decision I am about to make, what is my duty to country? What does the Constitution have to say about this decision that is before us?

The third question I ask is: In the decision I am about to make, what is my duty to others?

Now, that one is a little harder because that is like: How does this impact more than 730,000 citizens that I have the privilege and honor to represent—16 counties, 24 percent of the landmass of Pennsylvania?

Finally, the last question is: What is my duty to self?

Now, for those who maybe it has been awhile since you have been involved in the Scouting family or maybe you just never had that opportunity, there is still time for everybody to get involved and support Scouting. There are a lot of volunteer jobs out there that can be filled. What we mean when we say duty to self, it is not self-serving. We define that by in every action we take and every decision we make, we are prepared to do our best. That is a reflection of the Scout motto and the Scout slogans. So those are principles as Eagle Scouts I really do believe that, by that point, it becomes muscle memory.

Any youth, for whatever period of time they have the opportunity to serve in Scouting, we know based on the research division of the Boy Scouts of America that it makes a difference in their lives.

I will finish up with this. I have said that, as a Scout Master for 30 years, I have seen this work its way out countless times, but let me take a personal privilege and just mention three particular Eagle Scouts: Parker, Logan, and Kale Thompson, my three sons. They are all three Eagle Scouts. They are all adults now. They are scattered—if anything, maybe one flaw is we made them too independent. They are now flourishing, one in Elgin, Illinois; one in San Antonio, Texas; and one in Trenton, New Jersey. Independent—I guess Scouting will do that. You learn to fly as an Eagle Scout.

I will tell you what I have seen. Parker today is a great dad. What he does with his two little guys, I see the lessons he learned in Scouting that just come through in how he nourishes.

Logan, my second son, is a soldier. Although I worried about him, I didn't worry as much when he was deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan because I knew that, as an Eagle Scout, he could handle whatever came to him.

My youngest, Kale, is a music teacher today who nourishes and just serves youth, kids in middle school, and makes such a difference in their lives.

In the lives of my three sons, I see how being a Boy Scout and an Eagle Scout has made them better men and made them better in all the roles that they serve.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Eagle Scout GLENN THOMPSON, Eagle Scout 1977. On behalf of Chief Scout Executive Mike Surbaugh and Members of Congress who gathered together this evening to tell another story, I intend to do it again next month. I intend to get JOHN GARAMENDI, who is one of our dear friends from California, Eagle Class of 1960.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Eagle Scouts of Congress who had time to come tonight, myself, CHRIS COLLINS, JEB HENSARLING, FRENCH HILL, JIM BRIDENSTINE, GT THOMPSON, I am thankful for the hour you have allowed us to tell the story about the Boy Scouts of America, about exceptionalism, about the Order of the Arrow, and about the opportunity for character to lead a great nation.

Mr. Speaker, we are thankful for the time. We will be back. We hope that we leave our campsite better than the way we found it. That is what we try to do every day.

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

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FASO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who, for the last hour, have talked about an extremely important part of America's social fabric: the Scouting programs of America. I thank them for bringing to Congress and to the American people the importance of Scouting at all levels. And for those of us who have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, much was discussed.

Equally important are the men that enter and only spend a couple of weeks and do not pass beyond the Tenderfoot level because they, too, have achieved, at least in part, the opportunities that Scouting presents.

I will talk about that more in the future, and I will look forward to that discussion. In the meantime, let's see if we can now talk about other things that are before Congress and the American public.

Mr. Speaker, almost unnoticed as a result of all of the issues—all of the controversies surrounding the President here in the United States, the controversies of Russia and Russia's involvement in the election, the firing of Comey and the investigations now conducted by a new special counsel, and, of course, the President's foreign travels, with all of that, we have basically not heard much about another extremely important and quite possibly a much longer lasting thing that has happened.

Today the President presented his budget. A budget presented by the President is often just waved aside by the Congress and considered to be dead on arrival, and surely this one should be. But I want to back up for a moment and I want us all to ponder exactly what it is that the President has proposed.

□ 1900

Because, you see, the budget, whether it is a Democratic budget or a Republican budget, an Obama budget or a Trump budget or a George H.W. Bush budget, those budgets are a statement of priorities. They are a statement of the value, the values that is what it is that the President thinks is important and how that fits into the American society.

We need to really understand and value the statement that the President, President Trump, has made in presenting to us his priorities. We ought not just wave it aside and say it is of no consequence because, after all, we are going to rewrite it and we are going to write our own, which is the tradition. However, it would be a gross mistake not to analyze what it is that the President of the United States of America, the strongest, the wealthiest country in the world, has proposed.

