen
Grijalva	Moran	Velázquez
Gutierrez	Murphy (CT)	Visclosky
Hahn	Nadler	Walz (MN)
Hanabusa	Napolitano	Wasserman
Hastings (FL)	Neal	Schultz
Heinrich	Oliver	Waters
Higgins	Owens	Watt
Himes	Pallone	Waxman
Hinojosa	Pastor (AZ)	Welch
Hirono	Payne	Wilson (FL)
Hochul	Pelosi	Woolsey
Holden	Perlmutter	Yarmuth
Holt	Peters	

NOT VOTING—11

Cardoza	Mack	Roybal-Allard
Carson (IN)	Pascarell	Sires
Filner	Paul	Yoder
Hinchey	Rothman (NJ)	

□ 1734

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 30, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted “no.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on February 2, 2012, I missed rollcall votes 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 because of district business. Had I been present, I would have voted “no” on rollcall 21, “no” on rollcall 22, “yes” on rollcall 23, “yes” on rollcall 24, “yes” on rollcall 25, “yes” on rollcall 26, “yes” on rollcall 27, “yes” on rollcall 28, “yes” on rollcall 29, and “no” on rollcall 30.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, I want to state for the Record that on February 2, 2012, I missed the last seven rollcall votes of the day.

Had I been present I would have voted: “yea” on rollcall vote No. 24, on the Peters Amendment; “yea” on rollcall vote No. 25, on the Connolly Amendment; “yea” on rollcall vote No. 26, on the Fudge Amendment; “yea”

on rollcall vote No. 27, on the Jackson Lee Amendment; “yea” on rollcall vote No. 28, on the Cicilline Amendment; “yea” on rollcall vote No. 29, on the Motion to Recommit H.R. 3582; “nay” on rollcall vote No. 30, on H.R. 3582, the Pro-Growth Budgeting Act of 2011.

BASELINE REFORM ACT OF 2011

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 534, I call up the bill (H.R. 3578) to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to reform the budget baseline, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 534, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Budget, printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the Rules Committee Print 112-9 dated January 5, 2012, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3578

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Baseline Reform Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. THE BASELINE.

Section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 257. THE BASELINE.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) For any fiscal year, the baseline refers to a projection of current-year levels of new budget authority, outlays, or receipts and the surplus or deficit for the current year, the budget year, and the ensuing nine out-years based on laws enacted through the applicable date.

“(2) The baselines referred to in paragraph (1) shall be prepared annually.

“(b) DIRECT SPENDING AND RECEIPTS.—For the budget year and each outyear, estimates for direct spending in the baseline shall be calculated as follows:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Laws providing or creating direct spending and receipts are assumed to operate in the manner specified in those laws for each such year and funding for entitlement authority is assumed to be adequate to make all payments required by those laws.

“(2) EXCEPTIONS.—(A)(i) No program established by a law enacted on or before the date of enactment of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 with estimated current year outlays greater than \$50,000,000 shall be assumed to expire in the budget year or the outyears. The scoring of new programs with estimated outlays greater than \$50,000,000 a year shall be based on scoring by the Committees on the Budget or OMB, as applicable. OMB, CBO, and the Committees on the Budget shall consult on the scoring of such programs where there are differences between CBO and OMB.

“(ii) On the expiration of the suspension of a provision of law that is suspended under section 171 of Public Law 104–127 and that authorizes a program with estimated fiscal year outlays that are greater than \$50,000,000, for purposes of clause (i), the program shall be assumed to continue to operate in the same manner as the program operated immediately before the expiration of the suspension.

“(B) The increase for veterans’ compensation for a fiscal year is assumed to be the same as

that required by law for veterans’ pensions unless otherwise provided by law enacted in that session.

“(C) Excise taxes dedicated to a trust fund, if expiring, are assumed to be extended at current rates.

“(D) If any law expires before the budget year or any outyear, then any program with estimated current year outlays greater than \$50,000,000 that operates under that law shall be assumed to continue to operate under that law as in effect immediately before its expiration.

“(3) HOSPITAL INSURANCE TRUST FUND.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the receipts and disbursements of the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund shall be included in all calculations required by this Act.

“(c) DISCRETIONARY SPENDING.—For the budget year and each of the nine ensuing outyears, the baseline shall be calculated using the following assumptions regarding all amounts other than those covered by subsection (b):

“(1) ESTIMATED APPROPRIATIONS.—Budgetary resources other than unobligated balances shall be at the level provided for the budget year in full-year appropriation Acts. If for any account a full-year appropriation has not yet been enacted, budgetary resources other than unobligated balances shall be at the level available in the current year.

“(2) CURRENT-YEAR APPROPRIATIONS.—If, for any account, a continuing appropriation is in effect for less than the entire current year, then the current-year amount shall be assumed to equal the amount that would be available if that continuing appropriation covered the entire fiscal year. If law permits the transfer of budget authority among budget accounts in the current year, the current-year level for an account shall reflect transfers accomplished by the submission of, or assumed for the current year in, the President’s original budget for the budget year.

“(d) UP-TO-DATE CONCEPTS.—In calculating the baseline for the budget year or each of the nine ensuing outyears, current-year amounts shall be calculated using the concepts and definitions that are required for that budget year.

“(e) ASSET SALES.—Amounts realized from the sale of an asset shall not be included in estimates under section 251, 251A, 252, or 253 of this part or section 5 of the Statutory-Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 if that sale would result in a financial cost to the Government as determined pursuant to scorekeeping guidelines.”

SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL CBO REPORT TO BUDGET COMMITTEES.

Section 202(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(4)(A) After the President’s budget submission under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, in addition to the baseline projections, the Director shall submit to the Committees on the Budget of the House of Representatives and the Senate a supplemental projection assuming extension of current tax policy for the fiscal year commencing on October 1 of that year with a supplemental projection for the 10 fiscal-year period beginning with that fiscal year, assuming the extension of current tax policy.

“(B) For the purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘current tax policy’ means the tax policy in statute as of December 31 of the current year assuming—

“(i) the budgetary effects of measures extending the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001;

“(ii) the budgetary effects of measures extending the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003;

“(iii) the continued application of the alternative minimum tax as in effect for taxable years beginning in 2011 pursuant to title II of the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010, assuming that for taxable years beginning after 2011 the exemption amount shall equal—

“(I) the exemption amount for taxable years beginning in 2011, as indexed for inflation; or

“(II) if a subsequent law modifies the exemption amount for later taxable years, the modified exemption amount, as indexed for inflation; and

“(iv) the budgetary effects of extending the estate, gift, and generation-skipping transfer tax provisions of title III of the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010.

“(5) On or before July 1 of each year, the Director shall submit to the Committees on the Budget of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Long-Term Budget Outlook for the fiscal year commencing on October 1 of that year and at least the ensuing 40 fiscal years.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After 1 hour of debate on the bill, as amended, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part A of House Report 112-383, if offered by the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), or her designee, which shall be separately debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3578.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I first want to start off by thanking Mr. WOODALL and Mr. GOHMERT, two of the leaders on this policy. This is the second of 10 bills on fixing the broken budget process that we're bringing to the floor to try to bring back accountability, transparency and responsibility to our Federal budgeting process. What this bill does is it removes the pro-spending bias that currently exists in the baseline we use as a starting point in Federal budgeting.

The baseline we currently use assumes automatic increases in spending in the discretionary budget. So, for instance, instead of basing next year's discretionary budget on what we spent this year, we don't do it that way. The way it works is we automatically assume spending increases. We automatically assume that government agencies can't live with what they had last year, can't be more efficient, can't be more productive, and we assume inflation in it already.

We think for honesty, for transparency, if we spent X dollars this year, that is the base on which we ought to consider next year's budget. And for all those programs where inflationary updates are already legislated, such as Medicare, Social Security, or the tax brackets to prevent inflation, this doesn't affect those. Those pro-

grams by law adjust for inflation and, therefore, so should their baselines. Discretionary spending, something Congress controls every year, does not have that because Congress legislates every year.

So what we're simply saying is let's err on the side of the taxpayer. Let's not err on the side of assuming every government agency automatically needs a spending increase one year to the next. If we think they need more money, then we should measure it on an honest basis and then legislate more money for those agencies.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will turn over the rest of my time to Mr. WOODALL, the author of this legislation, and reserve the balance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia will control the remaining time.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. WOODALL. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the chairman for yielding to me.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

This is the second budget bill that we've had today. There's been a lot of talk about what we need to do to help move the economy forward, to help put people back to work.

Let's be clear: as was acknowledged earlier, these bills do none of that. This will not help create one job; this is not going to help grow the economy. We've got a lot of work that we should be doing, including taking up the President's jobs bill, which has been sitting in the House since last October.

The economy remains very fragile. Those infrastructure investments and helping rebuild and repair our roads, our bridges, transit ways could be put to good use right now.

With respect to this bill, the concern is that this creates actually a very misleading picture of what we can purchase in terms of goods and services with our dollars, and it gets more misleading over time. Why do I say that?

Every American knows that when you're comparing the amount something costs between different periods of time, you have got to take into account inflation. You know what, \$10 back 40 years ago bought a lot more than \$10 today. What this bill does is it tries to kind of wish away inflation and, in that sense, it creates, as I say, a misleading sense of what we can expect in terms of goods and services purchased for taxpayer dollars going forward.

I think every taxpayer would say that if we did not, we did not index their taxes for inflation, that would be a tax increase. That's why we index taxes. If we decided to pass a law saying no more indexation of taxes, it would be a hidden tax increase.

Now, here I want to give a very clear example.

□ 1740

In fiscal year 2013, we're going to spend \$61 billion to help support our veterans, to help support our veterans, provide for veterans health care and other services. This is part of the discretionary budget. We also provide help in some of the mandatory budget.

Now, this bill would have you believe that 10 years from now, that \$61 billion is somehow going to provide you the same amount of goods and services to take care of our veterans. We know that's not true. We know that \$61 billion 10 years from now is going to provide a lot less health care for people who served this country. And so let's not play make-believe, and that's what this bill does.

What the Congressional Budget Office does right now is they make the assumptions that reasonable forecasters would make. As the author of the bill has said, there's no law right now that tells CBO how to do it. We leave it to the independent, non-partisan body, the Congressional Budget Office, to figure out what's the best way, what makes the most sense for budgeting purposes. And they say, you know what; we should do what every American does when they're comparing dollars spent in the past or in the future. We need to normalize that. We need to index that to get a real sense of what taxpayer dollars will be able to purchase; otherwise, it creates a misleading impression.

And so CBO, the independent group, said we need to take an account of inflation. What this bill does is says as a matter of law, ignore that. As a matter of law, we're not going to wish away inflation. We're going to pass a law that says for these purposes, don't take it into account. And as I say, it will create a very misleading picture of what it will take to support investments like veterans' health.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) who has been battling in the trenches over this idea for a number of years and whom I'm just as pleased as can be that his idea has come to fruition today.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I understand the concerns of my friend across the aisle, but I'm telling you, this is a great day for Congress, for America. Going back to 1974, the most liberal Congress in America until the time when Speaker PELOSI took the gavel, in 1974, rules for CBO were put in place making it difficult to ever make actual tax cuts to help the economy grow, as John F. Kennedy made clear and showed by his actions. But that was also a time when Congress thought it would be a good idea to create automatic increases of every discretionary department's budget in the Federal budget, automatic increases.

