

clear rules of the road, and leading with purpose.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DIANE ORLOWSKI

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

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Diane Orlowski. She was a true force of nature. We came to know her affectionately on the campaign as Mama Deetz.

Mama Deetz would go shopping. She would call and make tons of volunteer efforts. She would do parades. She really was everywhere, but she had such an exuberance, a spirit about her, that was infectious. If someone heard her laugh, they might not even know what the joke was, but they were captivated by the laugh and would find themselves laughing, too.

She was a leader in the Myrtle Beach area, but also in Connecticut in the business community. She had decades of experience as a businesswoman. After retiring, of course, she did like most and retired to the Grand Strand.

We are going to miss her very deeply because of the life that she led and the person that she was. She loved her family dearly, her sons, her grandchildren. We were always impressed by the stories that she would share, the trouble that she would get into with her grandkids. She brought light into every room she was part of, and her absence leaves the world a little bit quieter without her laugh echoing through it. She will be deeply missed.

HONORING ELLEN LEWIS

(Ms. ROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, during Women's History Month, to honor Ellen Lewis of Wake Forest, North Carolina, a remarkable community member who is not often remembered in the history books.

Born into slavery, Ellen Lewis was about 15 years old when Union soldiers came through Wake Forest after the Civil War and told enslaved people that they were free.

After emancipation, she built a life of service to her community, becoming a respected nurse and midwife who delivered hundreds of babies, both Black and White.

Her story reminds us of the generations of Black women who have been the backbone of maternal care in our communities. Yet, today, Black mothers in America are still far more likely to experience complications or die from pregnancy-related causes.

Let's recommit ourselves to building a healthcare system where every mother can give birth safely and with dignity.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. KENNETH JOHN BROWN

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

Mr. KENNEDY of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Dr. Kenneth John Brown, a marine, teacher, husband, and man of deep faith who recently passed away at 102 years old.

Ken Brown was just 20 when he landed on Iwo Jima, where he proudly served his country. He came home, started a family, earned his doctorate, and spent his career teaching our youth in the classroom.

He was, by every account, a man who showed up for his country, for his church, for his students, and for his family for over a century.

Mr. Speaker, lives like Ken Brown's are worth pausing to recognize. He is a reminder that one person committed to the right things can leave this world better than he found it. May his example inspire all of us to do the same.

HONORING SIERRA PACIFIC GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM

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

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the Sierra Pacific girls' basketball team for their amazing 2026 season.

This past year, the Lady Bears finished an incredible season by winning the Division II State championship, the highest CIF State division title in school history.

These student athletes have shown what is possible through teamwork, discipline, and grit. They put in long hours, battled through adversity, and continued to push themselves to be better every single day. That dedication has absolutely paid off.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the players, coaches, and families on this well-earned victory. They have made their school, community, and the Central Valley proud.

COST OF THE WAR IN IRAN

(Mr. KHANNA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iran is crushing the economy here at home. Working-class and middle-class Americans are struggling.

Today, I read that the price of gas has gone up 27 percent in just 2 weeks. Every day, we are spending \$2 billion of American money in Iran.

To put that in perspective, for 20 days in Iran, we could have free public college for every American. We could have a thousand new trade schools. We could have childcare at \$10 a day for working-class Americans.

Today, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE and I are introducing the Big Oil Wind-

fall Profits Tax Act for oil companies. They need to be paying a tax, and that money needs to go back in the pockets of ordinary Americans who are struggling at the pump.

Instead of putting more money into Iran, we need a Marshall Plan for the United States of America. The Democrats stand for America's economy first, building jobs here, childcare here, and healthcare here.

Let's focus on our people and our communities instead of draining more money to the war in the Middle East.

RECOGNIZING ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, founded in 1891, Elizabeth City State University celebrated its 135th anniversary.

As the community gathered to celebrate a convocation, Chancellor Hargrove announced MacKenzie Scott's generous \$42 million contribution to the university, the largest dollar per student enrolled gift of any HBCU of her recent gifts.

Our HBCUs are game changers. They are transforming regions and lives in northeastern North Carolina.

We are reclaiming our future and keeping the American Dream within reach.

Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful that MacKenzie Scott sees the value of educational institutions like Elizabeth City State University. Viking pride, Viking pride, Viking pride.

□ 1220

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES REQUIRING A BALANCED BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 139) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring a balanced budget for the Federal Government.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 139

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in

Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein). That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States:

“ARTICLE —

“SECTION 1. Total expenditures for a year shall not exceed the average annual receipts collected in the three prior years, adjusted in proportion to the changes in the population of citizens of the United States and inflation. Total expenditures shall include all expenditures of the United States except those for payment of debt, and receipts shall include all receipts of the United States except those derived from borrowing.

“SECTION 2. Congress may by a roll call vote of two-thirds of each House provide by law for specific expenditures in excess of the limit in section 1.

“SECTION 3. Congress may by a roll call vote provide by law for specific expenditures in excess of the limit in section 1 for any year in which a declaration of war is in effect.

“SECTION 4. Any bill to levy a new tax or to increase the rate of any tax shall not become law unless approved by two-thirds of the whole number of each House of Congress by a roll call vote.

“SECTION 5. Congress shall enforce and implement this article by appropriate legislation.

“SECTION 6. This article shall take effect with the fifth year beginning after ratification.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.J. Res. 139.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today our national debt exceeds \$38 trillion and grows second by second. On a per-person basis, the national debt amounts to \$113,000 for every person living in the United States.

For generations, Congress has chosen to max out our national credit card and leave the bill to the next generation instead of having hard conversations about spending.

Families across our Nation have had these hard conversations, and they balance their budgets. The leaders of this Nation should do the same.

Americans know that debt comes with strings attached. Every dollar we spend beyond our means today is a dollar and change we must repay tomorrow. It is no different for government. The more America borrows, the more expensive every next borrowed dollar becomes.

Indeed, annual Federal spending on interest is now one of the largest line items we have. We spend more on interest than we do on Medicare. We spend more on interest than we do on national defense.

Republicans and Democrats may have different policy ideas and priorities, but surely we can all agree that a budget hamstrung by huge interest payments benefits nobody.

Our fiscal trajectory is alarming and unsustainable. Higher-than-expected interest rates or other challenges could trigger a debt spiral. It has happened to other countries throughout history.

