

After 15 years and a \$9 billion bond plus Federal money, what do we actually have? We have a project that has ballooned to over \$120 billion with zero miles of track laid and a completion date pushed back another decade into the future.

This is all ostensibly to save carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, but I point out to you here that CO₂ is actually .04 percent of our atmosphere.

This is a bottomless money pit, and continuing to throw State and Federal dollars at it is a terrible waste when we need to be doing so many other things for our people, including agriculture and water supply. Revolving doors of CEOs of the California High-Speed Rail Authority aren't going to fix this anytime soon.

California faces a great need for water supply, infrastructure, and forest management that could provide a whole lot of benefit that the high-speed rail project never will do.

American taxpayers shouldn't be on the hook for California's boondoggle, so let's instead focus on things that will help the American people such as building more water supply and growing those needed crops that somewhere between 90 and 98 percent only grow in California that help the American people.

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY STUDY INSTITUTE

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 40th anniversary of the Environmental and Energy Study Institute, or EESI.

For four decades, EESI has provided valuable educational opportunities, policy analysis, and support to Congress and so many others all around the country.

EESI was founded as a caucus in Congress by a bipartisan group of Members, including Dick Ottinger from the great State of New York in 1975.

In the 1980s, it became an independent nonprofit focused on educating Members and staff, convening stakeholders, and advancing science-based solutions for climate, energy, and environmental challenges.

Many Members attended their annual Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Expo, which brings cutting-edge energy companies to the Hill to show off the latest innovations.

Over the years, I have been proud to collaborate with EESI so many times, and I truly value their work.

To EESI's staff and supporters, I congratulate them on this 40th anniversary, and I wish them many more years of being such an important partner to Members of Congress, moving upward and onward with additional innovation through the years.

RIISING NATIONAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) is recognized for 13 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I think I heard applause and happiness that I am only allowed to go for 13 minutes.

For anyone that is paying attention, it is because of the lateness of the hour. My brothers and sisters on the Democrat side, we have to split the remaining time.

That is what is about to happen, so I am going to talk faster than normal. I apologize to those trying to take our words down.

Let's see if I can make the point. I actually edited my boards down because I wanted to go through, once again, the actual mathematical facts and my intense frustration that our brothers and sisters around the country running for office are promising things that there is no mathematical way to make them work and a complete void of an honest conversation of demographics and debt and the reality of what is going on. Let's actually race through this because I think I now have 12 minutes.

Please understand this. For every dollar of tax collection this year that your Federal Government takes in, we spend \$1.39.

Now, work with me. I used to come behind this microphone just a little while ago and say: We borrow 30 cents out of everything—no, we borrow 39 cents. If you remove interest, for every dollar we take in, we spend \$1.21. I need you to process this.

Please process this. For every dollar of tax collection the United States takes in, and that is this year, in a time when the economy has actually been pretty good. GDP growth has been pretty good. Tax collections have actually been pretty good, and we spend, meaning we are functionally borrowing, 39 cents for every dollar we take in.

Here is the point. How many of you, as Members of Congress—and if someone's watching, if you don't see people in the room, that is the way it is supposed to be. People are supposed to be back in their offices or other places actually doing their work.

One of the reasons you do these presentations is you are probably on a thousand televisions around this campus, and hopefully there are still some minds that are open to math.

Do you see this chart? Do you see the blue? We call that defense and non-defense. That is all I, as a Member of Congress, get to vote on. It is 26, 25 percent of spending.

Back to this board. For every dollar of tax collection, we have to borrow an additional 39 cents on top of it. Does someone see a math problem?

If what I get to vote on is 26 percent of the budget, it means every dime a

Member of Congress votes on is borrowed as well as a big chunk of what we call mandatory spending.

How many people are willing to tell that story, whether it be on the left or the right? The hallways in this place are full of people begging us for more spending. It is an investment, DAVID. We need the money.

I have done chart after chart after chart over the last few years, coming in here and showing when we have had very high marginal tax rates, we get about 17, 18 percent of the economy in taxes. When we have had very low marginal tax rates, we get about 17, 18 percent of the economy.

Will this place start to take it seriously? You have to adopt tax policies, regulatory policies, and code policies that dramatically do growth. Understand, what is the biggest change that has happened the last couple of years? What is the thing that has moved these numbers so dramatically?

□ 2140

I am going to play with this just a little bit.

Interest. The fact of the matter is, Social Security, \$1.460—480 billion. Total interest, because remember you have to pay the interest back to Social Security, the pension plans, all those things, and then interest to those who bought our bonds. Remember, the vast majority of our bonds are actually bought by Americans.

Interest now is the second biggest expenditure in the Federal Government. It is going to come in total gross interest maybe \$1.140—160 billion.

Then the next biggest, the third biggest expenditure is now Medicare, and number four is actually defense. The thing that is in the Constitution now is number four.

One of the points I want to make here is I was just showing you a chart that about 25 percent of what we get to vote on is defense and nondefense, and we are over 14 percent is just interest now. Understand, in about 10 years that a little less than \$1.2 trillion is going to be approaching \$2 trillion a year.

Tell me how many things we got to buy with that interest when for every dollar of tax collection we take in, \$1.39, so 39 cents on top of it is borrowed. That is the mathematical reality. This is the thing that I get booed at, I get people online saying: Oh, that hurts my feelings.

One hundred percent of the debt for this country from today through the next 30 years—go look at CBO's reports, Medicare—sorry, I don't mean to get so agitated, Medicare and the interest. In 9 or so years when the Social Security trust fund has been depleted, do we reach in the general fund and backfill it?

