

fire was in Congressman THOMPSON's district, portions of that terrible Santa Rosa fire spilled over to affect my constituents, and I had a separate fire in Mendocino County, the Redwood Complex, that itself would have ranked among the top 20 wildfires in California history. The fact that all of these fires happened together is truly an unprecedented and a dreadful crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. THOMPSON. He has been everywhere in the region. I thank our local government partners, and I thank our colleagues, Minority Leader PELOSI, and Majority Leader MCCARTHY. The support has been bipartisan and it has been nationwide. FEMA has been on the ground along with first responders doing heroic work to get the recovery and the rebuilding process started. We are grateful for all of that, but we are only at the beginning.

If you want to see your government doing good work, go to the local assistance center in Santa Rosa or in Ukiah and watch how the wraparound services are there. Every need that these fire victims, these devastated families, can imagine is there to be met. But we are at the beginning, and we are going to need that support over a long-sustained period.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for standing with us at this early stage of dealing with this crisis. We are going to need them over the long haul. We will be talking more about this going forward.

TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. JENKINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, everyone remembers the excitement of receiving that first paycheck and the feeling of accomplishment that hard work brings. We also remember just as vividly the disappointment we experienced when we saw just how much of our hard-earned money went to taxes.

It is a rite of passage that we have grown used to, but that doesn't mean it is right. Americans deserve to take home more of their pay.

That is exactly why we need tax reform, tax cuts, and tax simplification, and why I am working with President Donald Trump to make our tax system work for West Virginia's families.

Our tax framework would cut taxes for West Virginia's middle class families, double the standard deduction for individuals and couples, and create jobs by making small businesses and American companies more competitive.

West Virginia's families work hard and have been squeezed by our State's economic downturn. Under our tax framework and with the support of President Trump, help is on the way.

We will also make it easier and simpler for Americans—West Virginians—to file their taxes. Most families will

be able to file their taxes just on a postcard, saving them both time and money.

Our plan for tax reform, our plan for tax cuts, our plan for tax simplification will help us build a better America, a better West Virginia, one where families have more opportunities, more jobs, and more money in their pockets.

□ 1030

NATURAL DISASTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues Congressman THOMPSON and Congressman HUFFMAN in paying tribute to the first responders who responded to the fires in northern California and, indeed, in southern California as well.

The spirit of our community is so magnificent seeing people come together to help each other. I salute our colleague MIKE THOMPSON, who so much of his district was like an inferno, but much of his district is still thriving and one group helping another, and Mr. HUFFMAN there, side by side with him, the whole time.

This is very tragic. The loss of life is heartbreaking, the loss of livelihood is devastating, and the loss of homes, of course, takes a while to replace.

We have seen other natural disasters in the rest of the country, in Harvey and Irma and Maria and Nate, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Texas, and Louisiana. So many of the people of our country devastated in a short period of time.

So, in times of natural disaster, it is very important for the Federal Government to honor its social compact with the American people and to be there for them. I look forward to working in a bipartisan way for us to have the resources for FEMA to do its job and for the SBA to do its job to help businesses and homeowners recover their losses. And, again, pray; our hearts and prayers are with the families of those who lost their loved ones, their livelihoods, and some who are still in need of recovery.

REPUBLICANS' DEVASTATING TAX CUT PLAN

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the devastating tax cut plan that the Republicans are putting forth. If you are in the middle class, you will most likely be having your taxes increased. If you have a family member on Medicare or Medicaid, you will be, most likely, devastated by the impact of this.

This is a bill that the Republicans are putting forth that will add trillions of dollars to the national debt while they sing the praises of fiscal responsibility. The fiscal hawks have become an endangered species. No longer are they there to say: We are not going to borrow from our future in order to give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in our country.

Indeed, 80 percent of the Trump-GOP tax framework, the framework net tax cuts go to the top 1 percent of Americans. The top 1 percent of Americans get 80 percent of the Trump-GOP framework net tax cuts.

As they increase the deficit, anyone who might be haunted by the thought that, well, we better cut someplace, where do you think they are going to go? They will devastate Medicare. They will devastate Medicaid.