Without changes, it will happen to us. The day of reckoning will come, and it will not be big and beautiful. It will be big and ugly.

There are two choices: spend a lot less on the future or spend a little less starting today. I choose the second option. That is why I support the balanced budget amendment. It is the only way to cement our commitment to long-term fiscal stability.

A 5-year path to balance will allow us to make prudent spending choices to gradually balance the budget and wean us from our reliance on deficit spending.

It is simple. The balanced budget amendment will restore fiscal sanity and take us off the path to an economic calamity.

But the balanced budget amendment will not merely beat back a future fiscal crisis. It will also reduce the cost of living here and now. The enormous Federal debt is currently driving up borrowing costs for all Americans. Mortgages, car payments, and student loans are all more expensive because of Congress' profligacy and irresponsibility.

We saw the disastrous effects of budget-busting deficit spending during the catastrophic 4 years of Biden-Harris rule. With the eager support of Democrats in Congress, the Biden-Harris administration approved \$4.7 trillion in new deficit spending, ultimately racking up \$8.5 trillion in new debt.

What did the average American get? The worst inflation in 40 years.

When Biden-Harris took over in January of 2021, inflation was just at 1.4 percent per annum. By the middle of the term, it exceeded 9 percent per annum.

Inflation is a tax on everyone, but we all know who it hurts the most: the poor, the working class, seniors on fixed incomes, and American families, who saw their expenses explode and their salaries stay flat.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise to oppose H.J. Res. 139, a feeble attempt by the President's budget-busting, blank-check enablers in Congress to distract America from their own staggering and historic fiscal irresponsibility.

Everyone knows they control the House. They control the Senate. They

control the White House, and they have used their total power over our Federal Government to drive our country into a deep ditch of deficits, debt, illegal tariffs, undeclared wars, and economic destruction.

After adding \$4 trillion to our national debt with their tax breaks for the super rich, every Republican in the Chamber but Representatives MASSIE and DAVIDSON voted to allow President Trump to keep spending between 1 and \$2 billion every day, not of his own money but of our money, on his unauthorized and unconstitutional war in Iran, without so much as a single vote or a single honest debate on the floor of the House.

This war of choice and aggression, which is spiraling out of control now in the Middle East, and which President Trump now calls this “little excursion,” has already cost 13 American servicemembers their lives and wounded over 200 Americans in uniform, while killing more than a thousand Iranian civilians, including 170 children at a girls' school that was bombed in the first week of Donald Trump's war.

But still our colleagues sit there passive, invertebrate, and complicit in the face of this brazen usurpation of congressional war powers, rising from their constitutional stupor only to vote “no” on our War Powers Resolution, which every self-respecting Member of the Article I branch should have voted for.

The administration reports that the first 6 days of this war cost the taxpayers \$11.3 billion, or \$1.9 billion a day.

Have Republicans come to the floor to explain why this war was necessary or to offer evidence of an imminent threat posed to the American people?

Have they asked for a special Iran war tax to demonstrate their fiscal responsibility?

No. They just put Trump's little excursion, as he calls it, on the national credit card like an impulse trip to Disney World.

But our constituents are paying through the nose for this historic folly right now, not just as taxpayers but as consumers. We have already been buffeted by Donald Trump's illegal tariffs and imbecilic trade wars against the rest of the world and the soaring cost of living under his corrupt economic policies. Now, we also have to contend with skyrocketing gasoline prices thanks to their foolish disruption of the global oil supply. Gas prices have shot up more than 25 percent since the lawless mullah theocrats of Iran shut down the Strait of Hormuz after the lawless MAGA theocrats of America bombed Iran.

Now, our Republican colleagues present a doomed proposal to deface our Constitution with the same kind of witless, self-incriminating graffiti someone recently scrawled on the exterior front wall of the Kennedy Center, which they call the Trump-Kennedy Center.

This proposed constitutional amendment pretends to address a problem that the Republicans created and that Republicans have refused to address legislatively, even though they have all the political control and all the legislative tools they need at their disposal to address it.

We don't need a balanced budget constitutional amendment. We just need a balanced budget. If you believe in a balanced budget, bring us one. Show it to us. You control the Congress. But don't start a fiscal wildfire with your out-of-control spending and then throw the Constitution into the flames, too.

If this proposed amendment were in effect today, the GOP-controlled Congress would be forced to pay for Trump's war by further cutting critical programs for America's working families.

If we gain the majority and try to repeal the trillion-dollar tax cut that they handed to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans, we would have to get a two-thirds vote in the House and a two-thirds vote in the Senate in order to engage in an act of fiscal responsibility. But if they wanted to pass another trillion-dollar tax cut for Elon Musk and the richest Americans, they would only need to get a majority vote in the House and the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, even Republicans are denouncing the gigantic, runaway deficits that result from out-of-control Republican spending and stupendously reckless Republican tax cuts for billionaires and giant corporations.

One of our GOP colleagues, Representative CHIP ROY, described their One Big Beautiful Bill Act as garbage prior to the House vote, saying: "If we're going to do the tax policy, at least do the spending policy. Have the courage and the fortitude to do what you campaign on when you're talking about balancing the dang budget."

□ 1230

Representative ROY's outrage makes sense. Republicans control the House. They control the Senate, and they control the White House. Yet they have not once balanced the Federal budget or even tried to present a balanced budget to Congress.

Their obscene, ugly, profligate law added a jaw-dropping \$4 trillion to the national debt because of their massive giveaways to billionaires and corporations, which is the true political mission on their side of the aisle.

They paid for a fraction of their profligacy by stripping health insurance and food assistance from tens of millions of working-class Americans who are now living with these Marie Antoinette policies concocted by billionaires and cyber barons throwing Great Gatsby parties at Mar-a-Lago and bulldozing the White House to build themselves one more gilded ballroom.

Now, rather than showing some discipline and hard work and reversing some of their terrible fiscal blunders from the past to propose an actual bal-

anced budget, no, they waste their time to keep the party going by inviting us to spend the day finger painting on the Constitution of the United States.

To observe the semiquincentennial of the country, they want us to use our Constitution to make them do what they claim they want to do but refuse to do at a time when they possess all the power they need to do it.

With the same foresight and expert planning, the White House has used in their chaotic, forever war in Iran, they will put our government into a fiscal straitjacket forever to cover up for their gilded incompetence and misplaced priorities.

