

Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China:

Mr. MCGOVERN, Massachusetts, Chair

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO SERVE AS CO-CHAIR OF THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 104(b) of House Resolution 6, 116th Congress, and the order of the House of January 3, 2019, of the following Member to serve as co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission:

Mr. MCGOVERN, Massachusetts

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 2 of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715a), and the order of the House of January 3, 2019, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission:

Mr. THOMPSON, California

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL DEBT AS THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to lead this Special Order tonight as we consider the national debt as a security threat to the United States of America.

I thank Senator DAVID PERDUE for his leadership. He introduced a concomitant resolution in the Senate. I also thank the more than 50 Members of this body who are original cosponsors to this resolution.

I also thank the more than one dozen conservative groups that endorsed this resolution and have come to understand that a structural deficit that nears a trillion dollars every year, a national debt that exceeds \$22 trillion, is indeed a threat to our national security.

Madam Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Roy).

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Arizona for his leader-

ship on this matter, and I appreciate his leadership very much on H. Res. 149, a resolution recognizing the national debt as a threat to our national security.

In February 2000, the total national debt, including intragovernmental holdings, was \$5.7 trillion. Federal spending as a percentage of gross domestic product was 17.5 percent. Today, the total national debt now exceeds \$22 trillion.

The last balanced budget was signed into law in 1997, and the Congressional Budget Office projects that Federal spending as a percentage of GDP is projected to be 20.8 percent this year. In February 2018, Congress passed a budget agreement that busted the previously established spending caps by almost \$300 billion over 2 years.

All those numbers don't mean anything to the American people tuning in to C-SPAN right now. They are giant numbers. They are really difficult for people to understand and comprehend. But we are talking about the future of our Nation and what we are leaving to our children.

We are leaving them with an economy that is anchored by \$22 trillion in debt that is going to turn to \$25, \$30 and \$40 trillion because, this year alone, we are going to have a trillion-dollar deficit, with no end in sight.

We are making it to where our children can't comprehend what freedom is like in this country and what opportunity is like in this country because they are going to have an economy that is weighted down by this body's and the Senate's irresponsibility.

Nobody in America balances their budgets at home like this. I assure my friend from Arizona, our States don't balance their budgets like this. Nobody looks at the total number for income you have, then blows it by 25 or 30 percent, and then goes to the bank and wonders why they might not give you a loan or help you finance a car.

My concern is that we are allowing this to happen on the backs of our men and women in uniform. We are saying that, as a need to defend the United States of America and to spend money—which our men and women in uniform deserve to have the resources necessary as we ask them to go around the globe—we are using that as an excuse to continue to bust caps and to bust the limits that we put in place to hold us in check.

Of that \$300 billion that I was talking about the last 2 years, about 40 percent of that is nondefense discretionary that rode on the back of what we are trying to do to help our men and women in uniform have the tools they need.

There used to be an adage of guns and butter. We don't have a choice anymore about choosing between guns and butter. Have we cut butter at all while we go and increase money for the guns for our men and women in uniform? Have we even held it in check? No.

We have plussed it up and continued to bust the caps, all while we know

mandatory spending—spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security—all go up.

The question I would ask is: When are we going to stop? Is it going to take placing a debt clock over the chair of the Speaker? Do we need to have something to remind us, sitting here in the body, what we are going to be leaving to our children? Because it is our responsibility, what we leave behind to our kids.

It is irresponsible when we look at every bill, every one of these little bills that comes across our desk.

People say, well, why did you vote "no," Mr. Roy? Well, it was just another \$500,000. It was just another \$5 million.

That is not how you spend at home. It is time that this body gets serious about spending restraint. It is time that this body recognize—as I am very happy that my friend from Arizona has, and I am proud to join him in saying that this is an impact on our national security and a threat to our national security.

When we know right now that the interest on our debt is pretty soon going to eclipse the amount of spending we are spending at the Department of Defense, that is a threat to our national security. We can't sustain it.

When we say now that we are going to spend more money for the tools that our men and women need, how are we going to afford to spend on those tools in 2030 or 2040 when we are spending more, literally, on interest than we are on what they need?