I mean, there are times when increases would be appropriate, and there

are times when it would not be. But why should the government not have to deal with financial issues, like any responsible American, like any responsible family? There will be times when you should have to make cuts. There will be times when you should have to make increases. But what we saw through the 1990s, back during my days when I was a judge, I heard a guy named Rush Limbaugh bring up why do we have this automatic increase, because then when conservatives try to slightly decrease the amount of increase, they're said to be making draconian cuts. Well, I made a mental note.

When I got to Congress in January of '05, I couldn't believe it, to find out that we still had those automatic increases every year. And then to be going through a troubled time like we are now when families across America are having to learn to do with less and make cuts across the board, Congress was still dealing with decreasing the amount of increase because we had these automatic increases.

We had a supercommittee that was formed last fall, and try as they might, they didn't even deal with the issue of the automatic increases. The committee's projections have had to be used because CBO, because of the same 1974 rules, ended up saying, well, gee, the formula can slightly change each year so there's no way to know exactly what it will be over 10 years. Well, one thing's pretty clear, it would have been enough to clear the \$1.2 trillion threshold in cuts, and all it would have been doing is decreasing the amount of increase.

This is a great day for America when Congress, after all of these years, 37-38 years now, Congress is dealing with a financial issue that should have been dealt with long ago.

I brought this up back in 2005 and 2006 when Republicans were in the majority, and I was told back then by the chairman of the Budget Committee that, well, the law is that we've got to do the automatic increases, so we're just going to do it.

It is really thrilling to me to have a chairman of the Budget Committee who saw this as a real problem. This should have been low-hanging fruit, as people like to say. This should have been an easy no-brainer. Cut out the automatic increases. We have a chairman of the Budget right now who saw it as a problem. And it was also exciting to me to have a freshman like ROB WOODALL come in and see it as a problem and collaborate, discuss the matter. Because, really, to get a bill like this through, you need to have somebody that will shepherd it all the way through—subcommittee, committee—to get it to this point. So I'm very grateful to Chairman RYAN, and I'm very grateful to Mr. WOODALL. Amazing, as a freshman, he's done an outstanding job.

And now here we are, about to do what could be the most responsible fi-

nancial thing this Congress has done, this House has done in the whole last year. It could be \$1.4 trillion in cuts over the next 10 years, and all we're doing is just stopping the automatic increase.

There's a lot to be said for finally coming around to responsibility. There's a lot to be said, if you need an increase, come justify it, don't get it automatically. And we now have responsible action being taken, and I urge adoption.

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

I think it's important to underscore the point, and I think the author of the bill would agree, that this legislation didn't save the taxpayer one dime. That's not what we're talking about. This bill, when you pass it, doesn't save one penny. Every year, with respect to the discretionary budget, we have Appropriations Committees in the House and the Senate who go through the budgets, and they decide what's appropriate and what's necessary to be budgeted for those agencies and those accounts every year. They can cut them. They can increase them based on the needs that are perceived by Members of Congress who are acting on that. That's not the issue. We need to tighten our belts. In fact, back in August, we made some significant savings. We need to continue to find savings.

In fact, my view is, if we're really going to be serious about reducing the deficit and the debt, we've got to do this in a balanced way like bipartisan commissions have suggested. You've got Simpson-Bowles; you've got Rivlin-Domenici. All of them have said we've got to do a combination of cuts, and we also need to deal with the revenue. We can no longer afford to have tax breaks for the folks at the very top, that we can't keep all of these tax loopholes open that disproportionately benefit certain people over others, and tax breaks that actually encourage in some cases the export of American jobs when we want to be encouraging the export of American goods and American services.

So that's a very important debate that we should have, but that's not what this does. This just has to do with how we present the baseline as to what can be purchased in terms of goods and services for certain dollars. And moving to this will create a very misleading perception, everyone knows.

Let's say it took a certain amount of money to buy an aircraft carrier today and we wanted to know how much it was going to take to purchase an aircraft carrier 5 years from now. Let's assume over the next 5 years we're in the midst of rising inflation. What this would do is create the idea that since the number was the same this year as 5 years from now, hey, we can buy the same number of aircraft carriers. That's not true. You're going to get a quarter of an aircraft carrier, and that isn't going to do anybody any good.

So again, Americans know that when they're comparing dollars and the value of their dollars over time, you have to take into account inflation.

□ 1750

It happens every day in terms of financial transactions all over the country. So, again, this bill doesn't save a penny. This has to do with just how you present the budget in terms of a picture for the American people to look at and whether it's realistic in comparing what you can buy for a dollar today versus what you can buy for a dollar 5 or 10 years from now. And what we're saying is you should compare apples to apples so people know what the purchasing power of those dollars are in terms of goods and services. Then we, as the Congress, can decide whether we want to increase that amount or cut it, as we do every year. But this bill doesn't mandate any kind of cutting of that nature.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'd like to yield 2 minutes to a real leader for fiscal responsibility on the Budget Committee, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the legislation by my good friend, Mr. WOODALL of Georgia. This legislation makes really significant reforms to the way the CBO develops baseline calculations for discretionary spending. Under current laws, we all know the CBO automatically budgets for inflation of discretionary spending in our baseline projects.

This process runs completely counter to what every American does with their own budget. No family sits down and assumes that they will automatically have an inflationary increase in their budget next year. No small business sits down and says, my sales or my revenue will automatically move up. As a matter of fact, using that approach actually is counterproductive because it actually discourages the search for savings and efficiencies.

I am an appropriator, and I can tell you this is the road to deficit spending. Getting rid of this will help us bring our fiscal house back in order. We should have done it a long time ago. The last time the Republicans were in the majority—and I'm very proud that Mr. WOODALL, Mr. RYAN, and other Members, and particularly this new freshman class, are pushing to do this. This will allow us to reduce the size of government, it will increase transparency, and we'll be able to put our house where we ought to put it.

Of course, the legislation is just one piece of a broader set of reforms. As Chairman RYAN indicated, we need to bring those up systematically. But this is the first step and the right step in the direction of getting our fiscal house in order. I commend my friend for bringing it to the floor. I look forward to its passage.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from

Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), also a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. DELAURO. I rise in strong opposition to this legislation, which would remove consideration of inflation from congressional budget baselines. Instead of beginning this year by putting forward legislation to create jobs, spur growth, and address the economic challenges that we face, the majority is trying, yet again, to achieve their ideological goals, this time by playing an accounting trick on the American people.

At its heart, this bill is a backdoor attempt to enact the same radical cuts the majority attempted last year and to further reduce the spending caps agreed to in last August's Budget Control Act. By eliminating inflation from our official budget considerations, this bill represents a freeze on all discretionary programs that, over time, would become a devastating cut to critical programs.

Within 10 years, all discretionary programs would see their funding slashed by as much as 20 percent. Among the priorities that would be gutted are scientific and medical research, financial aid for college students, assistance to elementary and secondary education, and investments in water and sewer systems. No discretionary program would be spared the axe. Disaster assistance, food safety, medical care for veterans, meals on wheels, community health centers, support for law enforcement and nutrition programs, all of these across the board would be slashed by leaving inflation out of the budget equation, and millions of middle class families would be harmed. Why don't we index tax brackets?

This dangerous cut aside, this legislation makes no sense from an accounting standpoint. Why don't we all put our heads in the sand, this bill argues, and just pretend that inflation does not exist? Now isn't that foolish? Then we can just pretend to be fulfilling our responsibilities to the American people.

Closing our eyes to inflation is not a solution. This is not a serious bill. It does nothing to cut the deficit. Do you want to try to cut the deficit? Let's look at the tax cuts for the oil and gas industry. Let's look at ending the subsidies to those multinational corporations that take their jobs overseas. Do you want to do something about the deficit? Then let's cut the Bush tax cuts for the richest 1 percent of the people in this Nation. This does nothing to cut the deficit. And like every other initiative from this majority, it does nothing to address the top priority of the American people, and that is jobs, growing the economy, and investing in the economy to put us on a glide path to economic sustainability in the future.

I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to

say to my colleague who just spoke, I've introduced a bill in this House that not only repeals the Bush tax cuts, the Obama tax cuts, and every tax break for every multinational corporation and every special interest favor and every deduction and exemption and favor in the entire United States Tax Code, but it does so in a way that would actually bring in more revenues for those priorities that you mentioned. That's H.R. 25, the Fair Tax, and I would welcome the gentlelady's support.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to yield 2 minutes to one of the finest young leaders on the Budget Committee, my freshman colleague from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3578, the Baseline Reform Act, and to commend my hardworking colleague from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for leading in this effort.

Now this is straightforward legislation. It removes the pro-spending bias that currently exists in the baseline that we use here in Congress as a starting point for our annual budgeting. The baseline should be a neutral starting point for considering fiscal policy. It shouldn't presume any spending by this body.

Now we've already heard from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle numerous examples of programs that they fear will be cut in the future as a result of this legislation. Well, this legislation just says that without the sanction of Congress, without a free and open debate about the merits of any given program, there will not be any automatic increases to that program.

Today, the baseline does assume an automatic increase for inflation each year in the discretionary budget. Instead of looking at what each agency actually needs each year to fulfill its mission, we simply assume that that agency needs more money than it had the previous year.

Well, these assumptions add up. In fact, they add up to approximately \$1.4 trillion in outlays over a 10-year period to last year's discretionary spending baseline. This bill would change that pro-spending bias by setting the baseline at the previous year's spending level—and not a cent more. The effect would be to put an end to the long-standing and confusing Washington practice of characterizing any effort to maintain the same level of funding as last year as somehow a "spending cut." It's time to bring Washington definitions of "spending cut" in line with America's definition of a spending cut, and that is an actual cut in spending. This bill does that, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, once again, instead of debating a bill that would create jobs and

bring this economy back or a comprehensive effort to put our fiscal house in order, we're here on this floor tonight focusing on a so-called budget reform bill.

This bill will do nothing to spur economic growth, it will do nothing to bring us closer to a balanced budget, although it could greatly confuse and complicate the budget process.

We must be clear what this bill does, Mr. Chairman. The bill pretends that inflation doesn't occur. It's a pipe dream. By eliminating baseline calculations, it would make it far more difficult to estimate future budget needs. We need to know exactly what it would take to maintain the current level of effort and the current level of services in governmental programs. With that knowledge, we can make realistic decisions, knowing what result those increases or decreases would produce. But this bill would deny us that knowledge. All too often, we'd be making budget decisions in the dark without knowing their full implications.

Efforts like this should find bipartisan opposition. Make no mistake. This bill would—or it could—not only lead to the slow starvation of funds for Democratic priorities like Head Start, clean energy research, and WIC, but it also could starve all programs, including the Border Patrol, military health and veterans' programs, and the FBI. At the very least, it would make budget decisions, both increases and decreases, less precise and less efficient.

I'm voting "no" on this bill. I urge my colleagues to do the same. Let's stop wasting time on so-called budget reform bills. Instead, we need to get to work on the real budget to hammer out a comprehensive agreement, to bring this economy to full strength, and to get our fiscal house in order.

□ 1800

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I'm pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, my hero, Thomas Jefferson, always said that if you apply core principle to any problem, no matter how difficult, the knot will always untie itself. It was true then, and it's true today. If we would apply the core principles of the Constitution to the problems we face as a government, the knot will untie itself. And here just applying common-sense principles to our fiscal problems, the knot will untie itself. This is a remarkably simple and remarkably effective reform. We will no longer assume inflation into the beginning of our spending bills on the Appropriations Committee.