Take a careful look, America. Don't just brush it aside. This is what the President wants. This is what he wants us to be. This is his vision of America.

I must tell you, it is awful—not my words only, but the words of many Republican leaders, of, obviously, the Democrats.

Take a look, America, at what it is he is proposing.

I am going to run through some of this because we need to understand, Members of Congress, we Americans need to understand what it is that this President wants us to be, what it is he sees as America. I am going to go through just some things very, very quickly, and then we want to go into it perhaps in a little more detail.

Medicaid is a program that has been in existence for some 60-plus years. It is a program that provides healthcare to the poor. It is a program that provides care to seniors. It is a program that is relied upon all across this country by families so that the children and adults can get medical care.

The President has proposed, in his budget, a $610 billion reduction in Medicare on top of, in addition to, an $800 billion cut in what we know now as Trump and RyanCare, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. A $1.5 trillion reduction in medical services to the poor. And they are not all kids. They are not all families. More than half of that money goes to seniors in nursing homes.

This is the vision of the President of the United States: $1.5 trillion reduction in medical services over the next 10 years to working men and women just above the poverty level, to seniors who are in nursing homes, and to women and children who are below the poverty level. This is his vision of healthcare in America.

And that is not all. That is not the end of the story.

In the 1990s, we knew that children not covered by Medicaid or, in California, Medi-Cal were not getting medical services; and so the American people, through their representatives in

Congress and the Senate, created what we now know as the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP—Children's Health Insurance Program.

And so what is the vision? What is the value? What is the moral purpose of our President?

He would cut $3.2 billion out of that program and effectively deny medical services for the 6 million children that are currently covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program.

For the aged, blind, and disabled—the aged, blind, and disabled Americans—that receive supplemental Social Security programs, $64 billion would be cut from those aged, blind, and disabled who receive supplemental Social Security insurance.

Students? How many times on this floor of the House of Representatives have we heard Democrats and Republicans talk about the terrible problem of student loans, the huge cost of providing educational services? So what is in this budget?

Student loans, financial aid, and repayment, $143 billion reduction. How does that help our educational program? How does that help students who are suffering under the cost of higher education? I don't know what the answer is except it does not.

For men and women who are working at minimum wage or below minimum wage across the United States, there is a program that was established by Richard Nixon called the earned income tax credit to encourage people to work. Men and women that are out there working but at a low wage, minimum wage, the earned income tax credit was established to lift them up to a liveable amount of money and encourage them to continue to work.

What does the President propose? Well, let's cut, by $40 billion, the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit.

It goes on and on. This is President Trump's statement of what he values in America.

I think it is immoral. I think it is terrible public policy, and, when coupled with the rest of the story, it becomes an abomination.

The rest of the story, the rest of the story is the most massive tax cut ever for the wealthy in the United States. You take that tax cut that has been proposed in the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, and you couple it with the tax cuts that are embedded in the President's budget, and we are talking somewhere north of $3.5 trillion tax cuts, 80 percent of which goes to the top 20 percent of America's income earners.

All the discussion last year about income inequality from President Trump, from Hillary Clinton, from everybody else about income inequality and the problem it presents to America was somehow forgotten. Because, when you take the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which some call the American Health Care Act now, and you couple it with this budget, the tax cuts that are embedded in both of them amount to the largest transfer of wealth ever in tax policy from the poor, from the working Americans, to the top earners in America, to the superwealthy.

If you are concerned about income inequality, this is exactly backwards. It is from the working men and women, the middle class of America and the poor to the wealthy. That is exactly what is happening here.

Is that a rational vision of America? Is this a sense of value of what America is all about: more for the wealthy, less for the working men and women, the middle class, for the families that presumably—presumably—were at the heart of last year's election?

Yes, we heard Mr. Trump and we heard Ms. Clinton go around the Nation talking about how we need to raise up the middle class, how we need to deal with this income inequality, what a problem it was for our society and our economy, months and months of political rhetoric. And now we see what is actually—actually—taking place: the greatest transfer of wealth from the middle class and the poor to the wealthy that has ever been found in any piece of legislation proposed.

God help us if it is enacted. Watch carefully, America. This budget, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act together with the proposed tax cuts, will devastate, seriously harm, personal lives in America by taking away their health insurance, by taking away their money that they depend upon to pay their rent, to put food on the table, to care for their children.

This is not the America that I want to see, and I don't think this is the America that the American public voted for. Whether they were a Democrat or a Republican, whether they voted for Trump or Hillary, they did not envision an America that would take $1.5 trillion out of the Medicaid program, of which 50 percent of that money goes to seniors in nursing homes.

