Our deficit is projected to reach an all-time high of $1.6 trillion, and our national debt is projected to equal the size of the entire U.S. economy, reaching over $15 trillion by September 30 of this year. And for 21 straight months, our national unemployment rate has been over 9 percent, longer than the country’s longest jobless streak since the Great Depression.

The people of my district, Virginia’s Fifth District, and the people of our Nation know that this course is unsustainable and that it must stop. Enough is enough. It is time to chart a new course of fiscal discipline and restraint. It is time to act on the urgent message sent by the people in November that we must put an end to Washington’s reckless spending.

No longer should the people of the Fifth District be stuck to foot the bill for a growing and intrusive Federal Government. No longer should families and businesses in central and southwest Virginia be making the tough choices to live within their means while the Federal Government borrows 40 cents on every dollar it spends.

By making tough choices and by reducing government spending, we are taking the first step in tackling our unsustainably debt and of preserving our economic strength for future generations. By reducing spending, we are restoring a sense of certainty and confidence to the marketplace that will create a better environment for job creation. By reducing spending, we are also reducing the size and scope of the Federal Government and are empowering our true job creators to hire, innovate, and expand.

The decisions we face are not easy, but we have not been given an easy task. Now is the time to act and to act boldly if we are serious about leaving a better America for our children and our grandchildren.

URGENT NEED TO CUT GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND REDUCE GOVERNMENT DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. HURT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HURT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the urgent need to cut government spending and reduce government debt.

Last year, our President and our Congress failed to enact a budget. This fundamental failure of leadership has put our country on a path of skyrocketing debt, growing deficits, and unacceptable high unemployment.

The President submitted to this new Congress a new budget proposal. Instead of recognizing the urgent need to reduce spending and reduce our debt, the President’s budget proposal amounts to, yet again, failure of leadership. It is a budget predicated on unsustainable spending and an insurmountable debt that will be passed on to our children and to our grandchildren.

THE 2011 CONTINUING RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. Bass) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the reckless spending plan in H.R. 1.

Mr. Speaker, it has been 43 days since I joined the new Congress, and my colleagues across the aisle have not offered one single idea or measure to put Americans back to work. While hardworking Americans struggle to keep a roof over their head, food on the table, and the heat turned on, my colleagues have not taken one single action to create jobs for the unemployed. They have completely abandoned the number one issue for the American people right now—jobs and the unemployment rate—and in fact, they are blatantly destroying, instead of creating, good jobs.

In fact, the Speaker recently said, “Over the last 2 years since President Obama has taken office, the Federal Government has added 200,000 new Federal jobs,” greatly exaggerating, citing a number 10 times greater than what has actually been reported. He said, “If some of those jobs are lost in the spending cuts, so be it.”

Mr. Speaker, under the Republican plan, jobs are the target of the cuts. No longer should the people of the Fifth District be stuck to foot the bill for the Federal Government. No longer should families and businesses in central and southwest Virginia be making the tough choices to live within their means while the Federal Government borrows 40 cents on every dollar it spends.

By making tough choices and by reducing government spending, we are taking the first step in tackling our unsustainably debt and of preserving our economic strength for future generations. By reducing spending, we are restoring a sense of certainty and confidence to the marketplace that will create a better environment for job creation. By reducing spending, we are also reducing the size and scope of the Federal Government and are empowering our true job creators to hire, innovate, and expand.

The decisions we face are not easy, but we have not been given an easy task. Now is the time to act and to act boldly if we are serious about leaving a better America for our children and our grandchildren.

For example, I believe we need to examine why we still have over 200 military bases in Germany 65 years after World War II and many years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The President also makes necessary sacrifices to sustain the maximum Pell Grant award for all students by eliminating the summer Pell Grant program. These are hard cuts to swallow but are necessary. The Republican budget, on the other hand, prefers to arbitrarily make shortsighted cuts; for example, cutting funding from programs that affect
women and their children, like $758 million from the WIC program and $1 billion from Head Start. The long-term impact of these cuts is clear: prohibiting access to family planning services. So guess what happens? Then denying food for the child and denying access to health care. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1 recklessly cuts spending at the expense of our economic recovery and job creation; nor does the Republican plan put us on a sustainable path to deficit reduction. I urge my colleagues to vote against this job-cutting, fiscally irresponsible spending bill.

WE ALL NEED TO GET INTO THE BOAT TOGETHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to congratulate President Obama for what I believe were the most important words that came from his press conference that he delivered yesterday when he said we all need to get into the boat together. Now, he was referring to all of us to the challenge of entitlement spending.

I listened to my California colleague talk about her priorities when it comes to dealing with budget issues. We are in the midst of a debate right now that will play out later today, and obviously it went into early this morning, on the continuing resolution and the challenges we face there. We are looking at making cuts that are important and need to take place. But, Mr. Speaker, they pale in comparison to the challenge of entitlement spending.

