

Please remind our good leaders in Washington that simply cutting the budget is not going to take away our responsibilities to the aged, those with disabilities and mental health needs, children, and the poor.

You can make a difference in this debate. Please, please do.
Respectfully.

The letter was signed by more than one dozen Republican State legislators.

Mr. Speaker, this is from Republican legislators to the Republican President and the Republican majority in Congress. Their plea is clear. The threat is real. The facts are undeniable. Republicans in State legislatures do not want to gut Medicaid. Minnesotans do not want to gut Medicaid. Americans do not want to gut Medicaid.

So why in the world are congressional Republicans teeing up these massive cuts to Medicaid in their budgets?

It is because they are singularly focused on giving massive tax breaks to their wealthy donors, to billionaires like Elon Musk, and to huge corporations. They are willing to do that by selling out healthcare coverage for 80 million Americans.

That is it. It is really that simple.

I say to my Republican colleagues that you cannot hide from your own party raising the alarm not to do this. You cannot hide from the fact that you are choosing to rip healthcare away from millions of Americans. You cannot hide from the fact that you are choosing to decimate State budgets in order to serve your donors and your billionaire elites. You cannot hide from the fact that your State counterparts and surely your constituents do not want you to do this.

As we consider the budget this week, we need House Republicans in the House of Representatives to finally stand with Democrats against this disastrous budget.

SUPPORTING OUR NATION'S CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of crucial, bipartisan legislation that will support our Nation's most vulnerable. The IDEA Full Funding Act is a bipartisan, commonsense commitment to our Nation's children who are living with disabilities.

This is not just about dollars and cents. It is about fulfilling a promise made 50 years ago to ensure that every child, regardless of ability, has access to a quality education that prepares them for a full and productive life.

When Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975, it was a landmark step toward educational equity. The Federal Government pledged to cover 40 percent of the excess costs of special education services.

Yet, for decades we have fallen short of promised funding levels, which have

hovered around 13 to 15 percent, leaving States and local school districts struggling to make up the difference.

This shortfall forces schools to stretch their already limited resources, meaning fewer special education teachers, outdated instructional materials, and less support for students who need it most.

The burden does not just fall on the schools. It affects families, educators, and, ultimately, the success of our communities. At the Education and Workforce Committee last week, we just heard about the exciting new opportunities artificial intelligence presents to advance education for students with special needs. However, many of those opportunities will not be realized if Congress does not live up to its commitment.

The IDEA Full Funding Act ensures that we meet that commitment, gradually increasing Federal support until we reach the promised 40 percent. It is not just good policy to invest in our Nation's future and ensure students with disabilities have access to a high-quality education. It is the right thing to do.

Full funding will provide critical resources to schools, enabling students with disabilities to receive services and support that they need. It will reduce financial strain on States and local districts, preventing them from having to cut other essential programs. This legislation supports teachers and staff, ensuring that they have the tools and the training to deliver high-quality special education.

Lastly, and most importantly, it gives families peace of mind, knowing their children will receive the education they deserve without unnecessary hurdles.

Investing in special education is an investment in future taxpayers, workers, and independent citizens who contribute to society. By fully funding IDEA, we alleviate the pressure on States and local governments thereby strengthening our education system.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to every student in this country. When we fail to meet our commitment under IDEA, we fail millions of children who deserve a fair shot at success. Passing the IDEA Full Funding Act is a step toward fairness, responsibility, and a brighter future for all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this essential legislation.

CONGRATULATING UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL STARS

(Mr. COURTNEY of Connecticut was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a stunning, dominant victory by the UConn women's basketball team yesterday over a very good University of South Carolina team by a margin of 23 points, which actually is lower than really where it was for most of the second half.

It is an amazing group of women student athletes who, again, rose to the occasion to take the UConn women's basketball program into further heights with its 12th national title. All records are made to be broken, but it is hard to even imagine any other school's team that could come close to 12 national titles.

