

Our nation has no greater asset than the folks who have served and are currently serving our nation, both military and civilian alike. Their dedication and service to our nation is unwavering and it is important that Congress provide the best equipment, training, and compensation so these men and women can meet their duties in full. The House budget plan restores national security spending and helps our defense maintain its current strength.

These are all measures that I have and will continue to support; however, it is disappointing that this proposal, just as in past budget proposals, unfairly targets only one group of Americans for additional sacrifices: the civilian federal workforce.

I have serious concerns that this resolution again forces federal employees to contribute more towards their retirement, approximately six percent, which is the equivalent of a pay cut, and eliminates their defined benefit retirement plan for deficit reduction purposes. It also goes farther than previous budget plans by proposing to decrease the rate of return on the Thrift Savings Plan's Government Securities Fund (G Fund).

America's First District is full of hardworking and dedicated citizens who serve the people of this nation every day, such as on the front lines of the War on Terror or in support roles for our military. Still others provide invaluable services at places such as VA hospitals, cancer and Alzheimer's research laboratories, and law enforcement agencies such as the FBI and DEA. And yet, federal civilian employees continue to see their pay cut and their benefits reduced on nearly every occasion.

Federal employees have already endured a three-year pay freeze; furloughs due to sequestration; and were required to not work because of indecision and political gamesmanship that resulted in a government shutdown on October 1, 2013 lasting 16 days. In addition, employees hired since 2012 have seen required contribution increases to their retirement, bringing our federal workers' total sacrifice to date to \$159 billion over ten years.

It is because of these sacrifices that I supported legislation to allow furloughed workers to receive back pay for time out of work during the 2013 shutdown. In addition, I introduced the Federal Employee Combat Zone Tax Parity Act, which would extend the tax credit available to military personnel who serve in combat zones to the civilian federal employees that work alongside them.

Congress charges federal employees with important duties and expects these duties to be performed with the highest caliber of expertise, but rather than being recognized for their service, these public servants see their salary and benefits continually used as a pawn in the game of politics. We continue to ask our federal civilian workforce to do more with less.

According to data collected by the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, there has been a decline in federal employee job and workplace satisfaction for the fourth consecutive year. A score sheet compiled by the Partnership for Public Service shows that government-wide, federal employee job satisfaction and commitment fell 0.9 points in 2014 to a score of 56.9 out of 100. Morale among our nation's civilian federal workforce is at a historical low and these continued attacks keep the highly-skilled and experienced people we need from seeking a federal job.

Enough is enough.

I am fully ready and willing to enact deeper cuts to my own salary, benefits and congressional operations, which are provisions included in this year's budget, but we must stop singling out federal employees simply because Congress continually fails to address the out-of-control spending.

There is no question that our nation must get its spending in order, and federal employees have been and are certainly willing to continue to do their part to help in this effort.

Their daily contributions to their fellow citizens and to the cause of freedom are simply innumerable, and yet during deficit reduction debate over the last several years, federal employees have been asked to contribute much more than their fair share. Our federal civilian employees live a life of selfless service and they deserve our appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, I voted in support of H. Con. Res. 27 because it is Congress' constitutional duty to budget and appropriate. Congress must get back to regular order. Congress does our federal employees no favors when governing by continuing resolution and through crisis management. We must bring more certainty to the annual federal appropriations process.

This budget proposal is a means for Congress to further discuss our country's fiscal challenges, but I will continue to push for deficit reduction efforts in the future that focus more realistically on addressing the true drivers of our debt, rather than targeting those who serve their nation every day.

HONORING MS. JOSIE BACALLAO

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Ms. Josie Bacallao, an outstanding individual in the South Florida community.

Ms. Bacallao is currently President and CEO of Hispanic Unity of Florida (HUF). Founded more than 30 years ago by community leaders, HUF was formed to ease the acculturation transition for immigrants from other nations. Today, this nonprofit organization provides assistance, through 19 programs, to Broward's diverse community. HUF remains the county's largest agency dedicated to the immigrant population, providing them with the tools they need to build a new life. Having been born in Cuba, raised in South Florida, and educated at Florida International University, no one is better suited to lead this organization.

Prior to her work at HUF, Ms. Bacallao was Vice President/Marketing Director for the Sun-Sentinel Company and worked for The Miami Herald/el Nuevo Herald as their VP/Marketing for more than 20 years. Beyond her professional background and work, she also sits on the board of CareerSource Broward, Greater Ft Lauderdale Alliance, and the Advisory Board of Florida Blue. She is a member of the Ft Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, and the Broward Chamber of Nonprofit Organizations.

Throughout her career Ms. Bacallao has been recognized for her achievements. She

was honored with the Silver Medallion from National Conference for Community and Justice; was named to the Broward County Women's Hall of Fame; and received United Way of Broward County's Human Services Professional Award. Legal Aid and Service of Broward County bestowed the Russell E. Carlisle Advocacy Award on Ms. Bacallao for her work in creating pro bono immigration clinics. She also received one of the most meaningful awards of her career, The Jim Moran Foundation Award, for her work leading a nonprofit organization.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Josie Bacallao for her continued service to South Florida, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 27) establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025:

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I would like to submit a letter that was signed by over 4,800 faith leaders supporting the Congressional Progressive Caucus' alternative budget.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As clergy and faith leaders of many faiths, we urge you to support The People's Budget, introduced by the co-chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Congressmen Keith Ellison and Raúl Grijalva. The Federal budget should reflect our values and shared priorities, and we believe that this proposal achieves that goal.

The teachings of our respective faiths are steeped in the understanding that we have a communal responsibility to care for the most vulnerable in society. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, ensuring that all workers receive a fair wage are not simply policy positions: they are sacred obligations.

The People's Budget would create desperately-needed, good paying jobs, repeal sequester and all Budget Control Act spending caps and end Corporate Inversions that allow U.S. companies to avoid paying taxes. The Budget's proposals invest in veterans, women, communities of color and their families and K-12 education. It expands the Earned Income Tax Credit and unemployment insurance and enhances the social safety net. It reauthorizes the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and implements comprehensive immigration reform, including a pathway to citizenship. In short, The People's Budget, if passed, would set our nation back on the path toward a fair and healthy economy.

These priorities were among those laid out by the Washington, DC Interfaith community in releasing our own Faithful Budget, which lays out how government spending could align with these moral priorities: <http://bit.ly/faithful-budget>. The "People's Budget" echoes many of the key proposals outlined in the Faithful Budget, so we're proud to support it. You can read more about