

Our current Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, issued a similar warning when she recently declared: “I think that our rising debt levels[sic] poses a national security threat, and it poses a national security threat in two ways. It undermines our capacity to act in our own interest, and it does constrain us where constraint may be undesirable. And it also sends a message of weakness internationally.” Despite these warnings, Congress has refused to address this crisis.

Congress’ spending addiction is not a partisan one. It reaches across the aisle and afflicts both parties, which is why neither party has been able to master it. We need outside help. We need pressure from outside Congress to force Congress to rein in this out-of-control behavior. We need a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution.

That is why I am introducing this legislation, which garnered 261 bipartisan votes when it came before the House for a vote last Congress. This bill would amend the Constitution to require that total spending for any fiscal year not exceed total receipts and require the President to propose budgets to Congress that are balanced each year. It would also provide an exception in times of war and during military conflicts that pose imminent and serious military threats to national security.

Furthermore, the legislation would make it harder to increase taxes by requiring that legislation to increase revenue be passed by a true majority of each chamber and not just a majority of those present and voting. Finally, the bill requires a 3/5 majority vote for any increases in the debt limit.

Our federal government must be lean, efficient and responsible with the dollars that our nation’s citizens worked so hard to earn. We must work to both eliminate every cent of waste and squeeze every cent of the value out of each dollar our citizens entrust to us. Families all across our nation understand what it means to make tough decisions each day about what they can and cannot afford and government officials should be required to exercise similar restraint when spending the hard-earned dollars of our nation’s citizens.

By amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget, we can force the Congress to control spending, paving the way for a return to surpluses and ultimately paying down the national debt, rather than allow big spenders to lead us further down the road of chronic deficits and in doing so leave our children and grandchildren saddled with debt that is not their own.

This concept is not new. 49 out of 50 states have a balanced budget requirement.

Our nation faces many difficult decisions in the coming years, and Congress will face great pressure to spend beyond its means rather than to make the difficult decisions about spending priorities. Unless Congress is forced to make the decisions necessary to create a balanced budget, it will always have the all-too-tempting option of shirking this responsibility. The Balanced Budget Constitutional amendment is a common sense approach to ensure that Congress is bound by the same fiscal principles that guide America’s families each day.

I urge support of this important legislation.

SALUTE TO SLOVAK REPUBLIC

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate our ally and friend, the Republic of Slovakia, on her 20th anniversary of independence.

In two brief decades, Slovakia has dramatically transitioned to an independent, democratic and economically viable nation.

As some of my colleagues may know, my great grandparents emigrated from Slovakia to the United States at the turn of the last century. Like so many others, my family was drawn to America by the promises of freedom and opportunity. My ancestors would be proud to see both the progress of America over that century and the positive development of the Slovak Republic in its 20 years of independence.

For millennia, the Slovak people were ruled or governed by others. After centuries of power shifts and realignments, in 1989, the Velvet Revolution brought down the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Democracy came to that nation as formerly jailed dissident and political activist Vaclav Havel was elected to the presidency. However, the Slovak people’s yearning for self-governance was not realized until 1993.

Following the peaceful separation of the Czech and Slovak Republics, January 1, 1993 marks the birth of the Second Slovak Republic. As fate would have it, days later I was sworn in as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. As one of the Members of Congress with Slovak ancestry, I have been proud to work with many who have been so successful in strengthening U.S.-Slovak relations and to aid in the political and economic development of the Slovak Republic.

Like any new democracy, the Slovak Republic has experienced some growing pains. After President Michal Kovács service as the first president, my good friend and former Košice Mayor Rudolf Schuster was elected president after a constitutional amendment changed the presidency to a directly elected position. His successor is now President Ivan Gašparovič. I commend these and all the other Slovak leaders who have helped fashion a new era for their people.

Even with many difficult challenges as a new nation, the Slovak Republic made outstanding progress over the last 20 years, and I am proud to have played a very small part in its history. In 2000, Slovakia became a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and in 2004, joined both NATO and the European Union. The Republic of Slovakia and its people continue to provide international leadership both in Europe and throughout the world.

For the United States and the American people, we are fortunate to have such a strong ally and friend in the family of nations. So today we salute and congratulate the Slovak Republic on the special occasion of their 20th anniversary of independence. We wish them every continued future success as they mark this historic milestone.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Slovak Republic and look forward to peace and prosperity for both of our countries for decades to come.

INTRODUCTION STATEMENT; H.R. 40 THE COMMISSION TO STUDY REPARATION PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to re-introduce H.R. 40, the Commission to Study Reparations Proposals for African-Americans Act. Since I first introduced H.R. 40 in 1989, we have made substantial progress in elevating this issue in the national consciousness. Through legislation, state and local resolutions and litigation, we are moving closer to a full dialogue on the role of slavery in building this country.

In the 110th Congress, the House passed a slavery apology bill on July 29, 2008, in which the House issued a formal apology for slavery. The Senate followed on July 18, 2009, with the passage of S. Con. Res. 26 which was sponsored by Tom Harkin of Iowa. In recognition of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade on January 1, 1808, both the House and Senate passed legislation creating a commemoration commission, which was signed into law on February 5, 2008. I believe that such Federal efforts are significant steps toward proper acknowledgment and understanding of slavery and its implications, but our responsibilities on this matter are even greater.

The establishment of a commission to study the institution of slavery in the United States, as well as its consequences that reach into modern day society, is our responsibility. This concept of a commission to address historical wrongs is not unprecedented. In fact, in recent Congresses, commission bills have been put forward.

In 1983, a Presidential Commission determined that the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II was racist and inhumane, and as a result, the 1988 Civil Liberties Act provided redress for those injured by the internment. However, the internment of Japanese Latin Americans in the United States during World War II was not examined by the Commission, resulting in legislation calling for a commission to examine this oversight. Legislation establishing a commission to review the injustices suffered by European Americans, European Latin Americans, and Jewish refugees during World War II has also been proposed.

H.R. 40 is no different than these other commission bills. H.R. 40 establishes a commission to examine the institution of slavery and its legacy, like racial disparities in education, housing, and healthcare. Following this examination, the commission would recommend appropriate remedies to Congress. As I have indicated before, remedies do not equate to monetary compensation.

In the 110th Congress, I convened the first Congressional hearing on H.R. 40. With witnesses that included Professor Charles Ogletree, Episcopal Bishop M. Thomas Shaw, and Detroit City Councilwoman JoAnn Watson, we began a formal dialogue on the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. This Congress, I look forward to continuing this conversation so that our nation can better understand this part of our history.

Attempts to eradicate today's racial discrimination and disparities will be successful when we understand the past's racial injustices and inequities. A commission can take us into this dark past and bring us into a brighter future. As in years past, I welcome open and constructive discourse on H.R. 40 and the creation of this commission in the 113th Congress.

THE ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED FISHING ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2013

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I reintroduce legislation to strengthen enforcement mechanisms to stop illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Illegal fishing threatens the economic and social infrastructure of fishing communities, and the security of the United States and our allies around the world, by decreasing opportunities for legitimate and conscientious fishermen.

Guam, and the other Pacific islands, host rich fisheries resources, including pristine reefs, diverse communities of reef fish, and large populations of sharks and valuable tuna; important economic and cultural assets for the islands. IUU fishing threatens these resources. There have been several incidents of foreign fishing vessels operating within the United States' EEZ with impunity—a significant national security and economic risk to our country.

This problem can be particularly acute in places like Guam, where the EEZ is vast, and where the United States Coast Guard, despite its best efforts, has insufficient resources to patrol all of our waters. The United States' Pacific lands represent 43% of the EEZ. Our focus should be on the posture of our Coast Guard in the Asia-Pacific region. The Navy and Coast Guard have recognized the economic and security threats posed by illegal fishing in Oceania and it is incumbent on the Administration and Congress to put resources towards these requirements.

The loss of economic opportunity weakens our allies in the Pacific and strengthens resource conflicts in the region. Recent reports have documented that IUU fishing accounts for between 10 and 22% of the reported global fish catch, or \$9–24 billion in gross revenues each year (MRAG, 2009, Sumaila et al., 2006 and Agnew et al., 2009). The Coast Guard estimates that over \$1.7 billion is lost annually to IUU fishing in the Pacific Islands. Additional action is needed from Congress if we are to be successful in combating IUU fishing and the depletion of fish stocks worldwide. This bill will help to provide our Coast Guard with the tools to better enforce regulations throughout the sector.

The "Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2013," which I introduced today, further enhances the enforcement authority of NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to regulate IUU fishing. This bill would amend international and regional fishery management organization (RFMO) agreements to incorporate the civil penalties, permit sanctions, criminal offenses, civil forfeitures

and enforcement sections of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. It would strengthen enforcement authority of NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to inspect conveyances, facilities, and records involving the storage, processing, transport and trade of fish and fish products, and to detain fish and fish products for up to five days while an investigation is ongoing.