I am proud to join my friend to make the case here that this is a threat to our national security. I call on my colleagues to join us, to join this resolution. I call on them to have the same level of resolve to limit spending and to make sure that we pass down the greatest country to our kids that the world has ever known.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, when the gentleman from Texas talks about the crowd-out effect, that is what we see as one of the threats to our national security.

When you look at the spending that is being bloated and plussed-up and increased, the ramifications of borrowing more and more money for an insatiable appetite to spend the Federal revenues and beyond to the tune of almost a trillion dollars a year—and it will continue to rise, make no mistake about that, unless we do something—it will ultimately crowd out spending for things like the military, spending for things like transportation and infrastructure, spending for any discretionary item.

We are on that fast track today, so I appreciate my friend from Texas talking and discussing the crowd-out and the impacts on our future and our future generations.

Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS).

Mr. WILLIAMS. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman BIGGS for leading this tonight.

Madam Speaker, the national debt is the single greatest threat to our national security. Since 1997, Congress has failed to do its job and balance the budget. Earlier this month, the national debt reached \$22 trillion.

For this reason, I am proud to co-sponsor Congressman ANDY BIGGS' resolution to recognize the national debt as a threat to national security. I commend him for introducing this important resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives, and I also commend Senator DAVID PERDUE for bringing it to the U.S. Senate.

We must no longer rely on routine debt ceiling increases, nor can we risk the devastating effects that a growing deficit will inevitably have on our military and our national security agencies.

In an effort to reduce the deficit and regain responsible spending practices, President Trump has laid out his National Security Strategy that highlights this critical need to reduce the debt through smart, fiscally responsible decisions.

While it is clear we cannot undo the past, it is also clear that Federal spending cannot continue to go unchecked and immediate action must be taken. We can no longer defer to future generations to solve our problem and to bear this burden.

I will continue to support legislation that cuts unnecessary spending and oppose legislation that recklessly adds to the debt. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get serious and support this important resolution.

It is time we stopped writing blank checks, and it is time to stop risking the national security of the United States of America. It is simple: Balance your books.

In God we trust.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, Congressman WILLIAMS from Texas, for his willingness to take a strong stand on this. I am particularly impressed by his reference to President Trump's National Security Strategy, which specifically mentions a portion of it is to bring down our national debt, to try to become a better fiscally situated nation.

That will help our national security, now and in the future. This is exactly what President Trump is talking about. That is what we are talking about. That is one of the issues that we have before us today.

I am grateful to my friend, the gentleman from Texas, who brought that forward and is supporting this important resolution.

Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield to my friend from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS), the great congressman.

Mr. HARRIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for yielding time.

I thank the two gentlemen from Texas for introducing the topic to the American people. This is something every American should be aware of.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Every American should

look at a few pictures about our national debt.

This first picture is a 110-year period going from 1930, before World War II, to 2050, just 30 years away. It shows what our national debt has looked like as a percent of our economy, and it is pretty striking.

For the first 90 years of it, there is one huge peak: World War II, a world at war. At that time, our debt exceeded the size of our gross domestic product, the size of everything produced in the United States. Our debt rose to that amount after World War II.

The Greatest Generation spent the next 30 years paying down our debt and growing our economy, so that we had an affordable debt.

We had a little bit of rise in the 1980s and 1990s, as we defeated communism—again, a war situation.

Then, following 2008 and following the last administration, we have skyrocketing debt once again to the point where, within 5 years, we will approach the debt we had during World War II, fighting the largest war this world has fought.

Then, by 2048, 30 years from now, actually having a debt that is 150 percent of everything we make in this country, that is the level we see with failing economies, some of the economies like Greece, Italy, the ones that have unsustainable debts. We are on a clear path to that.

Now, let's talk about the size of our national debt. This chart goes from 2010. This is just 18 years, starting from 2010 and going to 2028. This is the interest payment on our national debt because, Madam Speaker, like every American knows, if you borrow money, you have to pay interest on it.

□ 1915

The fact of the matter is that right now, our interest, total interest payment, is about \$200 billion.

But, Madam Speaker, every American family knows, every senior who has saved for retirement knows that interest rates right now are very low. If you go and get a CD, what are you getting, a 1 percent, 2 percent return. Those interest rates will return to normal.

