

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON
THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR
2010

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Conference Report on S. Con. Res. 13, Chairman, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2010, revising the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal year 2009, and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2011 through 2014. I thank Chairman SPRATT of the Budget Committee for his leadership and hard work on spearheading the effort to bring a budget to the floor that the American people can live with, helps fuel the engine of the government, makes America thrive, and makes it place that we all can be proud of. The President, the Conferees, and this Congress, should all be commended for helping bring this budget to the floor. I support the budget and I urge my colleagues to do the same. I support the budget for several important and distinct reasons.

Unlike the last Administration, which inherited a \$5.6 trillion surplus, this Administration inherited an economy in steep decline, a budget in record deficit, and faltering public services due to persistent underfunding and inattention. The Congress has already taken steps to create jobs, help Americans regain their home, help Americans pay their bills and put food on the table for their families. The Congress has also taken steps to rebuild our economy. The Congress has done all of these tasks by enacting the Recovery Act. The budget is an economic blueprint for the future that builds from these initial steps by making strategic investments to rebuild our economy over the long term. The budget provides for increased investment in health care reform, education, and energy independence and at the same time puts the budget back on a path to fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

The budget is to be applauded as nothing short of a miracle. It makes strategic investments in education, health care reform, and energy independence and puts the country back on track to remain globally competitive. It puts us on track to cut the Federal budget deficit by more than half by 2013. The budget reflects the Recovery Act. The Obama Administration inherited a deficit of well over \$1 trillion and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. The budget builds upon the President's plan. It provides tax relief to middle-income families, creates jobs through investment in infrastructure, and extends unemployment benefits for millions of Americans.

The budget addresses eight years of Republican policies that have brought on America's current economic woes. So far, we have seen 25 straight months of housing price declines; 14 months of job losses and 4.4 million jobs lost, the most since World War II, with 651,000 jobs lost in February alone; unemployment is currently soaring above 8.1 percent and in the double digits in the minority communities across this great Nation; and 45 percent drop in major stock markets from their highs.

The budget supports the President's goals for Health Care Reform. The President's principles for healthcare reform include making health coverage affordable and available to all, improving safety and quality, and improving and providing Americans with a choice of health plans and physicians, including the choice of keeping their current health plan. The budget begins to address the rising health care costs. The average cost of an employer-sponsored health insurance policy exceeded \$12,000 in 2008, more than twice what it cost ten years ago. The President's plan would reduce the inefficiencies that have caused these prices to soar.

The budget sets us on a plan to increase coverage. The number of people without insurance grew from 38 million in 2000 to nearly 46 million in 2008. Nearly 1 out of 6 Americans is without health care coverage. Most uninsured are in working families. Millions more are underinsured. The budget assumes that health care will be paid for, so it does not add to the deficit. Importantly, the budget supports improvements to medicare's payment system for doctors. The budget supports legislation on medicare physician payments to provide for efficiency and higher quality care, promote fiscal sustainability, ensure that primary care receives appropriate compensation, and improves coordination of care.

The budget invests in education. The budget builds upon the Recovery Act's historic investment in education. The budget includes the \$100 billion in education funding provided for in the Recovery Act to help states maintain elementary, secondary, and higher education services. The Recovery Act targeted funds to Title I (Education for the Disadvantaged), Head Start, and special education, where the funding can be used to train more teachers to provide needed services. This supports Congress's efforts that resulted in increased maximum Pell Grant awards to \$619 to a total of \$5,350—the largest annual increase in history—and created the American Opportunity Tax Credit for eligible students receive a partially refundable tax credit of up to \$2,500 to cover college costs. Simply put, the budget makes education more affordable and accessible and increases education funding. It supports early childhood education and supports improved school breakfast and lunch programs. The budget will afford over 31 million children a healthy and nutritious meal.

The budget builds upon significant funding and tax incentives in the Recovery Act by increasing our investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency by some 18 percent for 2010. These investments will spur new sources of energy that we can produce here, creating "green collar" jobs for American workers. It will promote energy independence over the long term.

I urge my colleagues to support the budget. It takes the appropriate steps to put the budget back on track for fiscal responsibility and sustainability. It will cut the budget deficit by more than half in four years. Specifically, it will cut the budget from \$1.7 trillion in 2009 to \$586 billion in 2013. It also improves responsibility through statutory pay-go. It includes investment in oversight and enforcement yielding savings.