When the President said we all need to get into that boat together, what he meant was, it was very clear, we need to work together in a bipartisan way. And there are all kinds of challenges that have been put before us and horror stories as it relates to entitlement spending. And there is a tendency on both sides of the aisle, when it comes to dealing with the issue of entitlement spending, to point the finger of blame at the other party. That’s why I was particularly pleased that just recently the former chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, our colleague Pete Domenici, along with the former Director of the Congressional Budget Office, Alice Rivlin, have been meeting with leaders of both political parties, talking about the imperative of dealing with the issue of entitlement reform.

As we look at the debate that’s taking place right now, Mr. Speaker, on the discretionary spending that is before us and juxtapose that to the massive, massive spending as we look as far as the eye can see when it comes to Social Security, Medicare, and other entitlement spending, I believe that if we can address entitlement spending, we will be able to have resources to address priorities that I know my California colleague and other colleagues on both sides of the aisle share. So that’s why I think that it’s important for both the left and the right to come together and recognize that the problems that exist with entitlement spending need to be addressed in a bipartisan way. They can’t be addressed in a bipartisan and so doing, we will be ensuring that future generations are not going to face this tremendous debt burden.

We’ll be addressing the issue that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, has said is our number one national security threat, and that is the looming national debt. I believe that we will be able to let the American people know that we do have, as a priority, a desire to work together to resolve the very important problems that lie ahead.

A HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. I rise today to bring the urgent attention of the U.S. House of Representatives to a人权 and civil rights crisis. I want to talk to you today about a part of the world where the rights of citizens of all walks of life to protest and speak their minds is being denied with clubs and pepper spray, where a part of the world where a student strike led the university to ban student protests anywhere, anytime on campus; and where, when the students protested the crackdown on free speech, they were violently attacked by heavily armed riot police; a place where a newspaper editorial stated, “The indiscriminate aggression of police riot squads against students who are exercising their constitutional rights in public areas is a gross violation of their rights and an act comparable only to the dictatorships we all denounce and reject”; a place where the government has closed public access to some legislative sessions just like this one.

I ask this Congress to look at a part of the world where the Bar Association has been dismantled by the legislature and its leader has been jailed for fighting a politically motivated lawsuit. And where is this part of the world? Egypt? No. Protesters exercising free speech brought down a dictator in Cairo last week. What far away land has seen student protests banned, union protesters beaten, and free speech advocates jailed? The United States of America’s colony of Puerto Rico. So outrageous! It is. But true, and well documented.

I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to turn their eyes to Puerto Rico. The doors of the U.S. Congress are open. Our proceedings are public. In fact, the public is our boss, and that’s why we have a democracy. Across America today, I am sure there will be protests at college campuses. Across America, workers will go on strike, and there will be marches and protests against mayors and Governors and derogatory things said, even about President Obama.

In Madison, Wisconsin, as we speak, protests over employment policies and budget cuts are alive. Will Wisconsin be taking place. College and even high school students have been joined by union members and their allies in peaceful protests on the streets across the state of Wisconsin. Will we see pepper spray and beatings? Not likely. The protesters will be protected by the First Amendment to our Constitution. And that’s the way it works in a democracy. It is their right to say whatever they want and say it without designing to deploy the Bar Association that limits and restricts the people’s rights.

In the 50 States, we have lots of organizations not unlike the Puerto Rican Bar Association, for organizations under attack by the government, and we don’t tolerate its leaders being sent to jail because they exercise their rights and they stand up for what they believe in. But that’s not the reality in Puerto Rico.

Just last week, Judge Fuste, a Federal judge with close ties to the ruling party and a personal history of opposing the Puerto Rican Bar Association, this Federal judge whose salary is paid for by the taxpayers of America, ordered Osvaldo Toledo, the president of the Puerto Rican Bar Association, to jail. And what was Mr. Toledo’s crime? Educating his members on how to opt out of a politically motivated lawsuit designed to destroy the Bar Association. For me, this attack was the final straw that brought me to the floor to speak out today.

So, in solidarity with Osvaldo Toledo, I asked for doing his job as the leader of the Puerto Rican Bar Association, I will enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD today the instructions for his members on how to opt out of the class action lawsuit that is threatening the viability of the Bar Association.

I will say to those who would pass laws to stifle public protest, to those who would authorize the use of force against peaceful protesters, and to stifle the words and actions of their enemies, attacking free speech has no place in a democracy, and a Federal judge like Fuste should know better.

Here is a fact that most of us learned a long time ago: Legal laws, secret meetings, armed enforcers don’t extinguish the flame of justice; they are the spark that makes it burn even brighter. You may, with your armed guards and your restrictive laws, try to slow down the protests of the people of Puerto Rico. You may harass the Puerto Rican Bar Association, and make their life uncomfortable for a while. And every time you turn police on students and jail an opponent, you guarantee that the good people of Puerto Rico and this Congress will speak out.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the people of Puerto Rico, there are some places