And as the gentleman from Texas mentioned, we are accruing debt at \$1 trillion a year, so that by the time we reach 2028, the interest payment on our debt alone, due to the increased size of our debt and the increased interest rate is going to approach \$1 trillion a year.

Now, what does that mean?

Well, Madam Speaker, there are a lot of things that the government funds. Those of you who are interested in the safety of Social Security, of Medicare and Medicaid, of Federal pensions, they know that we are approaching a zero sum game. We can't keep this debt going forever.

In fact, this final chart I am going to show is 10 years, starting now, it shows the percent spending of GDP, so rel-

ative to our economy, what our net interest on our debt is; and then other things, like Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, things that we think are important, defense. The yellow line, the defense budget, non-defense, discretionary spending, all these are relatively constant. All of them are going to be crowded out by net interest on the debt.

Madam Speaker, Americans understand, you can't borrow forever. You can't do it on your cars; you can't do it on your houses; you can't do it on your credit cards; and we can't do it here in Congress anymore. This threatens our security, when, in 5 years, we will pay more interest on our national debt than we pay defending this country. We can't do it.

Congress has to get its act together, clean up its act, and get our budget in balance.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland, and I appreciate his focusing on the interest, because he is right. In just a few short years, we will be spending more of our budget on interest than we do on defense; and then a couple of years after that, more on our interest than we spend on Medicare.

Think about that. Think about where we are headed because of our profligate ways.

In the first chart he showed, I was struck, as I remembered growing up in the Cold War era.

Madam Speaker, I think those of us who grew up in the Cold War era remember that contest between us and the former Soviet Union and the amount of money spent by both sides. It is dwarfed by the spending that we are embarking on today as a percent of our GDP. That is where we are. That is where we have come. So it continues to be a problem in so many ways and on so many levels.

Madam Speaker, it is my privilege now to yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK).

Mr. BUCK. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Arizona for yielding, and I thank him for his leadership on this important issue.

Madam Speaker, we have \$22 trillion of debt, over \$22 trillion of debt now. We are accumulating debt at approximately \$1 trillion a year. America is financially bankrupt, and if we continue to place this burden on our children and grandchildren, we are also morally bankrupt.

We are threatening our ability to react to world affairs, our ability to deal with the dynamic threats that we face in this world, not just land, not just sea, not just air, but space also.

We need to balance the budget, but it requires us to make difficult decisions today, to ensure a prosperous future. And it requires us to make significant cuts to our discretionary spending.

One of the amazing, unique characteristics of this place, of Congress, is that for some reason, we make a distinction between discretionary spending and mandatory spending.

My grandchildren don't care if they have to pay back a debt that was created by mandatory spending or a debt that was created by discretionary spending. They don't care. A dollar is a dollar to them, and it should be to us, and we should take control of mandatory spending, just as we take control of discretionary spending.

Since I was elected to Congress, I have fought hard against our country's out-of-control spending, and I have advocated for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution that would force Congress to pass a balanced budget every year.

For the economic well-being of our country, I am proud to join my colleagues in cosponsoring this important resolution, and I would like to thank my dear friend and colleague, Mr. BIGGS, for recognizing our country's serious spending problem before it's too late.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Colorado, Mr. BUCK, and I appreciate him raising that important issue, that it is an oddity, isn't it, in Congress, that somehow we segregate money. We segregate money and say, oh, well, this money doesn't matter so much. But it becomes fungible when you are looking at the accumulation of debt that we are heaping upon our future generations.

I appreciate the gentleman bringing that to our attention and reminding us, and I would just say, I appreciate his voting record, because I have watched it closely, and he is a man of his word when he says he has been fighting to balance the budget and reduce our deficit since he got here, because his voting record is actually true to that, and I appreciate that very much.

Madam Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE).

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona for the time, and thank him for bringing this issue to the forefront.

Madam Speaker, I am distressed by the lack of numbers in the Chamber right now because this truly is the greatest threat to the security of this Nation that we face.

When I ran for office last fall, I promised the citizens of Virginia's Sixth Congressional District that I would reintroduce 4 words to Washington: "We can't afford it." These are four words that have been needed to have been repeated over the last 22 years, as the last time a Federal budget with a surplus was signed into law was 1997.