YOUTH JOBS

The budget includes funding for summer jobs for youth. Our youth, and individuals that have opted not to go to college or institutions

of higher learning, need to be engaged and employed. Employment will provide them with skills and aptitudes that are necessary to be productive in society.

HEALTHCARE

The budget accounts for the cost of healthcare reform to ensure that the 45 million uninsured Americans (four million of which are children) have access to quality and affordable healthcare.

The budget accounts for the following:

Funding the Minority AIDS Initiative to build capacity among minority run non-governmental organizations and to conduct outreach services among minority communities.

Funding the Ryan White CARE Act to support care and treatment programs at the local level to address the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Funding the CDC Prevention activities for HIV, STD, TB and Viral Hepatitis to fund testing initiatives and support innovative prevention efforts at the local level.

Funding for Housing for people living with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) to provide supportive housing for people with AIDS.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

I commend the President for requesting an increase of \$15 billion for the Department of State and other international programs in FY2010, which is a 40% increase over the FY2009 level. The budget includes this increase in the budget resolution. I am hopeful that these additional funds will go towards the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; USAID; migration and refugee assistance; peacekeeping efforts in Darfur; education, healthcare and cultural exchange programs; child survival and health programs; and development assistance.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

I support the robust funding for our troops and America's national defense. I support reducing funding for the failed Ballistic Missile Defense program and reallocating those funds within the Defense Department to fund increases in shipbuilding, troop readiness, military and civilian pay, cancer research, and mental health services.

I have consistently fought for funding to weed out waste, fraud and abuse within the Department of Defense. The Defense Department has already saved an estimated \$89 billion between FY01 and FY07 by implementing 1,682 of the Government Accountability Office's recommendations. The present budget, as does President Obama's FY2010 Budget Overview, reflects a similar commitment, as has the House Budget Committee under Chairman SPRATT's leadership.

INCOME SECURITY

As the economy continues to worsen, the budget accounts for the increased need for income security programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Unemployment Insurance, Medicaid, and the Recovery Act's COBRA subsidy.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

The housing crisis lies at the center of the economic problems we face today. After the series of TARP bills, the Congress has just found out that bank executives have used over \$100 million in TARP funds to pay for executive bonuses and other forms of compensation. The budget reverses eight years of underfunding of the nation's affordable housing programs and we are pleased that the Administration has proposed a HUD budget that

increases funding for the Department by 19 percent. The budget matches this aggressive budget authorization and to support large investments into the Community and Regional Development and the Income Security functions in order to account for increases in Affordable Housing programs.

The budget supports the Administration's proposal to fund the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund at \$1 billion and to fully fund the Community Development Block Grant program. It funds HUD's housing programs for the elderly, disabled, and Native Americans, as well as for those programs that prevent homelessness. It increases funding for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, which allows states, localities, and nonprofits to buy up and rehabilitate abandoned and foreclosed properties.

JUSTICE PROGRAMS

The budget accounts for funding efforts to combat and reduce juvenile crime and efforts to rehabilitate ex-offenders. Removing barriers to reentry has proven to reduce recidivism, which in the long run reduces crime. In addition, the budget accounts for much needed increases in youth crime intervention programs. Research has shown that targeting funding towards intervention rather than incarceration is more effective at reducing crime and saving the taxpayer money in the long run.

I have long supported efforts to increase funding for the Justice Assistance Program, the Juvenile Justice Program, Civil Rights Enforcement, the COPS Program, the Byrne Justice Grant Program, and State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance. The budget accounts for sustaining many of the important increases for these programs that was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

EDUCATION

As the Chairwoman of the Children's Caucus, I support the budget's effort to reform and expand the Pell Grant program. Pell Grants are way to make education affordable to disadvantaged youth. This is very important to me.

The budget has sustained increases in education funding, especially for Title I and IDEA. Even though Congress is to consider the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act this year, the Budget Committee should still account for the need to address the substantial funding shortfalls of this program over the last eight years. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act made substantial increases, the budget accounts for sustaining many of these new investments.

The budget also account for needed increases in funding for Head Start, TRIO (including Upward Bound), GEAR UP, Youth Build, and vocational education programs. The budget accounts for funding for expanded grants to states for workplace and community transition as authorized in the Higher Education Opportunity Act. These grants will better assist and encourage incarcerated individuals who have obtained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent to acquire educational and job skills.