It would mean, for example, that a responsible leader, like Franklin D. Roosevelt or Bill Clinton, would no longer have the flexibility to deal with economic crises created by Republicans like Herbert Hoover or Calvin Coolidge or George W. Bush.

The simple truth is that we don't need a constitutional amendment to balance the budget or have responsible fiscal policies.

They have got one-party control of every branch of government. They have never stopped talking about balanced budgets.

Why don't they just bring us one? That is all we need to do.

However, billionaire rip-off artists like Elon Musk or Peter Thiel don't get rich off balanced budgets. They get rich when the GOP opens the spigots of taxpayer money in Federal Government contracts and giveaways for billionaires and the high-flying, rent-seeking corporate class.

Republicans have run up historic corrupt deficits in this Congress and have never once submitted a single balanced budget. We don't need a constitutional amendment to force the majority to do the right thing. We need a new majority. Republicans may as well introduce a constitutional amendment saying that Federal agents shouldn't shoot American citizens in the face for exercising their First or Second Amendment rights, or a constitutional amendment saying Federal agents shouldn't shoot someone 10 times for lawfully carrying a firearm in Minneapolis.

Mr. Speaker, you don't need a constitutional amendment to respect the law, and you don't need a constitutional amendment to do the right thing for the American people. You just need a new majority, and, Mr. Speaker, it is coming.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to oppose this foolish diversionary legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, histrionics and misdirection won't cover the historical hypocrisy of the reckless spending of Democrats who now even choose to keep parts of the government shut down.

Under the Biden administration, the national debt grew by an unprecedented—unprecedented—\$8.5 trillion.

By the way, this used to be a bipartisan issue. When the gentleman mentioned Bill Clinton, I think: Yeah, that is the last time everybody came together from both parties that actually produced a balanced budget.

The gentleman asks: Well, why don't Republicans do it now?

It is because we would like to invite the other side to do it with us. We would like to invite the other side to do it with us, but they don't want to do it with us.

In fact, the gentleman just basically announced that he would like to repeal the tax act and give us the largest tax increase in national history.

What did we get from the runaway spending of Joe Biden?

When Biden-Harris took over in January, inflation was at 1.4 percent. By the middle of the term it was over 9 percent. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act will reduce debt to GDP, flip primary deficits into surpluses by 2034, and reduce the deficit by about \$4.5 trillion relative to the policy baseline prior to enactment, all of this while averting the largest tax hike in American history that my colleague across the aisle basically just announced they are going to enact upon the American people if they become the majority.

Democrats have proposed radical bills that far exceed the alleged cost of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Let us see what they have done. The Green New Deal will cost \$93 trillion over 10 years. That is theirs. Their Medicare for All proposal will cost \$32 trillion over 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, forgive me if I think they are projecting a bit on this one here. The simple truth is a balanced budget amendment would hold both parties accountable.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HARRIS).

Mr. HARRIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, all Americans understand something very clear. We don't have a revenue problem with the Federal Government. We have a spending problem.

Congress has the power of the purse, but we have failed to exercise such authority responsibly. Our national debt currently stands as of this morning I understand at \$39 trillion, which equals over \$113,000 per citizen. This number grows as I speak and will not stop without radical action from Congress.

We have borrowed our children's futures to pay for programs we cannot afford, putting this country on the path to financial ruin. The only way forward is to set guardrails to ensure Congress can no longer spend money it does not have.

This balanced budget amendment to our Constitution simply prohibits total spending from exceeding the average

tax revenue collected in the 3 years prior.

While critics may argue that reducing spending will somehow harm the economy, this amendment allows Congress 5 years to adapt to the new requirements. The amendment also sets a two-third majority voting requirement for any new taxes to prevent politicians from taking more of your money to spend rather than doing the hard work of fine-tuning our budget. Despite what some opponents might say, there is no way to tax our way out of this situation.

As I said at the beginning, all of America knows: There is a spending problem, not a revenue problem.

Mr. Speaker, I urge full support of this amendment. It is past time to balance our budget.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the gentleman from Arizona has conceded that the last time we had a balanced budget was under President Bill Clinton, the elected Democratic President for two terms who turned over a surplus of hundreds of billions of dollars to his successor in office. Compare that to President Trump who has been President for a total of around 5½ years and has added one-quarter of the national debt from George Washington all the way to today. One-quarter of that has come from Donald Trump himself. Mr. Speaker, look not at what they say but at what they do. That is because it is the Democrats who have always been the party of fiscal responsibility. Like they are doing in their Iran war right now, they are spending us into oblivion without even coming to Congress to get the war declared. It is unauthorized—much less telling us how they are going to pay for it other than putting it on a credit card for our children and our children's children to pay for many generations into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I oppose this dangerous, dishonest, and undemocratic resolution.

It is dangerous because it would require shredding the social safety net and gutting vital investments in healthcare, infrastructure, and public safety.

It is dishonest because the same Republicans who hold all the levers of power can pass a balanced budget any time they want, but instead they pass tax cuts for billionaires, creating trillions of dollars in deficits.

It is fundamentally undemocratic because it bakes in policy choices that should be the decision of future Congresses. Each Congress, elected by the people, should decide the contours of its own budget, but this resolution requires a two-thirds majority to raise taxes but only a simple majority to cut taxes. That puts a thumb on the scale for massive spending cuts rather than ensuring that billionaires pay their fair share.

If my Republican colleagues believe so strongly in a balanced budget, then they should pass one. However, this resolution, which will never become law, is nothing more than a press release that lets them pretend to care about deficits without doing the hard work of actually legislating. Vote “no.”

□ 1240

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I find that the argument that is presented by the gentleman from Maryland seems delusional at best—delusional at best.

This amendment doesn't target programs. It targets overspending. Congress must live within the revenue Americans already provide, and that is about \$5.5 trillion a year. The two-thirds threshold applies to tax hikes, not program cuts. Receipts have been stable for decades. Spending is what is out of control, and they fail to acknowledge it.

What is delusional is for the Democrats to have the audacity to say that they are the party of fiscal responsibility when they are trying to impose the Green New Deal, \$93 trillion over 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CLYDE), my friend.

Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my friend, Representative ANDY BIGGS, proposing a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.

I was a proud cosponsor of this Republic-saving resolution, and I am proud to support it on the floor today.