They were led by Paige Bueckers who is going to be one of the greats in the history of college basketball. She scored 17 points and had numerous rebounds, steals, and blocks. She has had every award imaginable for a college basketball player: ESPY Award, John R. Wooden Award, and Naismith Awards, but winning that trophy which so far had eluded her is just a storybook way for her career at the University of Connecticut to finish.

She was joined by Azzi Fudd, who is a junior, 24 points, 6 rebounds, and 3 assists. She was named the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four, which is really saying something when we have a teammate like Paige Bueckers.

Lastly, a freshman, Sarah Strong, had 24 points and 15 rebounds. Over the course of the season watching her grow as a player playing with poise and maturity that defied someone of her young age was something quite striking and amazing.

Their starting line-up was rounded out by Jana El Alfy and Kaitlyn Chen, a portal transfer from Princeton University, with a really deep bench. KK Arnold came out and provided lots of energy during the game.

It was just an amazing team led by an amazing coach, Geno Auriemma. In 2006, which is a long time ago, he already was named to the Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, which usually is reserved for coaches after they have retired. However, Geno just kind of keeps going on. Their last win was in 2009, and there were a lot of naysayers out there that while the UConn program has hit its peak, in 2023 in USA Today there was a headline: "UConn's dynasty is officially dead. That is good news for women's college basketball."

That is probably the ultimate bulletin board material for someone like Geno Auriemma, if you know him.

What is so striking about Geno is just the loyalty of his players. He had all these former stars of the UConn program who have gone on to be at the WNBA who were all there yesterday in Tampa, Florida, rooting them on. The same for the bench. He is an amazing leader and a really talented coach.

John Wooden, the legendary coach, never got 12 national titles during his time. I congratulate Coach Auriemma and the team.

We have here the college basketball capital of the world. If we add on the six national titles that the men's program has actually accumulated since 1999, its total is 18. I was there for the first one. It was like a religious experience as a UConn fan and a UConn Law

School graduate. That is the same as the Boston Celtics have in the NBA. The Los Angeles Lakers have 18 titles, as well.

Eighteen titles for a land-grant university in rural Connecticut defies any conventional wisdom about big, high-paying university programs. They just keep getting it done.

Coach Hurlley, who coaches the men's team, was rooting on Geno and the women as loudly as anyone. It is a great university sports program that brings everybody together. We are so proud of them, particularly in the Second Congressional District. I have the honor to represent the amazing university campus and stores and also Avery Point.

Well done, bravo, and kudos to all of them. Just watching them celebrate on the court last night was really so exciting for all of us from Connecticut and from all across the country where many of these players come from.

I was texting with the Governor of Minnesota, Tim Walz, which is the home of Paige Bueckers, and he was as happy as anyone in Connecticut to see her great victory.

HONORING WES WATKINS

(Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of my friend and colleague, the great Oklahoma Congressman, Wes Watkins.

Wes originally took office as a Member of Congress in 1976 after serving 2 years in the Oklahoma Senate. He succeeded former Speaker Carl Albert, who notably endorsed Wes after retiring.

However, Wes' legacy of service started long before he made his way to Washington. As a young boy, Wes was involved in 4-H and FFA while working several jobs to help support his family. He then graduated high school at the top of his class before attending Oklahoma State University. He earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural education and a master's degree in educational administration.

At Oklahoma State University, he served as the southeast district vice president for the Oklahoma FFA Association. He was so successful in that position that he would later be chosen to be the State president of the Oklahoma FFA Association. But he didn't stop there. He continued to prove himself to his peers and was also elected as the chair of the student senate.

Winning the student senate election would become a monumental moment for Wes because it was becoming quite clear to everyone that he had an ability to motivate and to lead his peers.

In a 2017 interview with the Oklahoma Historical Society, Wes reflected on the moment he won the student election. A friend asked him if he was going to run for office one day. This made Wes stop and think about a life

in public service. He thought to himself: What is your mission? What are you all about? What is your passion?

