

us safe. They serve to protect the vulnerable and to defend us from harm. They patrol the neighborhood beats, walk our streets, and willingly put their lives on the line to do the work that makes our society safe.

These men and women preserve our way of life by steadfastly safeguarding us from crime. To ensure the safety and protection of others, many have lost their lives in the line of duty. Their sacrifice must not be forgotten, and their families should always remain in our prayers.

Though today is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, I believe members of our law enforcement community deserve our gratitude every day.

#### NEW YEAR, NEW TAX CODE

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, it is a new year, and I am thankful that my Republican colleagues and I made good on our promise to bring about a new Tax Code. Due to the historic passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, most citizens, couples, and companies will finally receive the tax relief they have so desperately needed.

The list of companies nationwide that have announced pay raises, bonuses, and 401(k) contributions is growing. Companies that weren't able to invest more in their employees in the past have found renewed confidence in this Nation's economic future.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle proclaimed that this bill was a tax scam that would only profit the rich. These baseless claims are the very epitome of fake news, and nothing could be further from the truth.

Already, more than a million Americans have received bonuses because of our efforts to reform the Tax Code. \$900 billion is being distributed to hardworking American taxpayers by job creators as of today.

Thanks to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, we have witnessed companies begin to reinvest in the future of employees. In fact, Aflac announced it will increase 401(k) matching from 50 percent to 100 percent for the first 4 percent of employee contribution, on top of issuing one-time bonuses to employees.

Our job creators are so inspired by the reforms we worked hard for, and those who are working toward retirement will enjoy these benefits for years to come.

While some in this Chamber stated that tax reform would lead to Armageddon, I would like to point out that, for many, tax reform has brought about what Reagan called morning in America again. Proponents of the status quo and naysayers claimed that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act would cost taxpayers. That is simply not the truth.

Even modest increases in GDP growth caused by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will substantially contribute to a leveling off of the deficit. The Congressional Budget Office stated, for every one-tenth of 1 percent increase in GDP, nearly \$270 billion in revenue is added over 10 years.

Most importantly, hardworking American taxpayers will now keep more of their hard-earned cash. Estimates show that married couples taking advantage of the new standard deduction in the Fifth District of North Carolina may receive a tax cut to the tune of \$1,834. That is no small sum.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that House Republicans kept our promise to bring about more jobs, fairer taxes, and bigger paychecks in 2017, and I look forward to this continued success in 2018.

#### IT IS TIME TO STOP THE ATTACK ON THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, last October, President Trump loudly proclaimed that the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, was "virtually dead." He said it was finished, it was gone. This was after the pummeling that this law had been taking over 2017 in the unsuccessful effort by the Republicans to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Again, last October was a critical moment, because enrollment was about to commence for 2018's policy year, and the Trump administration announced that they were going to cut in half the time that people would have an opportunity to go out and learn about rates, to talk to get enrollment help, and also to sign up for different plans. They also cut the marketing budget by 80 percent and eliminated funding for folks at the State level to actually provide face-to-face assistance. So it all looked pretty grim back in October in terms of what that would result in in terms of enrollment for 2018.

Well, as a famous resident from the State of Connecticut, Mark Twain, once infamously said: Rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated.

Yesterday, the Connecticut exchange, the Connecticut Access Health Exchange, announced their enrollment numbers for 2018. Rather than going down, even though they were only able to enroll people in half the time there was in 2016, and even though they had no budget in terms of trying to actually promote and advertise, their enrollment went up. It went up by 3 percent in terms of the number of people who signed up for Anthem Blue Cross plans, for ConnectiCare plans, and for Medicaid plans.

Again, it was done because of this amazing grassroots, organic effort by libraries, by community health centers, by human service agencies, by hospitals that went out and took on the task of getting the word out that, in fact, the Affordable Care Act was still alive and that people would have access to affordable health plans. Sure enough, it resulted in an increase in health plans.

Interestingly, the young invincibles, the young enrollees that everybody predicted were going to abandon the

program because the enforcement of the mandate was going to be relaxed by the IRS actually had a very strong, healthy number.