What does that mean in the lives of the American people? It means that middle class families in our country will be subsidizing tax cuts for the wealthiest families and wealthiest corporations in our country. This is completely wrong.

It will also have a devastating impact on our budget priorities. In our budget priorities, our budget should be a statement of our national values. What is important to us as a country should reflect what is in the budget: investments in education so that children and families can reach their aspirations, so that communities can reach their economic success, so that America continues to be number one globally, competitively, and so that we, again, have the resources to invest in science and technology and our national security to keep America number one.

Infrastructure, so talked about, infrastructure—build, build, build:

Build across America roads, bridges, broadband. Build water systems and the rest, all of the needs that we have.

Build the human infrastructure of America by investing in education and healthcare and the rest.

Build our democracy by making sure that our democratic process has the resources necessary to be conducted in a way where every person's vote is counted as cast.

So all of this is connected to governance, and all of this is harmed by the assault on our budget that this tax proposal will present.

Middle class taxes will increase. Middle-income families will pay more. Tens of millions of middle class families will pay higher taxes.

One of the ways they will be because of the great idea the Republicans have to stop the deduction for State and local taxes. This is a big hit on middle class families in our country.

It steals trillions of dollars, borrows from the future and from our children's future to give tax cuts to the wealthiest. Eighty percent of the GOP tax cuts go to the wealthiest 1 percent at the expense of our children and working families and our country's future.

It would devastate Medicare and Medicaid. After adding trillions to the deficit, the GOP will use the deficits to justify destroying Medicare and Medicaid. And they are on it. They are already, in the bill, saying that they are going to means test Medicare. It is in keeping with their theory that Medicare should wither on the vine.

Democrats are for A Better Deal, for real bipartisan tax reform. Any business will tell you that what they want

in tax reform is some level of certainty that this is going to last for a while. The only way to do that is to have bipartisan support at the table.

Go to the table. What will create growth? What will create good paying jobs? What will reduce the debt? This bill does exactly the worst.

Don't let them tell you that, even though they are adding trillions of dollars to the debt, that is going to be paid for by economic growth. It has never happened. Trickle-down economics, President Bush tried that. It was tried before. It has never done that. It has never paid for itself. In fact, it has only increased the national debt.

In that regard, Bruce Bartlett, who was an economist in the Reagan years as well as worked very closely with Jack Kemp in supply side economics as an advocate for supply side economics, said: We never said it would pay for itself. Anybody who tells you that these additions to the deficit will pay for themselves by growth, it is not true, it is nonsense, and, he said, BS.

Forgive me, Mr. Speaker. I am just quoting. I am just saying what he said.

So this is a moment of truth for our country. What are our values? How are they reflected in our budget? How do we grow the economy in a way that increases the paychecks of America's working families so that they have consumer confidence? they spend? they inject demand into the economy? they create jobs? they bring revenue to the Treasury?

How is it a good idea to cut education in order to give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in our country? Nothing brings more money to the Treasury than investments in education, early childhood, K-12, higher ed, postgrad, lifetime learning for our workers.

So, with stiff competition, mind you, having tax cuts which will steal from our budget investments in education is, with stiff competition, one of the worst ideas that the Republicans have to offer. But this is something that people should be alerted to, forgetting the policy and all the rest of it, what it means in your life.

Most likely, middle class family, you will pay more taxes. If you have a family member who is dependent on long-term healthcare, long-term care, whether in a nursing home or at home, most likely you will pay a price. If you have a family member who is on Medicare or if you are, Social Security disability, you will be affected by it.

The President said in his campaign the system is rigged. This is the rigging of the rig. This is taking the rig to a step that is almost impossible for us to return from. They take us down this road to ruin. They take us down this path to severe increase in the national debt to the tune of trillions of dollars, not even counting the debt service on it, at the cost of investments in our future, in our children, in our families, in fairness in our economy, in opportunity for America.

This is something that must be stopped, and we can start by stopping the assault on the State and local taxes deduction. Let's hold Members of Congress accountable for what they do that affects your pocketbook and your future.

We will be continuing this conversation for awhile, and we will have charts and the rest to visually demonstrate what this is.