The budget accounts for funding for the historic increases in funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority Serving Institutions authorized in the Higher Education Act reauthorization enacted last year.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The budget supports the President's initiatives to provide increased funding for

infrastructural projects. The President's priorities are reminiscent of the New Deal where this country invested in building up our Nation and the budget reflects this. The President has made a significant effort at achieving this by his signing of HR 1, the Stimulus Act.

In the Stimulus Act, the President authorized money to be spent on infrastructural projects that were shovel ready, i.e., ready to be stated within 120 days. I know that America could use this money.

Indeed, Houston would benefit. Houston's Metro Rail needs to complete its RAIL service in certain quadrants of Houston. The project has been twenty years in the making. I have worked with Leadership and Chairman OBERSTAR to ensure that METRO Rail projects get the funding that they need to be completed.

Completion of this mobility project would decrease congestion and pollution as Houstonians would travel via rail instead of using their cars. This would increase Houston mobility and the health of Houstonians as they would be forced to walk around instead of using their private transport.

VETERANS

The budget provides increased funding for veterans over the next five years.

OTHER PRIORITIES

Fully fund the Community Development Block Grant.

Increased funding for the Public Housing Capital Fund to continue to address eight years of stagnant funding under the Bush Administration.

Fully fund the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

Fully fund the Social Services Block Grant. Increased funding for HOPE VI.

Fully fund the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Increased funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Support for the creation of a National Infrastructure Bank.

Continued funding for Hurricane Katrina recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Increased funding for the Environmental Justice Small Grants Program.

Increased funding for the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program at the National Park Service. This is important to me. I worked to get funding for urban parks in the Stimulus bill. This increases the health and overall well being of constituents. It is necessary in urban Mecca's like Houston.

HANG UP ON THE TELEPHONE TAX

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to support the Telephone Excise Tax Repeal Act of 2009, which I introduced today along with Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. The telephone tax is deceptive, archaic, unfair and regressive.

This tax was first imposed in 1898 to fund U.S. involvement in the Spanish American War. That conflict is long over, and now elimination of this tax is long overdue. But it is not for want of trying.

Similar pieces of legislation have won bipartisan support in previous sessions of Con-

gress—127 cosponsors in the 110th Congress and 220 in the 109th Congress—but have routinely been stalled. Let's not let that happen again.

I suspect many Americans would be surprised to learn that they are paying a three percent tax on their local telephone, toll, and teletype exchange services. As an excise tax, there is no direct payment made to the government; the tax is collected by the phone companies and remitted to the federal government.

Although the amount is itemized on each phone bill, it is one of many taxes, fees and surcharges listed and can be easily overlooked on the multiple pages of an average telephone bill.

With advances in technology, this tax has become punitive for those without the ability, financial means or desire to upgrade their telecommunications services. Cellular phone and long distance landline telephone services were exempted from the tax in 2006. Bundled services that do not differentiate between local and long distance services, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services, also are exempt. The only service still being subjected to this antiquated tax is local telephone service, which is the predominant means of communication used by the disabled, lower-income families and senior citizens.

Eliminating this regressive tax would be consistent with the actions we already have taken so far in this Congress to provide hundreds of billions of dollars in tax relief to hard working Americans. I ask my colleagues to join us in hanging up on the telephone tax.

HONORING DANIEL C. GILLIAM

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Daniel C. Gilliam upon his retirement from the position of Deputy Senior Acquisition Executive at the National Security Agency (NSA). In this position Mr. Gilliam has been responsible for all of NSA's acquisitions and management of the Acquisition Directorate's senior leadership. Mr. Gilliam oversees all procurements, liaisons with key industry partners, and directs resources to optimize the organization's effectiveness. Working closely with Acquisition's customers, Mr. Gilliam maintains strategic partnerships with NSA's mission elements to ensure their needs and requirements are met.

After earning a Bachelor's degree in Business Management from the University of Maryland, and a Master's degree in Public Administration from the George Washington University in 1979, Mr. Gilliam graduated from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 1993. He also attended the Federal Executive Institutes Leadership for a Democratic Society Program in 1996.

In 1976, Daniel began his career at NSA as a management support intern. Since then, he has worked on a variety of acquisition and contracting positions to include contracting specialist, contracting officer, and cost/price analyst as well as managing those same disciplines. While participating in NSA's executive development program, Mr. Gilliam worked in