In Virginia, where I served in the House of Delegates until last year, we are required to balance our budget each year. And because we have placed a priority on fiscal responsibility, Virginia is frequently listed among the best states in which to do business.

In contrast, the Federal Government has an outstanding public debt of more than \$22 trillion. Every year, since 1997, Congress has failed to maintain a fiscally responsible budget and, instead,

has relied too much on raising the debt ceiling.

Because of this practice, on August 5, 2011, the credit rating of the United States was reduced by Standard & Poor's from AAA to AA+, and has remained at that level ever since.

Virginia, through its fiscal responsibility, has maintained its AAA bond rating, one of only a few States to have that honor.

Not only is the current practice of not passing a balanced budget fiscally irresponsible, it poses a threat to our national security. As part of his National Security Strategy, President Trump has highlighted the need to reduce the national debt through fiscal responsibility, and I commend him for it.

In September 2011, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Michael Mullen warned: "I believe the single biggest threat to our national security is debt." And at that time, our national debt was close to \$15 trillion. Now, almost 10 years later, our national debt has increased by \$7 trillion, a 46 percent increase.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand with Congressman BIGGS, my fellow co-sponsors, and a bipartisan group of national security leaders, in support of this resolution:

Recognizing that the national debt is, indeed, a threat to the national security of the United States;

Recognizing that deficits are unsustainable, irresponsible, and dangerous; and

Committing Congress to restoring regular order in the appropriations process and addressing the fiscal crisis faced by the United States. The future of our great republic depends on it.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE), for his comments and his efforts and his willingness to stand on this important issue and recognizing—and promising to people and responding to that promise; because I can tell you, when I first considered even running for Congress, one of the things that motivated me was this horrific debt, which I have watched explode even more since I got here; not because I am here, but in spite of my efforts.

So, today, we are preparing to introduce our resolution, which will be later this week, Senator PERDUE, his cosponsors, my 50 original cosponsors—more than 50 original cosponsors. And we recognize that, as of today, the national debt is more than \$22 trillion. You have heard that. Can you hear it enough without taking action?

The resulting total interest expense for the fiscal year 2019 is \$192 billion. \$192 billion. Interest does not sleep. It doesn't take a holiday; it doesn't take a vacation. Interest accumulates without ceasing until you pay your debt.

Our national debt as a percentage of GDP is 104 percent. The last time a Federal budget was balanced and was signed was 1997.

Our total Federal tax receipts for fiscal year 2018 were \$3.329 trillion. But

somehow—and we all know how—our Federal outlays totaled \$4.1 trillion, with a deficit of \$780 billion. And we know how. We know how that happened. We look to each other in this body.

Since the last time Congress balanced the Federal budget in 1997, Congress has failed to maintain a fiscally-responsible budget and has relied on raising the debt ceiling. How many times have we raised the debt ceiling? It is almost more than you can count.

Congress failed to pass a balanced budget for fiscal year 2019 and failed to restore regular order to the legislative process by not allowing Representatives to offer and debate amendments. When we have regular order, it permits the House to separately debate and adopt all appropriation bills in a timely fashion and facilitates congressional oversight on Federal spending.

Estimates are Medicare will run out of money in 2026, Social Security in 2034.

As my friend from Virginia, Mr. CLINE, said: Congress' ineffectiveness has caused the U.S. credit rating from Standard & Poor's to drop from AAA to AA+. Without a targeted effort to balance the Federal budget, our credit will surely continue to fall.

President Trump's National Security Strategy highlights the need to reduce the national debt through fiscal responsibility.

Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis warned that: "Any nation that can't keep its fiscal house in order eventually cannot maintain its military power."

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats warned that: "Our continued plunge into debt is unsustainable and represents a dire future threat to our economy and to our national security."

Former Secretaries of Defense Leon Panetta, Ash Carter, and Chuck Hagel warned: "Increase in the debt will, in the absence of a comprehensive budget that addresses both entitlements and revenues, force even deeper reductions in our national security capabilities."

And former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen warned: "I believe the single biggest threat to our national security is debt."

And so what must the House do?