Governance is about how you raise the money and how you invest it, and this is the dialogue that our country needs to hear very clearly for not only the policy aspects of it, but the personal consequences in their lives. This is a very bad deal for the American people, for middle class families.

Democrats want A Better Deal, better jobs, better pay, better future, and, by the way, to do this in a very bipartisan way.

REMEMBERING LUKE JOHNSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of 22-year-old Luke Johnson, a graduate of Pennsbury High School in my home of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Luke was known for his quirky sense of humor and his laid-back demeanor. He was a football standout at Pennsbury and was named best defensive player of the year his senior year. He also wrestled. He played soccer, baseball, and could throw a Frisbee a mile.

Above all, Luke loved to be with his family and with his friends, and it was his tight-knit group who supported Luke as he battled the increasingly common enemy of opioid addiction.

On May 17, 2017, Luke lost his battle with this disease after many difficult years of trying to return to normal.

Throughout his fight, like so many, he was haunted by shame, loss of self-worth, and the stigma of being addicted to opioids. This pain was shared by his friends and family, affecting the entire community, who just wanted to help, to see Luke be Luke.

As he tried to work his way towards recovery, Luke's parents, Maureen and John, discovered the genesis of his addiction: a prescription opioid pill given to him on his first day in high school. It progressed further when he was offered opioids after football game wins during his junior and senior year in high school. Ultimately, he was offered and accepted the invitation to try heroin.

Imagine the difficulty for this family and millions like them. At first, Luke's family was dumbfounded, angry, and hurt. They had no idea the difficulty he was facing.

They mobilized to support Luke by placing him into a local rehabilitation facility, but later found out that their insurance would not cover inpatient

treatment, so they sold their car for his initial recovery. However, when Luke came home, the people, places, and things from his old life triggered a relapse.

His parents hoped that a facility in Florida would remove these triggers from Luke's life and put him on the road to recovery. After several months of recovery in Florida, Luke was forced to find another place to live. This was the move, Mr. Speaker, that he was not ready to make. He died a few days later, before he had fully unpacked the few belongings that he had.

Following Luke's death, his parents established the Luke's HERO in ME Foundation in Yardley, Pennsylvania. Their goal is to help with the awareness, education, and to destigmatize opioid addiction. Ultimately, they want to ensure that other family, friends, and community networks can save their Luke.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a letter I received from Luke's parents.

OCTOBER 17, 2017.

CONGRESSMAN FITZPATRICK: Thank you for speaking with me at the David's New Day event last weekend. Your support for the opioid crisis has been more than welcome. The recent news, spurred by the 60 Minutes investigation, suggests that there are very deep rooted issues that need to be addressed to fully confront this issue. In short, you and your colleagues have much work to do. If there is anything we can do to help, please let me know.

I have included my son's story below to go along with the funeral card I gave you. I hope putting names, faces and stories to the cause will help drive the needed change.

John Luke Johnson, always known as Luke or Lukey or Duke, was a handsome athlete with piercing blue eyes. He was known for his quirky sense of humor and "chill" demeanor. He loved his dog Ethel (aka Ed Rendell)—she was just as quirky as Luke—and it never ceased to amaze me how gentle and kind Luke was to Ethel and all animals. He was a good athlete, playing football (named Pennsbury's best defensive player his senior year), wrestled, played soccer and baseball. He could throw a Frisbee a mile. He loved to be with his friends. He had more friends than I could count. But, his best friends—Tyler (an Army Ranger), Fardin (a college student) and Christian D (recent college grad), Christian H (a college student) he loved most. Like his family, these friends supported and loved Luke; despite the pain and battle that comes with addiction, they stuck around until the very end. In Luke, we lost that good guy next door—that guy that everyone loved and enjoyed being with.

One May 17th, 2017, our son Luke lost his battle with this terrible disease only after suffering for a few, very difficult years trying to return to "normal". Throughout his battle he was haunted by shame, a loss of self-worth and the stigma of being an addict. This pain was shared by his family and friends. Our aspirations for him and the aspirations he had for himself were replaced by the day to day struggle against the emotional and physiological damage caused by this disease.

During the process of recovery, we learned about Luke's path to becoming an addict. It started with a female friend giving him a pill (an opioid) to try his first day of high school. She passed away of an overdose last year. It