Now, unfortunately, we only control on the Appropriations Committee about 39 cents out of every dollar of spending the Federal Government does. But that 39 percent that we do control will no longer increase automatically year to year. These procedural institutional reforms that House conservatives are enacting into law will make

a dramatic difference in changing the direction of our Nation from insolvency and bankruptcy to getting back on a path to a balanced budget.

I'm very proud to help our colleagues, my chairman, PAUL RYAN, Mr. WOODALL, and Mr. GOHMERT of Texas in enacting this fundamental, common-sense reform to put America back on track to a balanced budget. And Americans should take heart that constitutional conservatives in the House are doing the right thing for the right reasons for the country and redesigning the way we spend money in favor of taxpayers and not in favor of Washington bureaucrats.

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

Again, just for people who are trying to get educated about the budget process who may be watching, and among our colleagues, we put together a 10-year projection of the budget in a lot of different categories. The appropriators on a year-to-year basis can decide how much or how little to give any program, and every Member of this body gets a chance to vote up or down on that. So that's not what this is about. This is not about saving money. I hope we will all save money and get the deficit down. This is about what information is presented in terms of giving an accurate picture of what the cost is of providing goods and services.

So I'm going to give the same example very clearly. Again, it's a very clear example. In fiscal year 2013, we're going to have \$61 billion in the budget for discretionary spending for veterans' programs. Now under the current procedure, the Congressional Budget Office tries to figure out 10 years from now, knowing what we do about inflation expectations—and everybody calculates those into their financial decisions—what would it take to provide the same services for our veterans?

Now what they're proposing is to put in \$61 billion in year 10. But that's misleading because you're not going to be able to provide the services to our veterans at the same level for that amount. In fact, that will represent a 23 percent cut. So I would ask my colleagues, what 23 percent cut are you proposing to make in veterans' programs as we go through this budget? And why do you want to build in what is misleading in a sense that it creates a false impression of what a dollar will purchase 10 years from now compared to what it will purchase today?

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I'd be happy to yield.

Mr. CULBERSON. I chair the Veterans Administration and Military Construction Subcommittee in Appropriations, and I assure you we all work arm in arm together. My friend, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, and I will make sure veterans are taken care of. We will still be able to with this reform, but in the light of day look at inflation, medical

inflation, which is generally higher than regular inflation, we will build that in, I promise you, as we go through our hearing schedule. But we will do it in open public hearings. It won't be built in automatically. That's all this does is remove the automatic increase and lets the people's elected Representatives do it in the sunlight of day in an open hearing. And I assure you that veterans will be taken care of.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you. And taking back my time, you really made my point, which is that if the purpose of a budget is to try and provide the most realistic projection of what services we're going to provide in the future compared to today, you should take into account the cost of those increases.

The gentleman has just said that of course we're going to build in inflation with respect to veterans programs. In fact, we're going to do better than that. And I'm glad to hear that because we're going to take into account the fact that medical inflation runs higher than regular inflation. But the point is, if you put different numbers in year 10 that don't take into account inflation, you're going to give people a very misleading sense of what can be purchased for their tax dollars in terms of goods and services.

The same holds true with respect to DOD, in other words, the Defense Department. Why don't we want to present the American people with an accurate representation of what it will actually cost to maintain the current defense or current discretionary veterans programs? That's the whole purpose of this. The Appropriations Committee can do what it wants with respect to decisions in increases and in cuts.

I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, at this time, just for the sake of clarity for the American people, I'd like to yield 2 minutes again to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the gentleman from Maryland. And as we all recall, the Military Construction and VA Appropriations bill passed the House almost unanimously because all of us in this Congress are arm in arm in support of our veterans, in support of our military to ensure that they get the very best medical care possible, that we're providing every benefit that they have earned by their service to the Nation.

And the only thing this bill will do is remove the automatic blind increase in the starting point for our spending. And we in the Appropriations Subcommittee, in the full sunlight of day on C-SPAN and public hearings, will go through and build in that increase that has actually occurred in medical inflation and regular inflation to ensure that we have compensated our veterans for that increase that has already occurred. But we'll do it in a public hearing; we'll do it in the full light of day.

We'll do it so the taxpayers can see what we're doing.

The game is rigged today against American taxpayers; and House conservatives, constitutional conservatives are following core principle. We're honoring the Constitution. We're looking for ways to restore the 10th Amendment and individual liberty, shrinking the government, getting control back in the hands of individual Americans and State and local governments.

And then when it comes to the budget, we're implementing commonsense reforms that every American understands. We don't get an automatic increase in pay. If you're working for a company, you've got to earn it every year. We on the Appropriations Committee are going to go through and analyze every one of these accounts and make sure that we have built in, but in an open public forum, any increase as a result of the increase in medical inflation or baseline inflation.

We will, on the subcommittee, I assure you, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, make sure that our veterans are fully compensated, as all of us take great pride in their service. And, truly, you see more unanimity on the Veterans' and Military Construction Appropriations bill than almost any other bill that we pass because we take such great pride in them.

So I urge my colleagues to please remove that argument from your repertoire, and let's focus on what's really going on here. The game is rigged today against taxpayers, and House Republicans are rigging the game today in favor of taxpayers in sunlight and transparency.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HURT). The time of the gentleman has expired.

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

I hear what you're saying with veterans. Absolutely true, on a bipartisan basis, we understand we're going to make sure we support the veterans and we're going to make sure they get the cost-of-living increase. And the reality is, you mentioned the defense budget. That's 50 percent of the discretionary budget right there.

□ 1810

Are we going to make sure that we provide increases to make sure that we can maintain the same national defense?

Mr. CULBERSON. Sure. BILL YOUNG's going to do that. BILL YOUNG's going to take care of it.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. So here's the point. So you're going to create a document for the American people that says, hey, we're going to be spending this much in year 10 for veterans when we know that that's not true. We know right now, in fact, you've just said on the floor of this House, that number's going to be a lot bigger.