First, we have to recognize that the national debt is, indeed, a threat to our national security. We must realize that deficits are unsustainable, irresponsible, and dangerous.

□ 1930

We must restore regular order in the appropriations process, and we must commit to addressing the fiscal crisis faced by the United States.

I mentioned it before, but when you are spending a pot of money and you have limited resources, regardless of how great those resources are—I mean, we have had record tax revenue for the last 14 months, record revenue, more than any time in the history of the United States of America, and we still outspend that revenue.

As we do so, we have to borrow money, because we have created a structural deficit. So, foundationally, we put ourselves in a position where we have to borrow money; and when you have to borrow money, you have to pay interest. As you have to borrow more money, which we do, you are going to start crowding out what you can spend those limited resources on.

Who holds our debt? One of the biggest holders of our debt is also one of our greatest potential adversaries, and that is China. China has been, for the last 25 years, expanding their military, building a blue-water navy, expanding their capacity for rockets and missiles, and also taking in our debt.

This places us at risk if we are ever in a conflict, which I pray we never are. I hope we never are. But if we are in a conflict with an adversary who holds significant amounts of our national debt, we are at risk. And you have to acknowledge that.

What has helped us out so far is the fact that the U.S. dollar is the international medium of exchange in international transactions, economic transactions. If we were to lose that, the ability to borrow funds to sustain our unsustainable spending would go away. And I bring that back to China.

China has ambitions to make its own currency a regional currency of exchange. They would like to replace the United States dollar as the international medium of exchange as well.

What else is an actual physical problem when you have the kind of debt and deficit spending that we have is that you cannot pay to replace and maintain your internal infrastructure, and we see that today. Bridges, roads, airports, all of these need maintenance. They need upkeep. They need expansion. We need new roads. We need new highways, but we can't pay for it, because we are going to be in a position of being overextended. That places us at risk, because you do need internal infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield to my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO).

Mr. YOHO. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. BIGGS from Arizona, for yielding. This is such an important topic that we are talking about, national debt.

I remember when I came to Congress in 2013, Admiral Mullen said that the biggest threat to America is our national debt. Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State at the time, said she agreed with that. One of the few times I have agreed with Mrs. Clinton.

But national debt today is \$22 trillion. When I came into Congress, it was \$14.5 trillion. When President Reagan left office, it was about \$2.5 trillion. It doesn't matter who is in the White House. Our debt is going up until this body, Congress, addresses our debt.

If you do a pie chart of our debt, 71 percent of our debt is mandatory spending, 29 percent is discretionary. Discretionary was described to me as

the money we have left over at the end of the month after we pay all of our bills. That is discretionary.

The interesting thing is, in 1964, those numbers were reversed. Mandatory spending was 29 percent, discretionary was 71 percent. So we were a cash-rich Nation. We could do things. We could do a space program. We could do the infrastructure bills that we did that this Nation needed.

Today, that is flipped around to where 71 percent of every dollar this government takes in is already spent. We don't vote on that in Congress. Those are things that happen without us. The only things we vote and we shut the government down on is that 29 percent.

If we do not address our mandatory spending, mandatory spending will address us as a Nation.

I was on an interview, and they said, well, President Obama doesn't want to mess with mandatory spending, which is Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, interest on our debt, retirement programs for our Federal employees. And I reminded the interviewer, and they said this about President Trump: He doesn't want to deal with mandatory spending.

I said: I understand that. But either this President or the next President deals with mandatory spending or mandatory spending will dictate to this Nation what we have to cut, and those are called austerity measures.

All you have to do is look at Puerto Rico, Spain, Portugal, Greece, where they had mandatory austerity measures where programs were cut, and they were cut by other governments that controlled their debt.

Today, about 30 percent of our debt is controlled by foreign nations, the other 70 percent, the American taxpayer owns, but it would be tragic to allow us in this body to allow another nation to say: You have got to get rid of that program.

That is unconscionable. It is irresponsible of us. And if we do not deal with that debt, that debt will deal with us.

Madam Speaker, this is something I appreciate Mr. BIGGS standing up and having this Special Order on. This is something we talk about repeatedly in our district. We have town halls on this.

When you look at the discretionary spending, that is the stuff that runs all of government outside of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the retirement programs. That means the Department of Defense. That means the Department of Education, Justice, the Department of Homeland Security. All the research money that goes into our research universities comes out of the discretionary funding of government.

I am telling you, as a Nation, if we do not address this, this Nation will not survive, and history will repeat itself from great countries that have lasted for a period of time. They have always come to a demise, and it was because

they haven't paid attention to the things that are the very basic.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague for bringing this up. This is something that repeatedly—if you look at this Congress, the Democrats have been in charge of the House since January 2 or 3. We don't have a budget. We haven't addressed anything dealing with debt. But they have spent a lot of time dealing with President Trump and trying to remove him from office and finding out reasons why he shouldn't be the President. Madam Speaker, we as Americans need to come together and deal with the debt, and I appreciate the gentleman's efforts.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida for taking time to come down and give us his insight on this monumental problem.

One of the things that he talked about, Madam Speaker, is that we have got to take care of our processes, our procedures. He is right. It doesn't matter whether it is Republican or Democrat; our processes have been broken.

I can't even begin to tell you. I have been here a little over 2 years. I bet you we have done a dozen and a half short-term spending bills, continuing resolutions. I bet it is that many. It seems to me like that many. I think we did three government shutdowns last year. I don't know when the next one is going to be. It wouldn't surprise me if it was 2 weeks from now, whenever it is. But the reason we do those things is because our budget process fails.

I remember sitting in a meeting and I heard someone say: We have got a 10-year budget plan to balance our budget. And I heard somebody else stand up and say: Well, I have been here 10 years. Ten years ago, I was told we had a 10-year budget plan, so we ought to be up to snuff. We ought to be balanced by now, because it is 10 years since that 10-year budget plan.

I think it was Mr. YOHO who said that.

Madam Speaker, I yield back to Mr. YOHO.

Mr. YOHO. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding, because I came here and they said: Well, don't worry about this, because this will balance in 5 years or this will balance in 10 years.

And I laugh, but I shouldn't be laughing. We should be crying, because here I am, 7 years, and guess what: It will balance in 10 years.

It will not balance. And, again, it is up to us, the Members of the House and the Senate, because we control the purse strings. But we have done a terrible job at it, and it goes back to leadership on both sides.

This is something that should not be a partisan issue. This is something that should be an American issue, because America is at stake here. It is not a Republican Party or a Democratic Party. We don't serve a party is what I tell people in my district, and I am sure you do the same thing. I serve a Nation, and that Nation is the greatest Nation on Earth. If we don't get our

fiscal house in order, this Nation will not be the Nation it is.

So, again, I don't think it will balance in 10 years. It won't balance in 20 years unless we change the dynamics, and they need to change now.

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time from the gentleman from Florida, when we look at that and the promises constantly, this is getting to my point: The process needs to get back to regular order. It needs to get back to 12 individual bills—this is what we talked about—12 individual bills that go through a process where there is debate; there are amendments; there is discussion; and there is accountability.

Nothing provides more accountability than bills that have single subjects; nothing provides more transparency than bills that have single subjects; and nothing allows the American people to see what we are doing in Congress like single subjects.

So when you take 12 subjects, which are your budget bills, and you combine 3 or 4 of them into a minibus and 6 or 7 into an omnibus, and you say vote on these things—usually we are given just a short period of time to read those things and analyze them anyway; usually they come in under some closed rule or some highly structured rule—well, you are preventing a couple of things:

Number one, we are not going to get to a balanced budget because, ultimately, what you are also preventing is accountability, because when the American people can see how you voted in a single area on a single issue, they know whether they agree with you or not. They know whether you should be doing that, and they will let you know. They give you the feedback. That is the accountability that we need if we are going to balance this budget over time and correct our course.

Now, there is an economic theory called path dependence. Sometimes it is called increasing returns. Kenneth Arrow wrote a lot about this, and what it boils down to is this: It is an analysis, really, of why decisionmakers make suboptimal decisions and then persist on the course even after they know it is a suboptimal decision.

Well, what typically happens is regimes and institutions are built up. There is feedback, and people will persist on that because they are building up regimes and institutions; and, ultimately, they have propelled themselves so far down, they are what we call locked in. To exit that path, the cost is so high that they don't want to exit that suboptimal path and move to a more optimal path.

