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PRESIDENT OBAMA'S 2013 BUDGET REQUEST

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

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the President sent his fiscal year 2013 budget request to Congress. It's been roundly panned as being "not serious," "inadequate," and "political."

But, Mr. Speaker, I want the American people to understand, in addition to all these assessments, the President's budget request is downright dangerous. House Republicans have begun a serious conversation with the American people about our debt, our out-of-control Federal spending, the unsustainability of mandatory spending, as well as our future.

But it's past time for this President and his party in Congress to join us in honestly acknowledging the real challenges facing our Nation and offering realistic solutions to put America back on the path to prosperity to ensure that our best days are still in front of us.

Sadly, the President's lack of leadership on these critical issues endangers not only the current economic recovery but the very future of our great Republic.

EFFECTS OF HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, the health care reform effort signed into law by President Obama in 2010 contains important new benefits for our seniors and Medicare recipients that have already started to take effect.

Nearly 3.6 million seniors in the doughnut hole have already saved \$2.1 billion on their prescription drugs. Twenty-four million people with Medicare have already taken advantage of free preventive services.

Additional reforms such as a prohibition of lifetime caps on insurance expenditures will soon be made available to our seniors, thanks to health care reform. Nothing in health reform reduces Medicare benefits for seniors.

Health care reform achieves Medicare savings by cracking down on inefficiency, fraud, and waste in Medicare, targeted at private health insurance companies and providers, not beneficiaries. This is how government should operate: by demanding efficiency, accountability, and protecting taxpayer dollars.

JOB-KILLING REGULATIONS

(Mr. QUAYLE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. QUAYLE. Mr. Speaker, in just this past year approximately 79,000 pages of regulations were printed in the Federal Register. The cost to comply with our regulatory enterprise exceeds \$1 trillion per year.

Now this past August, the Department of Labor issued its final rule governing the non-displacement of qualified workers under service contracts. Under this rule, when a government contract is given to a new firm, the company is required to first offer employment to the previous contractor's workers.

The administration claims this rule will help government efficiency, but it gives a preference to union employees and limits the ability of the firm to negotiate and hire the workers that it actually wants. This rule will impact thousands of employers and billions in government contracting.

By piling on new hoops for employers to jump through, we are simply increasing costs that are passed on to taxpayers. Regulatory compliance costs are a hidden tax borne by us all. The administration must stop this myriad of job-killing regulations.

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of American Heart Month. February, you know, is not just about Valentine's Day, but it's also a month designated to raise awareness of heart disease, especially its impact and effects on women.

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for women. And most Americans, including over 90 percent of primary care physicians, are not even aware that heart disease kills more women each year than men.

We have lost far too many of our loved ones to heart disease. I dare say each of us knows someone, a dear friend or a family member, affected by it. And that's why I reintroduced H.R. 3526, the Heart for Women Act, to increase awareness of and access to care for those impacted by heart disease.

I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation and join me in the battle against heart disease.

A GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, why do we say that the President's health care law is a government takeover? Because, under the law, the government can force religious organizations to violate their conscience. Because, under the law, the Independent Payment Advisory Board can cut Medicare

reimbursements without the consent of Congress.

This same board could start running with minimal congressional oversight, given the President's attempt to broaden the definition of a recess.

It is a government takeover because the minimum essential benefits package will effectively dictate the level of coverage for every health care plan in the Nation. It is a government takeover because the United States Preventive Services Task Force will determine what services have to be provided without any copayment.

Finally, when the government can force you to purchase a service that it firmly controls, it's a government takeover. The list could go on and on. Clearly, the Federal Government is now in the driver's seat. The President's health care law is already failing, which is why we need to end it before it's fully implemented.

□ 1220

MEDICARE

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

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, on March 1, Medicare physician payments will be slashed by 27 percent, badly impacting seniors' access to health care. We must act now to make sure that doesn't happen.

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to speak to World War II veterans from Missouri who visited Washington to see the memorial to their service. They spoke to me about how, during their crisis, Americans pulled together to meet the great challenges of their time. That's the can-do attitude we need now. We should stop using the lives and health of our seniors as political bargaining chips.

Plain and simple, paying doctors for doing their job, keeping seniors' access to health care should not be a partisan issue. It should be an American value we can all rally around.

I call on my colleagues to work together to keep access to Medicare services strong. That's an American value.

NANNY STATES

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

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, a year or two ago, some local bureaucrat in Oregon shut down a 7-year-old girl's lemonade stand because she had not paid the \$120 required to get a restaurant license. The bureaucrat's supervisor defended the action because some government officials will never admit a mistake. Fortunately, elected officials got the action rescinded and let the little girl operate her lemonade stand.

I thought about this when I heard that Big Brother had struck once again

by not allowing a 4-year-old girl in North Carolina to eat the lunch she had brought to school from home because supposedly it did not meet Federal guidelines. The little girl had brought a very healthy lunch: a turkey and cheese sandwich, banana, chips, and apple juice. Instead, she ate three chicken nuggets apparently okayed by the government, and the school sent a bill for the lunch to her mother.

This is the Big Government nanny state run amuck. This was not only ridiculous and excessive, it was cruel to tell a 4-year-old child the lunch her mother had sent was bad or not proper. Plus, the little girl went home hungry.