Coming from a State that is known for its insurance history—it was the insurance capital of the world—the fact of the matter is that getting those young enrollees, those young members to sign up for these plans, in fact, portends well for 2019 and beyond.

This morning, The Hill newspaper reported that for ObamaCare insurers, actually, their financial prospects are looking much better for 2019 because the system has stabilized.

Now, again, there is still work that could be done. There is a bill, H.R. 3748, a Medicare buy-in, which would allow people 50 and up to voluntarily sign up for Medicare, again, using subsidies if they qualify or paying the full cost, which would still be 40 percent less than the plans that are on exchanges throughout the country for people 50 and up. It would not affect the deficit, and, in fact, arguably, it would strengthen the Medicare trust fund because you would get a younger population into the Medicare Program.

So there is work that we can do that is optional, voluntary, in terms of trying to provide more choices for individuals out there; but, clearly, what happened yesterday in Connecticut and throughout the country in terms of enrollment figures, that despite the active efforts by the Trump administration to undercut and sabotage this law, in fact, shows that the law has a life of its own, that, in fact, people are voting with their feet in terms of still trying to get access to the critical needs of every human being and every American, which is access to healthcare.

I want to particularly congratulate Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman, who spearheaded this effort in Connecticut and yesterday stated: This just shows how valuable the Affordable Care Act is to thousands of residents in Connecticut; also, Jim Wadleigh, the director of the exchange, who, again, was not distracted or demoralized by the comments coming out of the White House but still plunged forward and still persistently and determinedly went out and made sure that people got the real information, the real facts, the real news so that they could, in fact, take an opportunity to protect themselves and their families from the inevitable problems of sickness and accident, that every American and every Member of Congress enjoys through their health benefits, for every resident in the State of Connecticut.

It is time for us to stop the attack in terms of a program that has provided millions of Americans coverage and opportunity to healthcare. We should work together on bills like H.R. 3748, a voluntary, deficit-neutral attempt to try and strengthen and provide cheaper alternatives for people 50 and up and small businesses. That is the way forward, not this persistent, nonstop hyperpolitical, hyperpartisan attack

on a bill that has made a huge difference to millions of Americans.

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#### PENNSYLVANIA FARM SHOW

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania kicked off one of my favorite events, the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

For more than a century, farmers have gathered each January at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This week, we are having the 102nd Pennsylvania Farm Show. This weeklong event is the largest indoor agriculture exposition in the Nation, showcasing over 6,000 animals, featuring nearly 12,000 exhibits, and more than half a million visitors.

Each year, I host a listening session at the Farm Show and we cover a range of topics during the public forum, from raising awareness about agriculture education to hearing very real concerns from our dairy farmers and more. As we embark on crafting the next farm bill, the 2018 listening session was extremely important.

I want to thank the following Members who were able to join this year's Farm Show: Agriculture Committee Ranking Member COLLIN PETERSON, Congressman DWIGHT EVANS, Congressman TOM MARINO, Congressman ROGER MARSHALL, and Congressman LLOYD SMUCKER. I also want to thank USDA Under Secretary Greg Ibach for coming up to join us. I was honored to be joined by Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show truly does bring together so many different people in the ag community and it is an event like none other. As vice chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, I am very proud of this fine event that takes place in the Commonwealth.

The Farm Show complex houses 24 acres under one roof, spreading throughout 11 buildings, including three arenas. There is no admission fee and it is a great event for the entire family. There are numerous educational shows that are all free of charge.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show provides an atmosphere for everyone to walk through, observe, and educate themselves about different areas of agriculture, the Commonwealth's largest industry, which brings in nearly \$6.9 billion annually in agricultural cash receipts. Almost half a million jobs are tied to the industry, which positively impacts all Pennsylvanians.

Undoubtedly, one of the most popular attractions at the Pennsylvania Farm Show is the Food Court. Located in the Expo Hall and Main Hall of the complex, the Food Court offers visitors a

variety of Pennsylvania products—PA Preferred products—and it generates income to support the nonprofit Pennsylvania Agricultural Commodity Organizations.