I also thank Speaker JOHNSON for bringing this resolution to the floor and fulfilling a promise that was made when we passed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

As our national debt rapidly approaches \$39 trillion, Washington is long overdue for a heavy dose of fiscal responsibility. It is not just irresponsible anymore. It is a national disgrace, and it is time to put an end to it.

To put our debt into perspective, this year, the Federal Government expects to bring in just over \$5.1 trillion in revenue but plans to spend almost \$7.1 trillion. That is almost a \$2 trillion deficit. Nearly \$1 trillion of that spending goes to purely pay interest payments—no principal, purely interest payments—providing no new services, no investment, no return.

If this were a private business, no bank would keep lending it money, yet this is how our Federal Government operates today.

This trajectory is unsustainable. Global markets will not finance U.S. deficits indefinitely. When confidence in our ability to repay fades, we risk a true sovereign debt crisis—collapsed pensions, failing banks, and shuttered Federal programs.

Despite Democratic claims to the contrary, our debt crisis stems from unchecked spending, not a lack of revenue. Without serious reform, we face two damaging options: either, one, print more money, which fueled the Biden-Harris inflation surge; or, two, borrow more, which raises interest rates and slows growth.

Notably, my home State of Georgia must, by law, operate with a balanced budget, so why not our Federal Government? I have told my constituents that I aim to bring north Georgia values to Washington, and fiscal sanity is at the top of that list.

As a fiscal hawk and a member of both the Budget and Appropriations Committees, I look forward to voting “yes,” and I implore all of my colleagues to do the same. Let's pass this balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Yes, it is unchecked Federal spending by President Trump, who is spending up to \$2 billion a day on an undeclared, unauthorized, and unconstitutional war in Iran.

Our colleagues won't utter a peep about it, and they won't bring us a balanced budget, but they will bring us a balanced budget constitutional amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, from the same folks who brought us \$4.7 trillion in additional Federal debt and who worship the “king of debt,” Donald Trump, as he describes himself, they present this unbalanced budget amendment.

Apparently, this proposal, which reeks of hypocrisy, is designed by those who gave us so much more debt to protect us from them doing even more harm. However, I think it really should be known as the protect our billionaire buddies act because that is what it is really designed to do: to prevent a future Congress from ever demanding a fair contribution from the billionaires and the multinational corporations that pay a tax rate lower than that for a teacher or a nurse, and to shift our jobs overseas.

Our loophole-filled tax code has more holes than swiss cheese. By imposing this first-in-history supermajority requirement before any tax can be increased, they prevent plugging those holes and doing anything about the injustice and inequities in our tax code that shift the burden onto working people and small businesses.

These Republicans aren't really deficit hawks. They are war hawks these days, and they created a special loophole in their own amendment for war, to ease the funding of the war machine. With Trump in office, we can expect more wars wherever his latest whim and ego take him, endangering all of us.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing balanced about this amendment. Let's reject it.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, during the gentleman from Texas' recent comments, so recently given, the national debt rose by \$125,000. Just keep that in mind.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON), my friend and chairman of the Budget Committee.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend and classmate from Arizona for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, let's pause for a brief moment of intellectual honesty. Both parties have failed. This institution has failed. We have failed our country.

We have jeopardized our economy, our security, and our leadership in the world. Worst of all, we have compromised on our children's future and the blessing of their inheritance of freedom and opportunity.

We have failed. That is why we are talking about a constitutional amendment to impose fiscal responsibility on a body politic that has not done that, that has not mustered the political will to do that.

We have a national debt per GDP that exceeds World War II levels of debt, an annual deficit that is larger than both the defense and nondefense discretionary budgets, with 50 cents or greater on every dollar that we borrow up to \$2 trillion going to service our interest payments.

Half of what we borrow, a trillion dollars, is more than what we spend on defense. Then, there is this ominous forecast by CBO that even at \$39 trillion today, where we are teetering on a potential sovereign debt crisis, we will add \$180 trillion to the national debt in the 30-year out. If that is not unacceptable to everybody, I don't know what is.

If we can't concede to the fact that this body politic does not have the political will to address it, to rein in the spending that is driving this unsustainable debt trajectory that will bankrupt our country and our children's future, then we must support this forcing mechanism. Force us to do what the American people have to do. Force us to do what State and local governments do.

Here is another stunning, and startling for some, but for all a sobering fact: We won't even get a simple majority vote today.

What shall we do? We should look to Article V of the Constitution, where the sovereign States and we the people can petition their government for another path to amend the Constitution. Guess what. They have done that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AMODEI of Nevada). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, they had the requisite applications to have an Article V convention of the States, to rein in us, the knuckleheads that refuse to accept that it is not a Demo-

cratic problem or a Republican problem. It is an institutional problem that persists and will destroy the greatest Nation in human history.

Let's look to the States, and let's call that convention like we should have done in the 1970s and 1980s. Let's let them rein us in, restore fiscal sanity in their Nation's Capital, and reverse the curse that looms large over this country.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that refreshing intervention in the debate, but I think, as the President Clinton example demonstrates, we can have and we have had the political will at different points to balance the budget.

It is not politically impossible, but it does start with some people taking some courageous votes.

For example, let's vote on whether or not we should be at war in Iran, costing the American people \$1 billion to \$2 billion a day. If you can't even have the courage to decide that we will exercise our warmaking powers and our power to declare war under Article I, Section 8, and our spending power to do it, then nothing will save you, I am sorry.

You can pass a constitutional amendment saying don't shoot people in the face, but still, you have to tell ICE not to shoot people in the face. You have to demonstrate your commitment to actually making that policy real.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), a very distinguished legislator.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about that Clinton budget.

Clinton's budget passed when the deficit was \$290 billion. The Republicans fought it tooth and nail, and didn't deliver a single vote on that budget. When it finally got down to about \$10 billion, the Republicans jumped on the bandwagon just before it was going to balance, whether they agreed to it or not. They were prancing around like peacocks, like it was their idea all the while.

□ 1250

They could get credit for ten of the \$290 billion of Clinton's deficit reduction. For years, Republicans have been talking about reducing the deficit and doing nothing about it.

If you look at what they did last year, they added trillions of dollars to the debt in that big, ugly bill. In fact, every Republican administration since Nixon has made the deficit worse and delivered a worse deficit to their Democratic successors and every Democrat since Kennedy has produced a better deficit.