And my point is we can make it bigger, we can make it smaller. This bill

doesn't save a dime in terms of what decisions we make. But why would we want to present the American people with a misleading sense of what it's going to cost in real dollars and cents? I agree with the Member.

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. Just for a friendly conversation.

Truly, there's nothing misleading. We're doing this in the light of day. What we're, through this reform, going to do, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, is have these hearings in public, in front of C-SPAN and the world, and talk about what actually has been the level of inflation this year, what actually do we need to do to increase funding this year for the veterans, for medical inflation, for regular inflation.

BILL YOUNG, the chairman of the Defense Subcommittee and a great leader from Florida who works in a bipartisan way with NORM DICKS, your leader on the Appropriations Committee, they're going to build in, they're going to analyze what inflation's been.

The difference here, truly, all we're doing is doing it in the light of day. We're removing the automatic increase. That's all. I want the pilot with his hand on the steering wheel of the airplane.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Reclaiming my time, but look, we're doing everything in the light of day. The issue isn't whether it's done in the light of day or not. Of course it's done in the light of day. It's what picture we're presenting to the American people in terms of the budget numbers on what their tax dollars will be able to purchase in terms of goods and services.

And in my view, it's misleading to say we're going to be spending the same nominal dollar amount for veterans 10 years from now in the budget when we know, according to your own testimony and according to what we know, that that's not going to be the case. That's why we try and put together a document that gives us the best representation of the information we have as to what it will cost; then we can make a decision to add or subtract. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, at this time it pleases me to be able to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), one of my freshman colleagues, a leader on the committee.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Speaker, one of the things about being a freshman in this body is walking in and trying to learn the numbers game. On the Budget Committee, there are a million different variations to the numbers, a million different options with the numbers. And it's amazing to me, in Washington, DC, when you try to say what's the number, you'll get five different numbers.

So I think the best thing that we can do is clarify the system and say, give

the numbers out there. We know what inflation's going to be, but give the numbers out there so the numbers are the numbers, and we can say to the American people when we talk about controlling spending, this is what it is. We're not cutting off what was the automatic increase and trying to have two different sets of numbers and saying we really cut but we really increased. We're able to have a flat line number out there that everyone can see and that everyone can process through.

So while we're fighting to be able to manage the budget and to be able to work through the realities that are out there of inflation—and I understand fully the principle of inflation and how that fits into your buying power. But while we're fighting through those realities, we're not fighting against ourselves. We understand that the number that's been presented to us is not including some arbitrary number that's been invented that Congress did not come up with, but it's a number that we came up with, as Congress, and said this the projection and this is where we're headed.

So the best thing I think we can do is create a neutral budgeting process, and the way to do that is to have this kind of simple reform in baseline. Control the baseline spending by not having the automatic increases. Have the baseline be the baseline. Don't put something out in the future that was not passed by Congress and assume Congress is going to then follow the lead of CBO, but assume that Congress is going to pass the budget and that next year we're going to look at exactly what that's going to be.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Maryland, the distinguished Democratic whip, Mr. HOYER.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN from Maryland, for yielding.

I, unfortunately, have not been able to listen to all of the debate, but I've listened to enough of it. This week we're playing let's pretend. We're playing the game of let's pretend that if we solve the process, we'll solve the problem.

There's an excellent article that I think everybody ought to read. Stan Collender, who is a real expert on the budget process and who has been involved in this budget process for a long, long period of time, quotes in an article that he wrote—that I hope most of you read—in Roll Call. He quotes Rudy Penner. Rudy Penner was the Director of CBO—not a partisan individual, in my view—that I've had the opportunity of dealing with for some period of time. And his quote is: A process, no matter how well designed, cannot make difficult problems easy.

I think my friend, PAUL RYAN, would agree with that. It's not the process that's the problem. The problem is we don't have the courage to make deci-

sions which are clearly necessary for us to make, and no amount of jiggering around the edges is going to change that.

Now, as all of you know, I'm a strong supporter of a Bowles-Simpson approach to bringing our country to a fiscally sustainable path. Unlike many of you, I believe that revenues have to be part of that process and cuts have to be part of that process and restraints of entitlements have to be part of that process. I've been saying that for 2½ years now. It's somewhat controversial, but I have three children, three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren. If we don't do that, they're going to be hurting.

But, frankly, we ought not to pretend that the process is the problem. The problem is the problem, as Rudy Penner's said. The problem is the problem, and we ought to address it. And we ought to have the courage to tell the American people that it's not a question of process, not a question that we don't have the right process in place in Washington. The problem is we don't have the votes in Washington.

This Congress is dysfunctional. That doesn't mean we don't pass things. We do. But this week, frankly, what we're dealing with will not affect any of the significant problems that we have, whether it be jobs or fiscal responsibility.

So I'm opposed to this bill. Why? Because I think it's a let's pretend. It's a let's pretend that if you have \$100 to spend on defense this year, that you can get that same defense for \$100 next year. You can't.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield the gentleman an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. You can't, and the American public knows that.

We talk about, well, we ought to operate like a family. Family understands that. They know their electricity bill goes up, and they know they can't get the same kind of heat this year or next year that they got last year because they know their electric bill has gone up, and they need to know what that is.

So what we said, the Congress said, we want a baseline budget. What does it cost to get that \$100 of value next year? And so we get that.

The previous speaker I heard speaking—I don't know who it was; I apologize for that—said, you know, we ought to have an honest budget. Well, you can argue it's honest both ways. Either it's honest that that's what we spent last year, 100 bucks, or it's honest that, in order to do next year what we did last year, you need \$101.50. Both of those are honest answers. Nobody ought to think that that's a dishonest answer.

The answer is: Do you want to know what you spent last year? Look at the budgets. Do you want to know what it would cost you to do the same thing? Then you get the baseline. So either one is honest. It's just a judgment.

But you're pretending that you're saving money by having that kind of budget. Baloney. Baloney. The only way you're going to save money is to have the courage to vote to do so.

My friend, PAUL RYAN, is shaking his head. He and I have some significant disagreements, but very great respect, I hope, for one another. I know I have great respect for him.

□ 1820

I think we are advantageous as a country having Mr. VAN HOLLEN and Mr. RYAN, who are both very bright, able, committed people dealing with this. The trick is coming to agreement irrespective of process. It's substance that matters. The American public will be affected by the substantive judgments we make, not about whether we do it with a baseline budget or a static budget or dynamic scoring.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. HOYER. I don't believe in dynamic scoring. I think dynamic scoring is a liberal, radical idea. Why? Because it pretends something you don't know.

George Bush said we had \$5.6 trillion we could rely on and therefore have very deep tax cuts. Didn't work out. I would much prefer to not use dynamic scoring and have more money than I thought I was going to have that I could apply either to reduction of the deficit or some other priority that I thought was important, rather than find out, oops, I was wrong on dynamic scoring, I have less money and I'm deeper in the hole. Now, you can differ on that, but that's my view.

I'd rather be conservative and say, Gee, I hope investing in infrastructure, cutting taxes, doing whatever you think is going to get better education is going to get you better results; I hope it does get better results. That's the purpose of investing in it. If it does, you're benefited if you didn't count on it because you have more than you thought you would. That's the place to be, not having less than you thought you would.

So I urge my colleagues to reject this bill, to adopt reality. It cost us to do this yesterday, and now it cost us to do it today. I think that's a responsible, smart way to budget.

I thank the gentleman for yielding this time. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your light touch.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, at this time it gives me great pride to yield 5 minutes to my chairman, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. WOODALL for his leadership.

I simply want to say I deeply respect the minority whip, and I agree with a lot of what he just said. First of all, he's totally correct when he's saying there's no substitute for discipline, meaning Congress has got to make decisions, and nothing can substitute for that.

He's also half right when he says Congress is dysfunctional. Where he's half right, it's the other body over on the other side of the rotunda, the Senate, because last year in the majority they didn't pass a budget.

Mr. HOYER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. HOYER. I was just going to kid him that he's just now trying to get to things that we can all agree on.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. That's right. Trying to get some consensus here.

The year before when they had a supermajority, no budget.

To budget is to decide. To budget is to make a decision. They haven't budgeted for over a thousand days.

The budget process we have here, which we've had in place since 1974, requires the House pass a budget by April 15, the Senate pass a budget; and they didn't do it for over a thousand days.

So when we look at the process, we see that it's not working the way it needs to. It's no substitute for personal discipline, for Members making decisions, for compromising; but in this particular case, we think the process is part of the problem. We think the process needs to be improved to make it more likely that we make these decisions, that we get to exercising that discipline.

On this particular bill, we are assuming \$1.4 trillion in automatic spending increases and discretionary spending over the next 10 years. We probably shouldn't do that because even though it happens—this is not a spending-cut bill. This is a measurement bill. But the way we measure it leads to a bias in more spending.

What I'm trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is in 2009 and 2010, domestic discretionary spending, including the stimulus, increased by 84 percent. So this category of government has grown very, very fast; and we're saying let's stop automatically assuming that it needs to grow every year. Let's put the taxpayer first and the government agencies second as far as who gets the money first.

What I'm trying to say is if we want to put a bias in favor of requiring agencies to do more with less, be more productive, more efficient, then we should not assume they automatically get a spending increase every year. That's how businesses do it. That's how families do it.

A lot of families don't get raises, but their expenses go up. Gas prices go up. Insurance costs go up. Grocery prices go up. But they don't get a raise, so they have to prioritize. We think government should do the same, and we shouldn't just assume they are going to get a raise.

This is not going to fix our budget problem, but we think this and the other bills we bring to the floor will improve the process to get us to what we need to do, which is come in here agreeing, compromising, and then de-

ciding and having decisions made, which is budgeting, so we can save this country from a debt crisis.

Mr. HOYER. Will my friend yield?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend for yielding.

Frankly, this issue is of such importance, it is a shame we don't have a lot of time to discuss it because I think in many respects we do agree.

Where we disagree, however, is when you say that body that is dysfunctional—the gentleman just referred to that. I kidded about it. Both parties are dysfunctional to the extent that we are not making determinations to spend just the money we have. We haven't done that for some period of time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. You're talking about deficit spending?

Mr. HOYER. Yes. Not spending money we don't have.

From my perspective, we did that when we cut taxes. We didn't pay for that. It wasn't like we had a real surplus. We had a projected surplus. We banked on that; and as I said earlier, we lost on that proposition.

I suggest that whether or not, as I said, you use what you think is the bias towards not spending as opposed to a bias for spending, as someone who served on the Appropriations Committee for 23 years, we all know what will happen. The agency will come in and say this is what we are doing for 100 bucks, and this year we need 150 if you want us to continue to do that.

My point is the Congress has the authority to say, no, we want you to do less. It is the Congress' role to make priorities. I suggest to the gentleman it won't be easier for us to do it under either scenario because it is hard to do. I agree with the gentleman that we ought to do it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Wisconsin has expired.

Mr. WOODALL. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. HOYER. I simply don't think this bill or any other bill will get us to that end if we do not have the courage and, your word, "discipline," to effect that end.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Reclaiming my time, I agree with that. I think the gentleman is right about that. There is no substitute for courage. This bill in and of itself won't fix the problem.

What I would simply say is that this bill helps remove what I think is a bias in favor of not pressuring government to be more efficient, more lean because they will think they will automatically get a spending increase year after year after year. That is the point. There is no substitute for discipline. I completely concur with that.

This helps us get the system pointed in the right direction. That is why I encourage all Members to support this.