Mr. Speaker, over a century ago, the first Pennsylvania Farm Show was a 3-day exhibit. Today, the event is a weeklong, 8-day celebration of how the agricultural industry touches our everyday lives. Proudly, this event draws visitors from across the country to highlight everything our State has to offer when it comes to ag.

Numerous students participate in the event as well from 4-H clubs and FAA organizations.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show truly showcases our Nation's farmers and landowners, and I was thrilled to again take part in the best agricultural expo in the country.

#### THE NATIONAL DEBT AND OUR SHARED FUTURE

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

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the national debt and our shared future. Our country has been on an unsustainable fiscal path, regardless of which party has been in power, and we all know this. As a result, our national debt is the largest it has ever been.

As of this week, the national debt is in excess of \$20 trillion. This works out to be an average of \$62,670 debt for every man, woman, and child in the United States. It is outrageous. It is a completely unacceptable amount of debt, and we have it because of irresponsible governing and a lack of political courage here in our Nation's Capital.

Sadly, this Congress has chosen to continue this irresponsible and unsustainable fiscal course. The tax cut legislation that Republicans rammed through the Congress last month will add \$1.45 billion to our deficit over 10 years, estimated, and over \$2.2 trillion to our national debt. We are going in the wrong direction.

But there is something I think that I have learned about this tax legislation last month, and that is that it seems that deficits matter under Democratic administrations, but under Republican administrations, deficits don't matter at all.

So when it comes to lifting our debt ceiling later this year, I would expect or hope to see every Republican who voted for the tax bill that adds \$2.2 trillion to our deficit—our debt to vote to increase the debt ceiling, seeing as deficits no longer matter.

Let's think about this \$2.2 trillion tax bill that will add to our debt. That is \$2.2 trillion in additional moneys that our children will have to pay for unless we do something. We can be fiscally responsible, and we must be fiscally responsible. But to act to change this course, we must stop digging this hole bigger.

I had a farmer friend who once told me: JIM, I've got a theory about holes, and that is, once you find yourself in one, just stop digging. Sometimes you think if you dig harder and faster, you're going to get out of it. Just stop.

Mr. Speaker, this will be difficult, especially considering the opportunity we missed to put the Nation back on a fiscally responsible path with the tax reform effort last year. Yet there are important steps that we can take—and Congress should—to balance our budget and to keep it from getting worse, like the amendment proposed by Representative STEPHANIE MURPHY from Florida, a balanced budget amendment.

We should also move to implement targeted reforms on government spending, both mandatory and discretionary spending, in ways that contribute to economic growth and invest in our future. It is tough work. It requires political courage and the willingness to reach across the aisle, for Democrats and Republicans to join hands and jump, in essence, on these tough decisions.

The last time we had such an opportunity to address the challenge was in March of 2012, when Congressman JIM COOPER from Tennessee presented a budget resolution similar to the recommendations under Simpson-Bowles. That plan would have reduced the deficit over \$4 trillion over a 10-year period.

Sadly, the political courage was in short supply then on that day, as it is now. There were 38 of us who were willing to support the plan. I was attacked by political groups on the left and on the right for taking such a vote, but that vote was the right thing to do and I was proud to take it.

Congress has a chance to do the right thing now. Congress has to come together. We need Democrats and Republicans to put our Nation's fiscal house back in order for the sake of all Americans.

The Blue Dog Coalition, of which I am a co-chair, has a long history of standing for fiscal responsibility, even when it was hard. Bridging the divide between Republicans and Democrats, both in Congress and this administration, is what we must do.

So as we are debating today how to put together the votes for the concurrent resolution to fund our Nation's budget for the rest of this year, let's think about this. Let's work together. What a novel concept.

As I stand here today, as a Blue Dog, as a proud Representative of California's 16th Congressional District, and as a concerned American, ready to reach across the aisle to create the bipartisan, long-term policy solutions that will help us tackle our national debt and our deficit, and that will help put us back on a fiscally sustainable path, I invite my colleagues and my fellow Americans to join me.

This is what good governance is really all about. This is where responsible leadership is necessary. It is what