The reason we have a deficit today is because the Democrats haven't been able to clean up the mess as quick as the Republicans can make it. Now they come up with a so-called balanced budget amendment. It doesn't produce a balanced budget. In fact, it will make it more difficult to produce a balanced

budget. It requires a two-thirds vote to pass the budget.

Let's get serious. You are not going to balance the budget cold turkey in 1 year without tax increases. We are talking about a two-thirds vote. Which is more likely: Balancing the budget cold turkey or having a two-thirds vote without any limit to how bad the deficit gets?

I think people have been around here long enough to know that it is going to be the two-thirds vote, and it is going to be a horrendous deficit. Republicans have used their time to enact massive tax cuts for big corporations and the top 1 percent. They have exploded the deficit in the process. To balance the budget, Congress has to make the tough decisions to actually balance the budget. It is not going to balance itself.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment will actually make it more difficult to do, and that is why we need to defeat this amendment.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I will set the record straight on that history. It was very colorful but a little bit inaccurate. If you remember, it was the '96 budget that was balanced. It was balanced with all the Republicans and a plurality of Democrats. It would have been nice if it would have been unanimous, wouldn't it? It would have been nice, but we couldn't get there.

Perhaps all the rhetoric you have heard today is political partisanship. It is posturing from that side of the aisle over there and maybe some from us because it is a bipartisan problem.

I think the previous speaker just said what are the odds of us ever just doing it on our own. That is right. Hell froze over once about 30 years ago. Are we going to wait 30 years again until the structural deficit exceeds \$5 trillion a year when we actually have a national debt that is somewhere north of \$100 trillion?

We are not going to last that long. We need to do this now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ONDER), my friend.

Mr. ONDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this amendment to the U.S. Constitution to require the Federal Government to maintain a balanced budget.

Republicans have warned for years about the dangers of unchecked Federal spending, but because of the Biden administration's unprecedented spending spree and Democrats' ongoing unwillingness to return spending to pre-COVID levels, we are now at a defining crossroad.

Within a few years, the debt held by the public will surpass every previous record in our Nation's history, even levels reached during World War II.

Two years ago for the first time in our Nation's history, we began spending more on net interest on our debt

than our entire defense budget. Interest has become the fastest-growing category of Federal spending and is now the second largest expense.

When we spend more on servicing past debt than we spend on veterans, education, and transportation combined, it is clear our national priorities are dangerously off course.

A constitutional amendment is necessary because previous attempts to curb spending are not working. Congress' budget resolution process is routinely ignored. Pay-as-you-go laws are routinely waived. The debt ceiling has been referred to as a "bad joke," and the results are now catching up to us.

Amending the Constitution is, indeed, a drastic measure and should only be employed in the most extreme circumstances, but at almost \$40 trillion in national debt, that is exactly where we are today. It is time to end the irresponsible spending spree.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this balanced budget amendment.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished former majority leader of the House.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the American people obviously have to be so confused about this debate because one side claims they are bringing us an amendment, the balanced budget amendment, and their history has been—and I have been here for some time, but Ronald Reagan increased the budget by 189 percent.

Why do I say Ronald Reagan did it? Because he could have vetoed any spending bill, and we would not have overridden that veto.

In 2001, we cut taxes and were told by our Republican colleagues it would raise additional moneys. It did not.

Then some, particularly those who are claiming we made a deal and we are keeping it to get this constitutional amendment on the floor—what was the deal for? The deal was to vote for the big, bad bill, which created \$4.7 trillion of additional deficit.

That is a tough way to want to balance the budget. We have a paying-for problem. That is the discipline, a paying-for problem, not a spending or revenue problem. What we have is a paying problem.

If we would pay for things, which presumably this constitutional amendment would seek, then we would not have this continuing deficit, but you and I both know we are not going to do that, and you haven't done it. We haven't done it.

JODEY ARRINGTON is right to that extent. This is a problem where we do not recognize the real problems of why we are so deeply in debt, and we pretend cutting nickels and dimes will make a difference.

Now, they are big nickels and dimes. I get that, but the fact of the matter is, it is dishonest in my view for me or anybody else to come to the floor and

say: I want to balance the budget and then vote for the largest creation of debt ever on this floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge defeat of this amendment and defeat of the suspension bill.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. I think in one sense he is right on the money. Both parties can share in the blame of this massive, structural national debt we have, but I will point out that in 2001 when taxes were cut, something happened in 2001 which changed the trajectory of the entire Nation, and we are still dealing with the fallout.

You will remember it. We called that 9/11, right? Some things happened in 2001, which changed our spending. That is important to recall.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY), my friend.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, welcome to bankruptcy theater.

Mr. Speaker, I am fascinated by my good friend on the other side of the aisle telling me that they are the party of fiscal responsibility. Let me just say, as others have said, including the former majority leader, that this is an institutional problem because it is, indeed, that.

Let me just make clear to the American people when they say there is not a dime's worth of difference between Republicans and Democrats on spending, to a certain extent they are right. However, the Republicans are using a handcart on this railroad and the Democrats are on some kind of bullet train on this train to hell.

As much as we have spent, and there are many in this room who have fought against this spending, I can't imagine how much worse it would be if we had to go to the Democrats for a vote. That is the problem.

□ 1300

Mr. Speaker, some say that, well, it is never going to become law. Why will it never become law, Mr. Chairman? There are seven Democrats in the Senate that refuse to vote to balance the budget ever. It is going to pass here maybe, but it definitely won't pass there. That is why it will never become law.

All the people I know that I represent have to balance their budget. I will say I went to the President. I said: Mr. President, we are spending too much money. You ran on cutting spending. I ran on cutting spending. We are spending too much money.

He said to me: You are right, SCOTT; but I can't get them to vote for less.

He is right about that. My Democrat colleagues tax and spend and tax and spend, and our folks are willing to spend without taxing enough. I am not saying that we should tax more. The American people are taxed enough, plenty. We are overspending and con-

tinuing to overspend. When I got here, I think the individual debt per person was like about \$40,000. What is it now, \$130,000?

Mr. Speaker, this place cannot control itself. The American people are going to have to step in. This allows them the opportunity. We ought to give it to them.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for offering the amendment. I thank leadership for honoring their promise.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am charmed by the story that the gentleman from Pennsylvania just told us about having gone to the White House to talk to the President and telling the President he is spending too much. I am just recording the story as it was presented to us.