We seem to have, Mr. Speaker, a government of, by, and for the bureaucrats instead of one that is of, by, and for the people.

REPUBLICAN TRANSPORTATION BILL

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House in relationship to the transportation bill that we are currently debating in the House this week.

Transportation, as you know, has traditionally and historically been an idea where our two parties have been able to find common ground. Transportation has been an opportunity for Republicans and Democrats, alike, to work to rebuild America, to create jobs, strengthen our economy, move commerce, move people, improve the quality of life, including public safety—that is, up until now; and that is, until this bill.

With the legislation that we are debating today, Republicans put forth the most partisan transportation package in 50 years. It is not just partisan; it's bad for our Nation, destroying more than half a million American jobs. The transportation bill is supposed to be a job-creating bill. It always has been—until now.

Destroying more than half a million jobs, cutting highway investments in 45 States, bankrupting the highway trust fund with a \$78 billion shortfall, and, just the strangest of all, among many shortsighted provisions in the bill, I want to make particular mention of what it does to public transportation. It eliminates all of the dedicated funding for public transportation, leaving millions of riders already faced with service cuts and fare increases out in the cold.

The legislation is so detrimental to our Nation that the Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, a former Member of this body on the Republican side of the aisle, has said:

This is the most partisan transportation bill that I have ever seen, and it is also the most antisafety bill I have ever seen. It hollows out our number one priority, which is safety, and frankly, it hollows out the guts of the transportation efforts that we've been about for the last 3 years. It's the worst

transportation bill I've ever seen during 35 years of public service.

In recommending that the President veto this legislation, the administration has said:

The legislation would make America's roads, rails, and transit systems less safe, reduce the transportation options available to America's traveling public, short-circuit local decision making, and turn back the clock on environmental and labor protections.

Mr. Speaker, this is so unfortunate because it's so out of character with the American way, the common sense of the American people about what we should be doing for them.

At the beginning of our country, Thomas Jefferson, when he was President, enlisted his Cabinet officers to build an infrastructure plan for America that involved transportation. In the 1800s, this plan, under Secretary Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, was put forth. It recognized that we had made the Louisiana Purchase, that there were Lewis and Clark expeditions going on, and that we had to build America—build roads and transportation out into these territories so that people would move there, commerce would develop, our country would be strong.

Following this, the Erie Canal, the transcontinental railroad, the Cumberland Road, they were all built after the War of 1812—of course, the transcontinental railroad later than that—when our population was sparse and so was our national treasury.

In my own community of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco Bay Bridge both were built 75 years ago in the midst of the Great Depression.

President Eisenhower in the mid-to late fifties, not a good economic time either, built and instituted the Interstate Highway System, unifying our country. It was a national security issue to unify our country. It was done at a time when our coffers were low on money, but it created jobs. It did what it was intended to do.

Now we are abdicating our responsibility. Again, 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson; 100 years later, Teddy Roosevelt, and his initiative for infrastructure centered around our national park system and how we make that part of our national patrimony, and some of that falls under the Transportation Subcommittee of the Congress of the United States. Now, here we are, 100 years later, putting forth a bill that loses jobs, diminishes public safety. It's a missed opportunity, and it's no wonder our Republican colleagues are having so much trouble building support for it in their own caucus.

I just wanted to take a moment to share my views with our colleagues about how wrong this is for the future and how out of keeping it is with our great past, which has seen the strength of our country grow because of our investments in our infrastructure and our bringing people together through transportation.

BUDGET'S FAILURE TO ADDRESS OUR DEBT CRISIS

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, for the fourth year in a row, of course President Obama's budget fails to seriously address our Nation's debt crisis and calls for higher taxes and increased stimulus spending.

This budget punishes small businesses, job creators, and seniors at the expense of the administration's spending addiction. This is not a recipe for long-term economic growth.

Instead, we need credible solutions that simplify the Tax Code, control Federal spending, and preserve valuable services for our seniors. Washington should create a win-win situation for all Americans.

The House continues to take these steps with jobs bill after jobs bill that will put people back to work and allow job creators and entrepreneurs to grow.

Unfortunately, the President's budget spends too much, taxes too much, borrows too much, and picks the winners and losers of our economic recovery. This is not what America needs right now.

□ 1230

INTRODUCTION OF SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME EQUALITY ACT

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

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, as a territory, Puerto Rico has always been treated unequally under Federal health programs. While the Affordable Care Act improved the island's treatment under Medicaid, a number of key inequalities remain under both Medicaid and Medicare.

Today, I am reintroducing legislation to eliminate a provision in Federal law that requires Medicare to reimburse Puerto Rico hospitals far less than Stateside hospitals.

Under the current system, Puerto Rico hospitals are paid a base rate that is about 13 percent lower than the base rate for hospitals in the States. Thus, an island hospital will receive substantially less than any urban, suburban, or rural hospital in the States for providing the same inpatient services, making it harder for island hospitals to deliver high-quality care and to remain financially sound.

This is another example of how the people of Puerto Rico are placed at a clear disadvantage in the race of life because of the island's territory status. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support my bill.

HELMETS TO HARDHATS

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1