

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

PRIORITIZING REINING IN OUR NATIONAL DEBT

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. MOORE of Utah was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.)

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In 10 years, the deficit will be greater than every penny spent by the Federal Government between 1789 and 2023. As we celebrate our 250th, this is the time to reflect on it and to focus on it. I am going to share something tonight that is going on every single day, specifically about trying to find the opportunity for deficit reduction.

I have another colleague who will be here momentarily as well, but this is, obviously, an evergreen topic, something that we are constantly focused on, something that members of the Budget Committee, members of the Bipartisan Fiscal Forum, members of various groups that focus more heavily on this than maybe some other issues.

I am proud to count myself as part of that. I remember voting against debt ceiling increases that didn't have some type of spending reduction, even when my own side was proposing them, that didn't have some type of spending reduction, a spending cap, or even a fiscal commission. There are many solutions. It is a key aspect, and it is something that we need to reflect on.

In President Trump's first year, as we started the 119th Congress, taking that first entire year, calendar year 2025, and comparing it to calendar year 2024, a very unique thing happened: We had about \$360 billion worth of deficit reduction.

We ran an approximately \$1.8 to \$1.9 trillion deficit over the last few years, and it has gone up considerably since COVID, during President Biden's 4 years. The first year that Republicans had the White House, House, and Senate, we had an extraordinary feat of \$360 billion worth of deficit reduction.

There were spending constraints. There was restructuring of how we approached some of the student loan aspect of the budget, various elements within the entirety of the appropriations process from different agencies across the board that were pulling back and withholding some of their planned spending. That, mixed with revenues

from tariffs, created a \$360 billion deficit reduction. It doesn't get reported much, doesn't get talked about.

A portion of that tariff money after the SCOTUS ruling will be refunded back, so of that 360, there will be money going back ultimately to some of these companies that are involved in this. The world of tariff and trade policy will continue to play out where you will still get revenue to help us offset some of the deficits.

I have been critical of some of the tariff policy. I have been supportive of some of the tariff policy. I want two specific things from tariffs. I want them to be consistent. If they are going to exist, I want them to be consistent, something the companies, business folks, and families can plan on, as well as be a positive contributor to reducing deficits. I think there is an opportunity to do both of those things, and we are seeing that play out.

I am going to talk a little bit tonight about what is actually going on with one of the most important aspects of the constant churn of us reducing deficits, and that is what is taking place within some of our administrative agencies on finding fraud. I am going to share some anecdotes and some data. I look forward to doing that.

Before I do that, I have a colleague here who is going to share a brief message. I yield to the gentleman from the great State of North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, our national debt has now surpassed \$39 trillion, and every second that we fail to address it, that number continues to grow, placing an even greater burden on future generations.

Families across western North Carolina understand just a simple truth: You can't spend money that you don't have. They balance their budgets, make difficult decisions, and expect their government to do the same. Unfortunately, Washington has spent far too long doing just the opposite.

Decades of unchecked spending have left us with rising interest payments, growing deficits, and fewer resources available for the priorities that really matter.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I have worked to ensure that we are good stewards of every taxpayer dollar. That means supporting our national defense, strengthening border security, helping communities recover from disasters like Hurricane Helene, and funding the essential functions of government while still looking for every opportunity to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse.

□ 1810

Through the fiscal year 2027 appropriations process, House Republicans continued efforts to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars by identifying several savings, reducing unnecessary spending, eliminating wasteful programs, and ensuring funding is focused on the Federal Government's core responsibilities.

We didn't create a \$39 trillion debt overnight, and we are not going to solve it overnight, but every responsible spending decision moves us in the right direction.

The American people deserve a government that lives within its means, just as they do every day. It is time to restore fiscal responsibility, reduce the deficit, and leave the next generation with a far stronger financial future.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his message and focus on very important issues.

Mr. Speaker, as I was mentioning, there is no question that we have a major issue in front of us. Over the last 18 months, I have gone back home and had a chance to share a lot of the specifics as to the gains that we are making from the reductions. I want to just highlight some of this.

Our Federal debt continues to grow unsustainably, and major trust fund programs face looming insolvency. To add insult to injury here, there is rampant fraud across our country.

If we want to get a handle on our national debt, then we also need to address what I will call the invisible tax on the American people. The data is staggering. The Government Accountability Office estimates that the U.S. Government loses as much as \$500 billion in Federal funds every year to fraud. Half a trillion dollars is wasted because fraudsters and scammers cheat our systems. That is \$4,000 per American household every year completely wasted. If there is one thing that infuriates every American, it is the waste of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

I find that in my own life. My wife and I are budgeting. The part that is frustrating is that it is not that we don't have to spend or invest in areas, but we have to eliminate the waste. Families are working hard to play by the rules, and fraudsters are stealing hundreds of millions of dollars from childcare programs,

To address this, the House Republicans recently passed the Stop Child Care Scams Act, forcing accountability when States repeatedly fail to fix fraud and serious program violations.

Fake ghost students are draining \$180 million in financial aid that should be helping hardworking American students, so I am supporting ID verification before tax dollars to support those programs go out the door.

Our reports have exposed fraud in States like Minnesota and California. They have industrial-scale theft, and it has gone unabated for years. Even States like Florida have had many issues in this regard.

One-third of all hospices in the entire country are in Los Angeles, and CMS estimates that at least one-half of those are fraudulent. Eight hundred of those hospices have now been suspended. The numbers I had from just a couple of months ago were that they suspended licenses of 400. They have even had a chance to do more, but they

have suspended 400 licenses and really only heard back from 12, meaning that 12 were probably running legitimate businesses.

They identified, through good data analytics, investing in targeting the right areas where we anticipate there being significant fraud, and they are taking action. If somebody reaches out and says, "Wait, what is going on? Why did you cancel our license?" if they are a legitimate business doing legitimate work, they can show that. The overwhelming majority were actually pinpointed. They suspected some level of fraud, and it appears to be very accurate.

Another anecdote that I just got recently, just this week, from a meeting with members within this agency, CMS, is that they have sent letters to the Medicare patients. Patients in hospice care are signed up for treatment with a number to show they are in hospice care. They have an opportunity to send correspondence to these folks just confirming that they have initiated hospice care.

Mr. Speaker, 15 percent have come back from States—I think the exact States were in the Southwest, California, Nevada, and, I believe, Arizona. Those three States came back with 15 percent of the people whom they were sending letters to saying, no, they are not on hospice. The majority of that was focused in this area. For some reason, the Los Angeles area went rampant in this hospice world. Ninety companies were associated with one address.

I have worked in the durable medical equipment industry before. There is equipment, call centers, and a workforce. You can't run 90 companies out of one location, Mr. Speaker, but this is what these dedicated men and women within our organizations within this administration are going out trying to find.

These are real numbers. These are real examples. This is not made up.

When I get the chance to go back and share this at home, they are really frustrated. They are also proud that this type of fraud doesn't stem from Utah. It is a moment of some recognition that States have a huge responsibility to play with respect to how these programs are implemented, and the States need to do a good job.

I am proud to say that Utah has been deemed to be very strong in this case. I am really impressed with the professionalism of what I am seeing. They continue to go and identify this. They are using good data analytics to be able to figure out where the potential might be next and go after it.

It is something that I share tonight as we highlight these issues of deficits, that this is going on daily, and as part of that first year of success of \$360 billion, this is part of it. This is the type of stuff that Americans love to see because it is wasteful and fraudulent. People need to be held accountable. That is all taking place and happening.

Just this week, the Labor Department sent a strike team to New York to crack down on unemployment insurance fraud that is costing taxpayers an estimated \$2 million a day. New York recorded more than \$750 million in improper unemployment insurance payments and \$507 million in fraudulent payments just last year.

House Republicans are focused on making sure the services get to the people who actually need them and are not wasted or stolen.

In the Ways and Means Committee, we have worked to put new guardrails on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to mitigate improper payments and ensure States are paying their fair share for this critically important program.

Empowering agencies to investigate and root out fraud and making targeted investments into fraud prevention and recovery programs is a giant step forward.

For every dollar Medicare spends on monitoring programs, the government sees almost \$25 in savings. Mr. Speaker, you will see Dr. Oz communicate this, and you will see his team communicate this. They have team members under Dr. Oz's purview who have said: I will come back and work in this job again.

They worked in the first Trump administration. They said: I will come back if we can be even more laser focused and really go after the fraud.

That was Dr. Oz's mission, and that is what his team's mission is. They do an incredible job of explaining and sharing with us the proper information. It is not hyperbole; it is not rhetoric; it is literally data. They talk about these numbers with respect to spending a dollar on these efforts, site visits, sending out communication to find out if they are truly actual patients on hospice. That takes a little bit of resources, but we are getting back a strong yield from that, \$1 for \$25 in savings.

□ 1820

For every dollar Medicare spends on monitoring programs, the government sees almost \$25 in savings. We need more programs like this to root out fraud and recover improper payments.

To that end, I am working on legislation that will allow more of the money recovered by the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program to be reinvested directly into the fraud prevention program. The areas that this money needs to be reinvested back into are the trust funds and also back into the programs that will help us continue to be strong in this regard.

Earlier this year, House Republicans passed the Fraud Prevention and Accountability Act, legislation that strengthened fraud prevention across the Federal Government and help protect taxpayer dollars from fraud, scams, and abuse.

Families are stretching every dollar right now. Fraudsters are cashing in on

taxpayer-funded programs like childcare, student aid, and safety-net programs. Americans play by the rules. Scammers should not get rewarded.

This is the right fight. Every dollar stolen through fraud is a dollar taken from workers, families, seniors, veterans, and small businesses that actually need the support.

We have got enough excuses, loopholes, and taxpayer money disappearing into fraud and abuse. Our government programs have a problem, and our taxpayers are the ones paying the price. These are the loopholes we are closing. We are cracking down on this and holding negligent State leaders accountable. We cannot lower our deficit without addressing the fraudulent spending throughout our country.

For a year and a half, Republicans have shone a light on the amount of fraud, abuse, and the sheer waste. We are reducing the deficit by cutting this spending, and it is happening on daily basis.

As I mentioned earlier, the data that I have here, I was told several months ago that they had canceled 400 licenses and only heard back from 12. That is obviously a green light to then reach out and identify more. If you cancel a license and you don't hear from that company or those stakeholders, you have definitely nailed that right aspect of finding that fraudulent activity.

It is a point that I hope that every American can really understand. This is not a partisan issue. Everything back here becomes partisan, but if you look at it and just actually take the data, this is a sensational thing that is going on, and it is going to continue to go on for the duration of this administration.

We must continue to courageously work to solve this crisis, and we cannot let it get too late.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to bring Utah's sound fiscal policies to Washington on the House Budget Committee, and I will continue to fight for the American family as we seek to give our children a better economic future.

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

HONORING THE 158TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Ms. MEJIA of New Jersey was recognized for 30 minutes.)

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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