He said to the President: You are spending too much.

That is the understatement of the 21st century. He is spending \$1 billion to \$2 billion a day on an undeclared, unauthorized, unconstitutional war in Iran. He has given us one-quarter of all the debt that has been created in the United States from George Washington until today. That is under the Trump administration.

The gentleman represents that he spoke to the President and said: You are spending too much.

The President's response was: I know we are, but I can't get them to stop spending more.

Who is "them"? Was that an implied critique of the Democrats? They control the House. They control the Senate. They control the White House. Who is President Trump in that vignette referring to? Is he referring to the Republicans? He must be because they are the ones who are controlling the Chamber, as they are proud to tell us. At least until the end of this year, they are the ones doing it.

If Republicans think they support a balanced budget amendment, why don't they start with a balanced budget? Just bring us one balanced budget. That is all that we need from them.

Mr. Speaker, they have taken what is a math problem and tried to turn it into a constitutional problem. Every family in America knows they have got to make their expenses come within their means and within their resources. Every family does that. Republicans don't want to do that. They want to turn what is a simple math problem or an economic problem into a constitutional problem.

To celebrate America's semiquincentennial, 250th anniversary, for the first time they want to say that what we need to do is to amend our Constitution to make us do what we want to do but we can't do. We don't have the will and political courage to do it.

It was offered by the majority itself. We have got the will on our side to do it. President Clinton did it, and we will fight to try to make our resources match up with our expenses.

We have already heard that their side of the aisle is looking for a military budget of \$1.5 trillion for next year. They are looking for \$1.5 trillion for the war budget, for Secretary of War Hegseth. They want \$1.5 trillion. That is where they are headed: endless wars in the Middle East, undeclared wars of choice, wars of aggression, not authorized by Congress.

None of them will even utter a peep about it today. That is where we are hemorrhaging money in America. Instead, they want to talk about a hypothetical pie-in-the-sky constitutional amendment that no other generation of Americans has ever needed before in order to do the right thing.

What is their loyalty and fidelity to the Constitution? Let's say they got their amendment. Right now, Article I, Section 8 says that Congress must declare war. It is not the President, not Donald Trump, not JD VANCE, not TULSI GABBARD, or somebody in their chat group. Congress must declare war.

What do they do? They do nothing. They just let the President go ahead and enter into his wars of whim and caprice, vanity, conceit, imperial ambition, whatever. They do nothing. They won't even have a vote to support it or oppose it. They won't have an honest debate about it.

That is the war power, which Madison said was one of the essential powers Congress must have, because the kings were always plunging their countries into wars of conceit and vanity, imperial plunder and corruption. So it had to be vested in the Representatives of the people, but they won't follow that.

Mr. Speaker, how about the spending power? Exclusively Congress has the power to spend money. It has to arise here in the House of Representatives. We have the power to spend, and we have the power to tax. The administration has been struck down dozens of times for abusing our spending power, and they won't say a word about it.

What about the taxing power? Donald Trump became the first President in American history to unilaterally impose tariffs, which is a huge tax on our people. It is not on other countries and not on China. It is on us. We told him it was unconstitutional. They wouldn't do anything, with the exception of Representative MASSIE from Kentucky, who is the conscience of the Republican Conference—although I don't mean to damn him with faint praise—maybe a handful of others opposed the tariffs. They all went along for the ride, even though we have the power to impose tariffs. It has always been Congress that has established the framework for tariffs, not the President. We can't make it up as we go along, but that is what he did.

Of course, he was struck down even by the Supreme Court that has been sliced and diced and gerrymandered to his advantage. Even that Supreme Court struck it down on a 6-3 vote, but we hear nothing from our colleagues about it.

What about the First Amendment? There shall be no law abridging the freedom of speech. Yet, this is the most anti-free speech administration the United States has ever seen. Donald Trump's chairman of the FCC the other day said that broadcast licensees, television stations, better watch out what they say about the war.

I can't think of a more naked violation of the First Amendment than the government threatening to revoke broadcast licenses of media entities who disagree with the President's policy, especially about something as important to the American people as war.

They don't utter a single word about it. That is their demonstrated fidelity to the Constitution. They are now saying: Yes, we are not balancing the budget. We haven't presented a single balanced budget. If we are made to do it through the Constitution, we will follow the Constitution.

Fool me once, well, blame on you. Fool me twice, blame on me. We are not falling for that.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague from Arizona for a spirited discussion of this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I will take the example offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) of President Clinton. We could take many historical episodes, but we have time only for one.

President Clinton was determined to balance the budget, and he returned hundreds of billions of dollars in a surplus to his successor in office. He worked with the Republican-controlled Congress and led them along to eliminate the deficit.

The government ran a huge surplus without the aid of a contrived balanced budget constitutional amendment. Clinton bequeathed to his successor, George W. Bush, famously a budget surplus of \$236 billion, which Bush and the GOP Congress quickly squandered on tax cuts for the richest people in the country and then the staggeringly costly forever wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, what do you know? History repeats itself. If it doesn't repeat itself exactly, it certainly rhymes. What do we have now? They have added \$4 trillion to our debt with their massive giveaways to the richest people in the country and the richest corporations.

What are we in now despite all of Donald Trump's campaign promises? We are in another undeclared, unauthorized, forever war of regime change, although it is not really a regime change war because the President obviously doesn't care about democracy or human rights in Iran any more than he cares about democracy or human rights in America. In any event, we are

there. We are in that war, spending \$1 billion to \$2 billion a day.

What do our colleagues do to try to deal with this fiscal catastrophe? They offer a balanced budget constitutional amendment, saying this is a bipartisan problem we are in. It is a pox on everybody's house. Let's just amend the Constitution to make us do what we really want to do but we can't do because we don't have the political resolve and the courage to do it.

□ 1310

At the same time, they don't have the political resolve and courage to exercise Congress' powers over war. They don't have the resolve and courage to exercise Congress' power over spending or over taxes or over our ability to regulate commerce domestically or nationally. They have given it all away to the President of the United States, when we are the Article I branch. We have the power. We can do it if we are willing to exercise it.

What is the President's power? It is very simple: to take care that the laws are faithfully executed.