In addition, this bill makes technical adjustments allowing NOAA to more effectively carry out current IUU identification mandates, including extending the duration of time for identification of violators from the preceding two years to the preceding three years. This bill broadens data sharing authority to enable NOAA to share information with foreign governments and clarifies that all information collected may be shared with international organizations and foreign governments for the purpose of conducting enforcement. This bill would also establish an international cooperation and assistance program to provide technical expertise to other nations to help them address IUU fishing. This bill, however, does not authorize new funding or appropriations. The bill is a cost neutral measure that would enhance our nation's security.

Finally, this bill implements the Antigua Convention, an important international agreement that provides critical updates to the principles, functions, and processes of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to manage fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The Antigua Convention modernizes the IATTC and increases its capacity to combat IUU fishing and illegal imports of tuna product. Without implementing legislation, the U.S. does not have the authorities necessary to satisfy its commitments under the Antigua Convention, including addressing IUU in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Increased enforcement increases stability among our allies in the Western Pacific. Many nations depend upon fishing as a vital component of their national economy. Fishing communities are the lifeblood of Guam, part of a cultural history extending back centuries. Protecting our fishermen from illegal fishing enhances economic opportunities and protects cultural and natural resources that our communities rely upon. IUU fishermen are "free riders" who benefit unfairly from the sacrifices made by U.S. fishermen and others for the sake of proper fisheries conservation and management.

I would like to thank Reps. MARKEY, SABLON, PIERLUISI, and CHRISTENSEN for joining me as original cosponsors and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to advance this important bill through the legislative process.

HIGHER TAXES, MORE SPENDING: NOT A COMPROMISE

HON. DAVID B. MCKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, as Congress approached the final hours before going over the so-called "fiscal cliff," the House was faced with a difficult choice. It could amend the controversial Senate plan and return it to them or the House could accept or reject it. Amending the plan was not a viable option be-

cause the Senate had refused to consider any changes. Thus it became a "take it or leave it" vote. I was elected to come to Washington to reduce the size of government and decrease spending; therefore, I voted against the flawed Senate plan.

In summary: although the legislation had certain positive attributes, the principal effect of the bill raised taxes, increased spending and only promised future spending cuts. It failed to address our long-term debt problem and looks nothing like the balanced approach promised by President Obama. America is now burdened with more than \$16 trillion of debt, and Congress has failed to cut spending that it promised the public.

Let's have a splash of reality: America is facing another \$1.2 trillion deficit for this year as it has for the past four years. This solution adopted by Congress not only does not reduce this year's deficit, but it adds to it. According to the official estimate by the Congressional Budget Office, the Senate deal includes more than \$330 billion in new deficit spending over the next decade.

Additionally, the bill calls for \$620 billion in increased tax revenues over ten years but incredibly includes only \$15 billion in spending reductions. That equates to a ratio of \$1 in spending cuts to \$41 in increased tax revenue, even though the President promised \$2.50 in spending cuts for every \$1 in new revenue during his campaign. The highly touted Simpson-Bowles Commission recommended a 3:1 ratio.

It should be self-evident that the \$60 billion in new revenue annually is woefully insufficient to pay down the deficit. Where will we find the remaining \$1.14 trillion to eliminate the deficit? We have a spending problem in Washington, not a taxing problem.

I had been willing to support a compromise that included additional, but limited, tax revenue if the plan also had included significant spending reductions and commonsense entitlement reforms. However the bill lacked that balance.

These concerns were not limited to conservatives. Senator MICHAEL BENNET (D-CO) also opposed the plan on these same grounds, saying, "We want a plan that materially reduces the deficit. This proposal does not meet that standard and does not put in place a real process to reduce the debt down the road."

In a similar statement, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke called the current levels of spending "unsustainable," and cautioned that "fiscal policy must be placed on a sustainable path that eventually results in a stable or declining ratio of federal debt to GDP."

This plan does nothing to put us on that sustainable path.

Americans once again are being promised spending cuts in the future in exchange for immediate increases in taxes. We've seen this movie before—the spending cuts unfortunately never happen.

This has played out twice with similar results:

In 1982, Congress promised President Reagan \$3 in spending cuts for every \$1 in tax hikes but the spending cuts never happened.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush reluctantly agreed to \$2 in spending cuts for every \$1 in tax increases but none of those cuts occurred either.