I don't think that is what they had in mind when they voted last November. That is not what they were promised. That is not what either of the two candidates promised. They promised to deal with this income inequality issue. They promised, both of them, to provide more healthcare, not less. That is just on this one side of it.

Neither promised massive tax cuts for the superwealthy. In fact, both railed against the way in which we have seen those at the top of the heap benefit while the rest were stagnated. Both candidates did that. And yet the proposal that has been put before this Congress in the last 127 days has been quite the opposite.

The repeal of the Affordable Care Act, ripping away healthcare benefits for 24 million Americans, and now on top of it, this budget proposal that the President has given to us.

□ 1915

I want to take just another moment because this one ought to be close to every American. In the President's budget proposal, there is a $7 billion reduction for research in the National Institutes of Health. What does the National Institutes of Health do? It does research. It does research on disease. Over the years, Democrats, Republicans, both sides of the aisle have put forth proposals to advance and increase the research in healthcare.

And the result? The result of that is this. I have used this many times on the floor. As I looked at the President's proposal to cut $7 billion out of the National Institutes of Health, I thought we ought to come back to this. Deaths from major diseases over the years. Because we have invested in research, we have seen breast cancer deaths decline by 2 percent, prostate cancer decline by 11 percent, heart disease decline by 14 percent, stroke by 23 percent, HIV/AIDS by 52 percent. That is what happens when you invest in research. That is what happens when we take the taxpayer money and we put it into research on healthcare and medical issues.

Today, the National Institutes of Health has $5 billion of valuable research projects that cannot be funded, research projects on all of these. Instead of adding an additional $5 billion, the President proposes to give that $5 billion to the wealthiest of Americans. The top 40 families in America, under his proposals, would receive a $7 million reduction in their taxes. And I daresay that four or five of those families are either the President's family or in the Cabinet.

This purple line here, this one, over the last year, we have increased the funding for Alzheimer's from just over $500 million to just under $1 billion. This one is out of control. Every family in America is experiencing the effects of dementia and Alzheimer's. My family. My mother-in-law spent her last 3 years in our home and died of Alzheimer's. It is not unusual. In fact, it is common.

Incidentally, cancer is some $6 billion a year for research; heart disease, $5 billion; HIV/AIDS, about $3 billion; Alzheimer's about $900 million. We know that if we were to spend the money, we could delay the onset, dramatically improve the lives not only of the individuals but of the families.

So what does the President propose? Not adding $5 billion for research that we know would provide benefits, extend the lives of Americans. He proposed to cut by $7 billion. Is this a statement of his values, of what he thinks is important, of his morality, of his administration? On the floor of the House, in the cloakrooms, what is argued and often said is that each and every bill that passes here, each and every proposal that we introduce, is a statement of our own personal sense of morality of what is right and what is wrong, of values.

Today, I looked at the Hill papers, what we fondly call the Hill rags, three of them. The top story is not the President's budget. The top story is the

President's scandals. But I will tell you this: This budget is the real story because this is going to live on. This is what we will be fighting about. All the issues of the scandal in Russia and everything else will be dealt with by others and some of our committees, but this is what is going to affect the American public in their homes, in their lives, in their healthcare, in their education, and in their jobs. The President proposed a budget, and it is a reflection of what he believes to be important. That is a scandal.

I can go on and on here, and I suppose I promised some that I wouldn't. There is much that we can do. There is much that we need to do. We have great needs in the United States. We need an infrastructure program. We need a healthcare system that provides benefits to all in which the costs are controlled. We have a military and we have national security, and we will debate these things, but I cannot let a day go by without contemplating what it is that the President has proposed to America. Not to us but to America. And it is not good.

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

THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 30 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to Mr. ALBIO SIRES, my good friend from New Jersey, the ranking member of our Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere in the Committee on Foreign Affairs for joining me tonight for this Special Order regarding the deteriorating situation in Venezuela, demonstrating not only the bipartisan nature of this issue, Mr. Speaker, but also the need for the United States, and specifically the Congress, to be even more engaged.

As Mr. SIRES knows—and we will hear from him in just a few minutes—the situation in Venezuela, as you can see here, is becoming more desperate by the day. The humanitarian situation is getting worse, if one can imagine that. The Maduro regime continues its flagrant human rights violations, and, despite the latest round of sanctions against human rights violators imposed by our excellent Treasury Department, the United States needs to take more decisive steps in support of the people of Venezuela.