If we pass a balanced budget, the President will have to remain within it. If we are going to say that we are going to have a debate about that war, that he can't just run off to war and start plundering the public fisc and spending billions of dollars of the people's money, he can't do it. Yet, our colleagues in the majority will not exercise any kind of discipline or institutional self-respect.

Mr. Speaker, the Framers of the Constitution thought that people in Congress would stand up for congressional power, just like the President would stand up for Presidential power and would always try to aggrandize the power of the executive branch, and the Supreme Court would stand up for the power of judicial review and what the courts do.

Yet, they thought that, as Madison put it in Federalist 10, ambition would counteract ambition. We would stand up for ourselves.

Our colleagues in the majority will not stand up for congressional powers under the Constitution of the United States, so they want to finger paint some more on the Constitution by adding their balanced budget constitutional amendment.

We don't need a balanced budget constitutional amendment, which will be a fiscal straitjacket in times like COVID-19 or times of war, where Congress needs the flexibility. All we need is for the majority to bring us a balanced budget, show some fiscal discipline, and show some fiscal resolve. Then, we can take it seriously.

Otherwise, it just seems like a massive, fantastical distraction from what is actually taking place in America today and on Earth, which is we have a President who is bulldozing everything from the White House itself to the Bill of Rights to the separation of powers.

What do we have on the other side of the aisle? It is nothing but legislative

accomplices in all of this fiscal and constitutional irresponsibility. They want to take a simple math problem and displace everybody's attention by trying to turn it into a constitutional issue.

Mr. Speaker, that wasn't the handiwork of James Madison. That wasn't the handiwork of Alexander Hamilton, who took balanced budgets very seriously. They didn't think that America needed it.

If the political leadership is not rising to the task, then we need new political leadership. If this congressional majority can't do it, let's elect a new congressional majority, but let's not throw the Constitution into the fire with all of the other constitutional principles that have been set ablaze by this administration.

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

Mr. BIGGS of Arizona. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, hyperbole and sophistry right here on the floor of the House from politicians, who would have think it? Really, who would have think it? I get a big kick out of that.

Do you know what the national debt was when Barack Obama became President? It was \$8 trillion. Do you know what it was when he left? It was \$20 trillion.

Do you know what the gentleman from Maryland did? He defended every wild-eyed, anticonstitutional program and every abuse of the First Amendment under the Biden administration. When you had reporters being castigated, investigated, and prosecuted, not a peep from him. Not a peep, but, boy golly, he is going to come up here and attack President Trump. That is what he is going to do, and then he has the audacity to talk about abasement—abasement of this body, and to say that we have absolute control over all three bodies.

I wish we did. That would mean that we had 60 Republican Senators in the Senate. Quite frankly, I have a major problem with that because that is a supermajoritarian body under the cloture rule. That wasn't contemplated by the Founders either. They thought it would be a simple majority.

The rationale for his argument is that James Madison and Alexander Hamilton wouldn't have said it, but do you know what? James Madison and Alexander Hamilton would have said that we are not going to have direct elections of Senators. They are going to be elected by their State legislature.

That rationale doesn't make sense in this argument. It is specious and weak. That is the rationale that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are throwing at us today.

The gentleman said that we have never needed a balanced budget amendment before. Perhaps he is correct, but we sure have a massive structural deficit today. We have a structural deficit because, even though we bring in a

record amount—a record amount—of revenue, we keep spending more. This body doesn't have the political will.

That is the point that our side has been making. We don't have the political will, not on our side or the minority's side. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to turn this constantly into a partisan affair. I am saying that both sides have recklessly spent too much—both sides.

Madam Speaker, do you know who is punished by it? It is not us. It is not us. It is the American people. It is the American people who are taking the burden of feckless, blind spending and reckless spending.

Even if you get the record amount of revenue, this body is not going to make a concomitant amount of spending. It is going to spend more. It will always spend more. We will always spend more. Only if we have a balanced budget amendment, which, by the way, used to be a bipartisan issue.

It used to be a bipartisan issue on the national debt and deficit. Both parties' national security leaders used to say that that is our number one security threat. I mean for 25 years, a generation or more.

Madam Speaker, we don't hear that today from my colleagues. It is too bad. I wish we did. Man, I wish we did. I wish we could both say: Let's put this together. It is delusional. It is delusional. The fact of the matter is that what was spent during COVID—massive amounts, literally trillions of dollars—without any productive capacity to go with it fueled the Biden-era inflation, and we are dealing with that today.

Oddly enough, the inflation rate under President Trump is back down to almost what it was when he left. That is the reality.

How about my Democratic colleagues saying that we are going to put in the Green New Deal program. Remember that one? Yes. It was \$93 trillion worth of spending with no pay-for over a 10-year period. It was \$93 trillion.

Medicare for all, \$33 trillion over a 10-year period, no pay-for.

Madam Speaker, do you know what the pay-for is? We are going to print more money. We are going to print more money, and do you know what that does? It devalues your currency. By the way, the valuation of currency is the classic definition of "inflation" because you can't buy as much with the same dollar. You are always going to need more.

People think that we have seen hyperinflation. We haven't seen hyperinflation. Do you know when we are going to see hyperinflation? We are going to see hyperinflation when the bond markets start saying: Guess what. You guys are effectively bankrupt, and we are not lending you any more money.

That is when the big calamity hits. When that hits, there won't be anybody here who can say that this is a partisan issue. Both parties will be at fault.

I pray to God that both sides here today will vote for this amendment. Get it to the people. Let the people actually impose upon us what 49 States have, and that is a requirement for a balanced budget. If we couldn't print our own money, we would have already collapsed.

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

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 139, a straightforward, commonsense balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have consistently supported solutions to address Washington's top-down, one-size-fits-all approach to spending. For decades, Washington has spent beyond its means, avoided difficult decisions, and relied on borrowing to fund an ever-expanding government. That approach has proven unsustainable, and today the consequences are impossible to ignore.

History has shown that we cannot afford to wait any longer. In 1995, when our national debt was \$4.9 trillion, the Senate failed to pass a balanced budget amendment, by a single vote.

The last time this house debated this important measure was in April 2018—just 8 years ago, but that was before a global pandemic, and our debt reached \$21 trillion. This measure was critical then and is essential today with our national debt now exceeding \$38 trillion, and annual deficits are approaching \$2 trillion.

This is not abstract math. Rising debt means higher interest costs, fewer resources available for national priorities, and a growing burden for future generations. Working families, farmers, and small businesses in central Arkansas live within their means. They make responsible choices every day about spending, saving, and prioritizing their needs. The federal government should operate with the same level of discipline.

Yet Washington cannot get its excessive spending under control. Addressing this issue is long overdue. A balanced budget amendment is just one tool to get our fiscal house in order. Its purpose is simple: restore accountability and discipline to a broken budget process. It would require Congress to confront tradeoffs honestly, set clear priorities, and stop treating unlimited borrowing as a substitute for responsible policymaking.

Passing this sends a clear message that Congress is serious about reining in spending and putting our Nation on a sustainable fiscal path. Our Nation must spend within its means.

I will continue to support efforts that restore fiscal discipline, strengthen our economy, and ensure a stronger future for our children and grandchildren.

□ 1320

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 139.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

DEPORTING FRAUDSTERS ACT OF 2026

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, Pursuant to House Resolution 1115, I call up the bill (H.R. 1958) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify that aliens who have been convicted of defrauding the United States Government or the unlawful receipt of public benefits are inadmissible and deportable, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 1958

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Deporting Fraudsters Act of 2026".

SEC. 2. INADMISSIBILITY AND DEPORTABILITY RELATED TO DEFAUDING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OR THE UNLAWFUL RECEIPT OF PUBLIC BENEFITS.

(a) INADMISSIBILITY.—Section 212(a)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(J) DEFAUDING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OR THE UNLAWFUL RECEIPT OF PUBLIC BENEFITS.—Any alien who has been convicted of, who admits having committed, or who admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of—

"(i) an offense described in section 15 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2024) (relating to violations of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits);

"(ii) an offense described in section 208 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 408) (relating to fraud involving social security account numbers or social security cards);

"(iii) an offense described in section 666 of title 18, United States Code (relating to theft or bribery concerning programs receiving Federal funds);

"(iv) an offense described in section 1028 of title 18, United States Code (relating to fraud and related activity in connection with identification documents, authentication features, and information);

"(v) an offense described in section 1031 of title 18, United States Code (relating to major fraud against the United States);

"(vi) an offense described under chapter 63 of title 18, United States Code (relating to mail fraud and other fraud offenses);

"(vii) an offense described in section 371 of title 18, United States Code (relating to conspiracy to commit offense or to defraud United States);

"(viii) any other offense that involves defrauding the United States Government or the unlawful receipt of a Federal public benefit (as such term is defined in section 401(c) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1611) or a State or local public benefit (as such term is defined in section 411(c) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1621)); or

"(ix) a conspiracy to commit an offense described in clause (i) through (viii), is inadmissible."

(b) DEPORTABILITY.—Section 237(a)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.

1227(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(G) DEFAUDING THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OR THE UNLAWFUL RECEIPT OF PUBLIC BENEFITS.—Any alien who has been convicted of, who admits having committed, or who admits committing acts which constitute the essential elements of—

"(i) an offense described in section 15 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2024) (relating to violations of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits);

"(ii) an offense described in section 208 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 408) (relating to fraud involving social security account numbers or social security cards);

"(iii) an offense described in section 666 of title 18, United States Code (relating to theft or bribery concerning programs receiving Federal funds);

"(iv) an offense described in section 1028 of title 18, United States Code (relating to fraud and related activity in connection with identification documents, authentication features, and information);

"(v) an offense described in section 1031 of title 18, United States Code (relating to major fraud against the United States);

"(vi) an offense described under chapter 63 of title 18, United States Code (relating to mail fraud and other fraud offenses);

"(vii) an offense described in section 371 of title 18, United States Code (relating to conspiracy to commit offense or to defraud United States);

"(viii) any other offense that involves defrauding the United States Government or the unlawful receipt of a Federal public benefit (as such term is defined in section 401(c) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1611) or a State or local public benefit (as such term is defined in section 411(c) of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1621)); or

"(ix) a conspiracy to commit an offense described in clause (i) through (viii), is deportable."

(c) INELIGIBILITY FOR ANY IMMIGRATION RELIEF.—Any alien described in subparagraph (J) of section 212(a)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(2)(J)) or subparagraph (G) of section 237(a)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1227(a)(2)) shall be ineligible for any relief under the immigration laws (as such term is defined in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101)), including under section 2242 of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (112 Stat. 2681).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1115, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, printed in the bill, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or their respective designees.

The gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1958.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, for years, Republicans on the Committee on the Judiciary have sounded the alarm about the costs of the Democrats' open-border policies on our schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, food banks, law enforcement, and American wages.

What we are now discovering is that many within these populations immediately set out to rob our country of literally billions of dollars paid by American taxpayers to help needy Americans.

Worse still, evidence is now emerging from whistleblowers that this was done while Democratic officials in sanctuary jurisdictions deliberately turned a blind eye to industrial-scale larceny in exchange for political support.

We have already heard from TSA agents who watched helplessly as Somali immigrants brazenly shipped millions of dollars out of this country in their carry-on luggage while alarms to the Biden-Harris administration were simply ignored.

We have heard audio recordings of these criminals discussing with Minnesota's Democratic attorney general how they had each other's backs. We have heard whistleblowers tell us their warnings to Minnesota's Governor, resulting in retaliation against them, but no actions to stop the fraudsters.

One estimate is that the Minnesota scandal accounts for some \$9 billion of stolen funds. As investigators begin turning over rocks in other Democratic sanctuary jurisdictions, like California and New York, this may prove just the tip of an iceberg of corruption.

There is more. Although this fraud may well end up implicating thousands of illegal aliens allowed into our country and then protected from prosecution by the Democrats, Social Security fraud and other fraud offenses implicate literally millions. Yet, our ability to remove such fraudsters is hamstrung by the courts, sometimes for decades.

In one case from 2017, the Board of Immigration Appeals held that an alien was not removable from the United States for having committed an aggravated felony despite the alien's fraud conviction for \$169,000 in food stamps theft.

In another case, an alien was placed in removal proceedings in 2005 while he remained until at least 2013, when his case finally made its way to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit to determine whether his conviction for conspiracy to traffic in identification documents made him removable from the United States.

Another fraudster spent 2 years challenging his removal proceedings even though he admitted that he had received up to \$3.5 million through food stamp fraud.