It is evident that these questions guided Wes through his time in Congress. He was a strong public leader who advocated for Oklahomans above all else.

He was raised during a difficult time, where many families were leaving Oklahoma in search of jobs and a chance for economic prosperity. Instead of following suit, he ran for office to change this and help the State. When he arrived in Washington in 1976, he came with a clear mission: Make life better for the neighbors.

Wes knew that in order to do this, he needed to work on financial policy, so he made his case to join the Banking Committee. Like everything else Wes did, he was so successful that his peers chose to elevate him to the House Appropriations Committee, one of the most important committees in the United States House.

Later, during his second stint in Congress, based on that same track record of success, he secured his spot on the Ways and Means Committee, not only the longest standing committee of the United States House, but the committee of jurisdiction over all tax policy. This made Wes the first Member of Congress to serve on both the Ways and Means Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

Wes ultimately knew that these committee assignments would give him the opportunity to provide access to capital to Oklahomans, and he was right. While Wes Watkins' legacy in Congress cannot be overstated, to Oklahomans, his kindness, generosity, and love for his community might be what we remember most.

Now remember, Mr. Speaker, Wes received his degree in agricultural education, and he was certainly an educator and a mentor to his very core. In his later years, he spent time counseling young people who sought his guidance. He would ask these young people the same questions that he had once asked himself: What is your mission? What are you all about? What is your passion?

Oklahomans will remember Wes Watkins as a dedicated public servant who fought hard to bring abundant opportunities and true prosperity to his neighbors. He never forgot his original mission of serving Oklahoma, and the work of his lifetime will continue to benefit the State for literally centuries to come.

One last thought: When his time in D.C. was done, Wes went straight back to Oklahoma.

□ 1230

HONORING JANE CONOLEY

(Mr. GARCÍA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. GARCÍA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Presi-

dent Jane Close Conoley, of Cal State, Long Beach, for her exceptional leadership, friendship, and passion for her community.

After nearly 50 years in higher education, she will retire at the end of this academic year, leaving a lasting impact on the Long Beach community.

As the first woman to serve as president, she led Cal State, Long Beach through a period of incredible growth, including growing enrollment and fundraising over half a billion dollars for scholarships, academic programs, and campus improvements.

Now, under her leadership, Cal State, Long Beach earned recognition as a high-research institution and received the Seal of Excelencia for its work with Latino students.

Now, Cal State, Long Beach also receives more applications than almost any public university in the Cal State system and public universities, period, in the State of California. This is all thanks to her incredible leadership.

President Conoley prioritized building strong connections between the campus and community and addressing student needs, from housing to food insecurity. She has been a partner, a friend, a supporter, and someone who has built an incredible academic reputation and partnerships across the country.

As an educator myself, I have seen firsthand her dedication to student success and her efforts to strengthen the university's ties to the community.

As she prepares for retirement, I know I join the entire Long Beach community in thanking her for years of service to Cal State, Long Beach, its students, and the community.

DISASTROUS MAGANOMICS

Mr. GARCÍA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call out Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and their disastrous MAGAnomics.

Last week, Donald Trump and his Cabinet of billionaires recklessly imposed the largest tariff tax hike in American history. Now, look at the markets just today. They are crashing.

Costs will now increase on all kinds of goods for the American family and people across this country. Working families can't afford to pay more for basic needs, for necessities. No one voted to pay for more expensive groceries, homes, cars, and household goods.

That is all Donald Trump has to offer.

Supply chains and small businesses are also right now being thrown into chaos, and hardworking people are going to lose their jobs.

Not only do we have this incredibly large tariff tax hike, but we also know that the stock market is in a free fall. Retirement accounts are being wiped out. We have lost trillions of dollars in the stock market in just a few weeks.

MAGAnomics hurts working people and gives huge tax breaks and giveaways to billionaires, to Elon Musk and all of their billionaire friends.