Mr. Speaker, at least 48 Venezuelans have been killed in almost 2 months of protests, nonstop protests, against the dictatorship responsible for a litany of crimes. You cannot enumerate them. Horrific human rights abuses, drug trafficking, a rapidly worsening humanitarian situation. The list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Venezuelans do not have access to even the most basic of necessities, which means water, food, and medicine. None of that exists in Venezuela. Venezuelan humanitarian shortages of food and medicine. People are standing in lines to get nothing. The Venezuelan Pharmaceutical Federation estimates that the country is running shortages on nearly every necessary medical item. For those few Venezuelans who could afford to purchase medicine, they are forced to pay exorbitant prices for supplies like gauze, pain relievers, Band-Aids, and that is only if they are available in the first place, Mr. Speaker. Hospital workers have told us that the supplies are being raided, and they are being sold on the black market.

The situation is no better when it comes to food. Last week, a 46-year-old man was killed by soldiers as he was on his way home from buying diapers for his baby. Killed while buying diapers for his baby. Why? Because diapers are a scarce commodity. They have been a scarce commodity for over a year now in Venezuela, a country that was abundant in natural resources. Earlier this week, this very week, a 15-year-old boy was shot and killed for the crime of buying flour.

One study reports that 75 percent of the population of Venezuela—this is unbelievable—has lost an average of 19 pounds due to food shortages. Even obtaining water can be an expensive proposition for those without running water at home. The shortage of basic goods has led to massive lines, has led to violence, has led to looting as people have become increasingly desperate for the basic, meager means to survive. We are just talking about basic necessities, Mr. Speaker.

This tragic humanitarian situation could have been prevented, Mr. Speaker, and no one is more responsible than the thug who rules Venezuela with an iron fist, Nicolas Maduro, and his despotic regime. The Maduro dictatorship presides over the world's largest oil reserves yet has managed to run the state oil company and the entire economy into the ground.

Socialism does not work. Communism does not work. One need only look at Venezuela. Instead of allowing humanitarian relief, the regime has nationalized the food and medical supply chain and put corrupt officials in charge. What could go wrong?

Earlier this month, I wrote a letter, along with my good friend ALBIO SIRES, as well as ELIOT ENGEL, the ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and 12 other congressional colleagues joined Mr. SIRES, Mr. ENGEL, and myself, urging the administration to use its voice, to use our vote, to use our influence at the United Nations Security Council to demand that Venezuelan authorities allow the delivery and the distribution of humanitarian aid. We were giving them what they need. Maduro would have none of it.

But I applaud our U.S. Ambassador at the U.N., Nikki Haley, for organizing a Security Council meeting on Venezuela last week. But more needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. As Ambassador Haley bravely said, Venezuela is on the edge of a humanitarian crisis, right here in our hemisphere. Humanitarian agencies must be allowed to operate independently in Venezuela, without interference from the thuggish Maduro regime, and deliver the aid that the people so desperately need. The world is ready to help Venezuela. Nicolas Maduro refuses this help.

Humanitarian agencies must say to Maduro, if they are hindered in any way, then those responsible must be held to account. Before I continue, Mr. Speaker, to address the Maduro regime's abuse of human rights in greater detail and how the United States can be a force for good in Venezuela, I yield to ALBIO SIRES, my good friend from New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida. I want to commend her for her passion and her commitment to helping the people of Venezuela. I thank her for making me part of this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the ongoing crisis in Venezuela. With every week that passes, we see the situation in Venezuela becoming more critical.

□ 1930

A country with the world's largest known oil reserves is spiraling into a collapsed state where people are struggling just to survive. Journalists and citizens risk their lives every day to report what is happening inside Caracas and around the country. We see that tensions are growing, and government security forces shoot first and don't even bother to ask questions later.

Maduro continues to keep political prisoners like Leopoldo Lopez under lock and key to send a strong message to those trying to question his actions. Just yesterday, we saw reports that government buildings in western Venezuela are being set ablaze. Make no mistake: It is the failed Chavismo policies and the authoritarian actions of Nicolas Maduro that have brought all of this pain and suffering upon the Venezuelan people.

Press reports show that of 800,000 businesses that opened during the Chavez regime, nearly 600,000 have shut down. Both the Obama and Trump administrations have sanctioned senior officials in the Venezuelan Government for their associations with narcotrafficking, money laundering, and other illicit activities.

Just today, Reuters released an exclusive report that the Venezuelan Government is in possession of 5,000 shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles that are typically used to shoot down low-flying planes and helicopters.

Last week, Spanish authorities interdicted a shipment of 6 tons of cocaine from Venezuela en route to their shores. With the recent sanctions of Vice President Tareck El Aissami, under the Kingpin Act, it has become clear that Venezuela's Government is