But I am here to tell you tonight that as long as we stay on this suboptimal path where we don't have these 12 budget bills, we don't get back to regular order in budgeting, as long as we do CRs and then claim that we have done a normal budgeting path when we have created cromnibus bills

or omnibus bills or minibus bills, we are not going to be able to exit the path that we are on.

If we are going to sustain this Nation, we are going to need to exit the path that we are on and move to a more optimal path.

□ 1945

That is really what this resolution is about. It is encouraging people from both sides of the aisle. I am not blaming one side or the other. I am just saying that if we are going to get this done, everybody in this House has to look internally. Everybody in this House needs to say: What are we doing with our process? Everybody needs to recognize that if we continue on this path, at some point there is no more path to run down.

We just heard from a series of speakers that the numbers go up and, at some point, you reach a tipping point, and that tipping point says you cannot go forward. I would rather we move over to a suboptimal path now and pay that price, which is typically a short-term, corrective price. In the scheme of things, it may take longer than just a short-term, but we have to move over because, if we don't, our choices are taken away from us.

I will tell you that if we would have gotten on the path 2 years ago, we would have had more choices and more options. Every day we go further down this path, the fewer options we have until the end. Mr. YOHO is correct, and all of my friends who have spoken tonight were correct, and the more than 50 cosponsors here, they are all correct: If we don't do something, it will be imposed upon us.

If it is imposed upon us, we won't have control. We will not be able to handle this in a way where we hurt the fewest people, where we can feather the landing as much as possible, where we can maintain our economic status, where people can still find jobs, and where people can achieve the American Dream that they perceive that they want to achieve. Those things get taken away from us because, ultimately, this country is built on individual freedom and individual accountability.

If we have to take that horrible measure of receiving something like our debts being called in, or we can't find lenders, or the cost of our loans—imagine if the cost of our debt today would just move up a couple of points—imagine what that would look like. If we can't do this of our own volition, we will be subject to someone else's will and the very essence of the American Dream—individual freedom and individual accountability—will go away. And why? Because that accountability will be foisted upon us by coercive forces.

Madam Speaker, I conclude tonight with gratitude to the 50-some-odd men and women who have signed on to this resolution. I implore all in this body to join myself, to join me, to join Senator

PERDUE and those who have signed on and sponsored a companion resolution in the Senate, and let's make the hard choices today so that we might preserve the freedoms for our children and grandchildren.

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

AMERICAN VOTING SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) for 30 minutes.

Mr. YOHO. Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I rise today in opposition of H.R. 1. This bill is nothing more than a thinly veiled attack on the American voting system designed to allow Democrats to keep the majority in the House of Representatives, and I will explain and illustrate.

As a Member of Congress, we have a responsibility to ensure that every American vote is counted and protected, especially because our democratic society relies on participation in the democratic process through free and fair elections. While I support efforts to involve all Americans in our electoral process, I cannot support this unconstitutional legislation.

Madam Speaker, let me lay out for you some of the most absurd provisions in this legislation.

H.R. 1 creates Federal Government subsidized elections. For the people watching on C-SPAN, if they don't have insomnia, I want them to hear that again. H.R. 1 creates Federal Government subsidized elections through a 6-1 ratio for government matches to small donor contributions for congressional or Presidential campaigns.

For the government to give matches—subsidized elections—that means they are taking money from you to go to candidates, hopefully of your choice, but not necessarily. So the donor contributions for congressional or Presidential campaigns, which means for every \$200 an individual donates, the Federal Government will take \$1,200 of the American taxpayers' money and distribute it.

Additionally, H.R. 1 removes the checks our current voting system has in place to ensure eligible voters are casting ballots by forcing States to accept online and same-day voter registration. I don't think that has ever happened before, where H.R. 1 removes the checks our current voting system has in place to ensure only eligible voters are casting vote ballots by forcing States to accept online and same-day voter registration with no penalties for ineligible voters.

That means somebody could show up, an individual, and cast multiple ballots or votes, or vote without meeting the current requirements, and they will not be reprimanded. There is no recourse. Who is going to go after somebody after they have already cast their vote and they weren't an eligible