I thank Mr. WOODALL and Mr. GOMMERT for their leadership.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire if my colleague from Georgia is prepared to close.

Mr. WOODALL. I am prepared to close.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think we have had a good debate. There have been a couple of themes. One is that this bill in and of itself, I think everyone acknowledges, won't save the taxpayer one penny. It doesn't do that.

In order to save the taxpayer money and reduce the deficit, we have to make the tough decisions that Mr. HOYER and Mr. RYAN mentioned. There are obviously disagreements as to how we go about doing that. We've talked about the importance of trying to make sure that as we go forward we have a budget that reflects the values and the priorities of the American people, and one where we are covering our costs. That means paying our bills.

A lot of us believe that in order to do that we've got to get rid of some of the tax breaks for the folks at the very top, that we need to close a lot of the special interest loopholes. That is a very important debate.

The question here is just how we put together an accurate reflection for the American people about our best guess of what I think should be a budget that shows what their taxpayer dollars will purchase in terms of goods and services.

□ 1830

It is a question of measurement. How do you measure what you're going to be able to buy for the American people or buy for our veterans 10 years from now? When you put \$61 billion in the budget today, which is what we pay for veterans' health issues and for other veterans' programs in the discretionary budget—and as Mr. HOYER says, let's pretend we're going to put \$61 billion in for that program 10 years from now—that is a cut when you take into account inflation and what we know about the increases.

In fact, Mr. CULBERSON, from the Appropriations Committee, was here on the floor, and he's absolutely right. He says you can be sure that the appropriators are going to build in inflation. We're going to make sure we take care of that. In fact, we're going to do a little more than that because medical inflation runs higher. If we're trying to give an accurate measure to the American people about what the budget is going to look like every 10 years, why would we put a number a member of the Appropriations Committee said is not going to be realistic and that we know, as we gather here, is not realistic?

If we are going to be serious about budgeting, we need to have the best

and most accurate sense of what taxpayer dollars are going to buy in terms of goods and services. What this does, as Mr. HOYER says, is to play let's pretend. Let's pretend that, for the same nominal amount, you're going to be able to get as much in terms of veterans' health care 10 years from now as you are today. If we do that, the real question to ask up front is: What veterans' services and benefits are we going to cut?

Now, the Appropriations Committee decides each year exactly how much to cut and how much to add. That's why, at the end of the day, this is all a question of the will of this body to make tough decisions; but let's make tough decisions off an accurate measure of what things will cost both now and in the future. In order to do that, we should maintain the existing practice, which shows us exactly what that is, and not create what I think will be a misleading sense that we can get more for our buck than we really can.

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

Mr. WOODALL. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to begin by thanking the folks on the Budget Committee who made it possible to bring this bill to the floor tonight: Nicole Foltz, Jon Burks, Paul Restuccia, Jon Romito, and on my staff, Nick Myers.

This is a team effort, and it was led by the gentleman from Texas, LOUIE GOHMERT, who has been working on this issue year after year after year, but he could not find a Budget Committee chairman who was willing to prioritize process—and process matters. I've learned in my 1 year here as a Congressman, Mr. Speaker, that we spend a lot of time arguing about process. If we could find that common ground on process, we could get on to the substance. This is one of those issues.

I'd like to associate myself with the comments of the gentleman from Maryland. He says the question is: How do we put together an accurate picture of the budget process for the American people? That is exactly the right question to ask. When I ask that question of my constituents back home, they say, Rob, cut out those phony numbers of automatic increases every year.

We absolutely agree on the question, Mr. Speaker. It's how you answer the question that divides us.

As the minority whip said earlier, this isn't a bill that deals with our priorities for spending. Our appropriators are going to do that. This isn't a bill that cuts one penny. This is a bill that changes the way we measure the pennies that get cut.

I will say to you, Mr. Speaker, I start getting nervous when I hear the Washington political class talk about changing the way we measure, because I just assume they're going to come up with some new phony way to make it happen. Yet in this case—and perhaps this case alone—what we're saying is, for

far too long, we've had those conversations during town hall meetings when we spent \$1 million last year and when we'll spend \$1.1 million next year, and they call it a cut—"they" being the Washington measures.

That's nonsense, nonsense.

Is there a cost of living issue? Absolutely. Do we have to spend more on health care next year than we do this year? Absolutely. Do we have an unlimited spigot of cash that we can turn on to meet those needs? The answer is no. The answer is no.

This isn't a little issue, Mr. Speaker. \$1.4 trillion over the 10-year window is what this automatic phony budgetary gimmick increases the budget to be. We're cutting that out. We're cutting that out.

We're saying, Congress, if you care about veterans as our veterans' committee chairman does and as our appropriating chairman does, stand up and put your money where your mouth is—and I guarantee you we're going to do it. If you care about seniors, stand up and put your money where your mouth is—and I guarantee you we're going to do it. But, Mr. Speaker, if we gave folks \$500 last year to go out and buy their new iPhones, that iPhone has gone down. If we gave folks \$100 at the beginning of the Obama administration to buy gas, clearly, that \$100 is not enough to do it anymore because gas prices have doubled.

We already have a phony budget mechanism to project and bias towards increased spending. This is a bill—a simple bill—to which folks back home ask time and time again: Why hasn't it happened before? I don't have the answer, but it's not about blaming folks in the past for not getting it done, Mr. Speaker. It's about coming together, as we are tonight, to get it done.

This is a bill that has the support of the National Taxpayers Union. This is a bill that has the support of Citizens Against Government Waste. This is a bill that has the support of FreedomWorks. And this is a bill that has the support of the American people.

I would urge my colleagues to vote in favor of it, and let's move this bill on to the Senate.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

The Chair understands that the gentlewoman from Texas will not be offering her amendment.

Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of H.R. 3578 is postponed.

THE PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

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