The insanity is, you hear the debates here: We will just tax rich people.

Even documents from the left say, well, if you do every tax that has been proposed on those over \$400,000, and

you adjust for the economics, you get about a point and a half of GDP. A point and a half of the size of the economy. For those of us who want to cut spending, add up everything we have talked about cutting, it is about one point of GDP. You have got a big 2½ percent there, 2½ percent for every policy on the other side, every policy on our side.

We are borrowing just a little less than 7 percent of the entire economy this year, and the economy is healthy. Dear Heaven, what happens if there is a war? What happens if there is another pandemic? What happens if parts of the economic clouds come and we have a recession? This is the time when things are good. We should be paying things back.

You look at the math. I know some of these charts are impossible to read from a distance. I am trying just to make the point that interest is our fragility. I have said it here multiple times. Do you want to know who really is about to run your country? It is not the Democrats; it is not the Republicans. It is not rich people; it is not the unions. It is the bond market. If you are borrowing seventy, eighty thousand dollars per second every day and you have got to go to the market, remember, this year, this fiscal year we will bring \$10 trillion to market. About eight of that is refinancing of the bonds that roll over. It is actually a little more than that.

If you look at the short end of the curve, they have to roll over a lot. Then there are a couple trillion of new issuances. If the world, if the bond vigilantes say, well, we don't want those things, we want a premium, you look at the charts, and this is actually assuming everything is wonderful.

When you see the CBO projection, and they talk about debt coming into the future, this is no pandemic, no war, no recession, yet if you listen to these microphones, it is person after person after person coming up with new brilliant ideas to spend money. Many of them you love. They are moral, they are helpful, and we have no damn way to finance them.

This delusion that we will just tax rich people, I have already shown chart after chart after chart, you confiscate all the wealth of those designated rich, you run the country for a few months. You crash every market, there is no retirement accounts, but you wipe out everything. It is just sort of a mathematical delusion.

There are ways to make this work, but are we going to legalize technology?

Last week, I actually did a presentation, and I was trying to show that all these projections of: We are going to take in this much money in additional enforcement at the IRS, and we have only hit like a fraction, a fraction of what was promised.

Remember, we are 2 years in. Remember, we originally appropriated 80, then it went down to 57. According to

CBO, we were supposed to be up around 10, 11 billion of additional tax collections coming in from the rich. We have hit 1, so we have hit basically 10 percent of the promises. That is story after story after story, we are not coming anything close to our fantasies.

Remember, the Inflation Reduction Act was going to pay for itself, and then we realized, hey, the subsidies, the planned economy, the new managed industrial policy that is America now, it is turning out to cost dramatically more. The tax collections didn't come anywhere close.

We are really bad at math here. We are really good at making public policy by feelings, but just try to say, let's have thought experiments. What would happen if the IRS used Chat and other things to answer the phone, customer service, so the vast majority of people who call the IRS could actually have their phone answered? I remember one person online said: Well, that would lose jobs.

I tried to show all that money we set aside for the IRS; it went down. Their auditors went down by 8 percent. We gave them billions of dollars, and it turns out we have a demographic issue.

Remember, starting in 1990, birth rates in the United States started to roll over. It turns out a lot of people don't want to work for the IRS.

There are ways to use technology to crash the price of healthcare, to make the environment healthier, cleaner, to move transportation, to actually do tax collections in an honest, fair, moral fashion.

This place is a protection racket. It is a protection of incumbent bureaucracies, incumbent business models. The hallways are full of lobbyists right now trying to stop us from disrupting and making our brothers and sisters healthier.

Diabetes is 33 percent of all U.S. healthcare. It is immoral what we allow to happen. We can make our brothers and sisters healthier. We can do amazing things for the debt and deficit. We just have to be willing to do things differently.

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

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK) is recognized until 10 p.m. as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order hour.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to anchor this CBC Special Order hour. For the next 12 minutes and 30 seconds, Members of the CBC have an opportunity to discuss the importance of Suicide Prevention Month, an issue of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair for the opportunity to speak.

As we come together for Suicide Prevention Month, I am deeply aware that this heartbreaking crisis is hitting the Black community hard. The CDC reported that in 2023, the suicide rate among Black Americans rose by 19 percent, with Black youth experiencing the sharpest increase of any racial group in the Nation. This alarming trend highlights the urgent need for action.

Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy that makes waves through communities and through families, leaving a void that cannot be filled. Yet, too many of our loved ones don't get the mental health care and support they deserve. As lawmakers, we must confront the uncomfortable truth that our current system is simply falling short.

The Congressional Black Caucus has been at the forefront of addressing this epidemic, working tirelessly to secure critical mental health resources, but our work is far from over. Suicide Prevention Month offers us a moment to reflect on what more we can do, how we can ensure these resources reach every individual in need and especially our youth.

We must expand access to culturally competent mental health care, reduce stigma, and create safe spaces for our open conversations about mental health.

□ 2150

That is why I introduced the Mental Health Workforce Act, to address racial disparities in the mental health field. The bill seeks to allocate resources and establish programs that focus on the unique needs of marginalized communities, ensuring equitable access to mental health services.

Numerous barriers to access mental healthcare treatment persist in communities of color, including the stigma associated with mental illness, general distrust of healthcare institutions, and the lack of health insurance.

Together, we can change the trajectory of this crisis and ensure a future where every life is valued and protected.

It is critically important that you know you are not alone, and we are here to help.

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON).