

Republican leadership continues its attempt to further raid the Nation's coffers and rob our citizens of important services.

Last week, Republicans had to pull their budget reconciliation from the House floor, temporarily preventing a disastrous fiscal blow that will dig an even deeper deficit hole. This week they continue efforts to force through Congress over \$50 billion in cuts to important programs, including student loans, Medicaid, child support and child support enforcement. Despite shameful attempts to disguise these cuts and services as necessary tough choices, the budget reconciliation funds an additional \$70 billion in misguided tax cuts for the wealthy and neglects the billions needed for Hurricane Katrina reconstruction efforts.

Democrats are holding Republicans accountable for enormously irresponsible spending that has managed to turn the surplus that the President inherited into an \$8 trillion deficit. Fortunately, there are a few honest Republicans who know that the budget plan will make the national debt worse by adding an additional \$20 billion to the already record-high deficit. They know they have lost their way with years of increased spending and indefensible tax cuts.

I hope that they stand strong and may not do what is responsible or what is popular in their conference, but do what is right for the American people.

MARY DEXTER SCANLON

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

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mrs. Mary Dexter Scanlon on the occasion of her 100th birthday. On November 21, 2005, she is celebrating this milestone in this life with over 50 relatives and friends of the family who will come across the country to her home in Boca Raton, Florida.

Mary Louise Dexter, daughter of Ralph and Carrie Dexter of English and Swedish descent, grew up in Galva, Illinois. She assisted her father in bringing the first telephone service to their small rural town. She continued to educate herself and left home to go to New York City to attend Columbia University and later went on to become a teacher.

In her lifetime, Mary has been part of much of this Nation's history, living through the Industrial Revolution, the Roaring Twenties, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, and her brother was born on the Fourth of July. Mary is the proud mother of six sons, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Mary's spirit is high, and her will to live every moment in life is great as she makes new friends each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of three generations, I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in wishing Mary Dexter Scanlon a very happy 100th birthday.

SUPPORTING CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I will introduce legislation to reaffirm Congress' support for conservation easements, one of the most powerful and effective tools available for the permanent conservation of private lands in the United States of America.

I am proud to represent southeastern Pennsylvania, a region that takes pride in its heritage and the preservation of its open spaces. However, in my district, Mr. Speaker, land available for preservation exceeds local resources. That is why we need conservation easements. That is where partnerships between private landowners and conservation charities come into play. By allowing landowners to receive a tax incentive by using these easements to donate the land for preservation charities, the private sector can supplement government attempts at land preservation.

On January 27 of this year, Mr. Speaker, the Joint Committee on Taxation released recommendations to limit the use of conservation easements by eliminating the charitable contribution deduction with respect to personal residence properties. In addition, the amount of charitable deductions for qualified properties would be lowered from the current rate of 100 percent to 33 percent of the fair market value of the easement. I, as well as many of my colleagues here in the House, feel that this would be a terrible mistake.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should reaffirm its commitment to environmental protection and historic preservation by passing this resolution. I call on my colleagues to review my legislation and to support its passage.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to walk the Halls of Capitol Hill these days without running into signs just like this one, reminding us of the size of our national debt, put outside their doors by members of the Democrat Blue Dog Coalition. Their message: "It's Time to Put Our Fiscal House in Order, Reduce Our Deficit."

I agree with them. And I am glad to see this bipartisan support for deficit reduction. By bringing the Deficit Reduction Act to the floor this week, the Republican leadership has provided the Blue Dogs with an opportunity to vote for the very policy they promote with their signs. The Deficit Reduction Act would result in some \$50 billion in budget savings over 5 years. It is a significant step in the right direction, and

it is welcome policy for those of us committed to fiscal responsibility.

If the owners of these signs are serious about debt reduction, then they should vote for the Deficit Reduction Act this week. Otherwise, their signs are little more than false advertising and ought to be taken down.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION GIVING FEMA AUTHORITY TO RELEASE INFORMATION ABOUT REGISTERED SEX OFFENDERS

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

Mr. POE. When the First Lady of the Gulf, Katrina, unloaded her wrath on Louisiana and Mississippi, thousands of people fled to my home State of Texas. This evacuation brought in not only good folks but it brought in registered sex offenders to the communities and neighborhoods of southeast Texas. Now, 2½ months later, many child molesters remain unaccounted for, lurking in the shadows, some waiting to attack again innocent children.

The Houston Chronicle reported yesterday that almost 300 known sex offenders from Louisiana have moved to the Houston area alone since Hurricane Katrina. None of them have been accounted for.

Some of these sex offenders registered with FEMA and received Federal disaster assistance. So FEMA has an address and a location of these registered sex offenders, but they will not release the names to local law enforcement. They are citing privacy reasons. This defies common sense.

Sex offenders gave up their privacy rights when they decided to rape and molest children. It is for this reason today I am filing legislation giving FEMA the authority and the duty to release this information about registered sex offenders to local law enforcement officials. The public has a right to know who these people are. Our children are in danger, and there should be no red tape when it comes to their safety.

That's just the way it is.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 72, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2006

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 558 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 558

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 72) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution