

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

to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations; and (2) one motion to recommit.

Sec. 2. House Resolution 542 is laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my neighbor and friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

(Mr. PUTNAM asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 558 is a rule that provides for consideration of House Joint Resolution 72, making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2006. As we approach the end of the week and the time that we will be taking in our districts to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday, this particular rule and the CR probably are among the least controversial things that the gentleman from Florida and I will discuss today. I look forward to an abbreviated debate on this.

The rule provides for 1 hour of debate in the House equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the joint resolution and provides one motion to recommit.

I want to commend Chairman LEWIS, Ranking Member OBEY, and the entire Appropriations Committee in the House for the determined effort this year to avoid an omnibus spending bill. This is something that unfortunately has become a routine part of our end-of-the-year appropriations process and Chairman LEWIS under tremendous leadership with a great committee behind him has managed to avoid that this year, in fact, setting almost a record by completing all of the House's work on the appropriations process before July 4.

□ 1030

The committee has practiced due diligence and is working to pass each of these bills individually rather than having them attached as a train at the end of the year. This continuing resolution is necessary because our friends on the other side of the Rotunda are a little bit further behind in their appropriations process and we are working through the conference report stage.

This CR will allow the appropriators to continue that conferencing work to ensure that we have a clean appropriations process where bills are moving individually in the regular order.

Today we are considering the Labor, Health and Human Services and Edu-

cation Appropriations Bill which leaves just three outstanding appropriations conference reports. The underlying resolution permits Congress to finish its work and provide the President adequate time to review the measures before signing them into law. H.J. Res. 72 simply extends the previous continuing resolution through December 17.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is a one sentence change, only shifting the date to December 17 for the continuing operations for the government.

The CR is a clean continuation of H.J. Res. 68, which passed the House in September by a vote of 348-65, and which funded programs and activities at the lowest of the House-passed level, the Senate-passed level or the fiscal year 2005 current rate and included language prohibiting agencies from resuming or initiating programs for procurement not funded in FY 2005 and prohibited agencies from awarding new grants and other forms of assistance during the period of continuing resolution.

Throughout the appropriations process, the appropriators have demonstrated their commitment to fiscal responsibility by working within the framework we established in the budget resolution earlier this year. Again, I want to express my gratitude to the gentleman from California (Chairman LEWIS), the ranking member, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the entire committee and staff of the Appropriations Committee for their hard work this year.

I urge Members to support the rules and the underlying continuing resolution so we can finish the appropriations process in regular order and continue on our way toward responsibly funding the needs of America.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM) for yielding me time. I also thank him for bringing the real Florida orange juice to the 7 a.m. rules meeting this morning.

I oppose this closed rule, Mr. Speaker, and the underlying legislation. Mr. Speaker, I wondered to myself earlier this morning as the Rules Committee majority members passed yet another closed rule which stifles debate and shuts off meaningful contributions from Members of this Chamber.

What is the problem? Congress has only had since January 3 of this year to complete work on the 12 annual appropriations bills, the so-called "must pass bills" that Congress works on every year.

In case anyone is unclear, so far the President has signed only five of the 12 appropriations bills that must pass and become law before September 30. Defense appropriations? Not done. Military quality of life and Veterans Affairs? Not done. Transportation, Treasury, HUD? Not done. Of course, the bill

which funds this very institution, the legislative branch appropriations legislation, well, we did that to protect our branch.

And the sad part? No one is to blame but the party in control. It is an irrefutable fact, the last time that there was sole Democratic control of Congress and the White House, all 13 appropriations bills were passed by September 30. We had a balanced budget. And oh, yes, budget surpluses as far as the eye at that time could see.

My, how times have changed. Now we have debt as far as the eye can see and disdain from much of the rest of the world. The people here are the modern day incarnations of Nero. The majority fiddles while the Nation burns.

More than 45 days have passed since Congress passed its last continuing resolution, 48 to be exact; and in that time, Republicans have managed to pass a measly three of the ten outstanding appropriations bills at the time of the last continuing resolution. In baseball, their batting average would be pretty good. But in the real world where salaries and promotion are based on accomplishments and contributions, getting done 30 percent of what you are supposed to get done is absolutely abysmal. In any other job in America, 30 percent would get you fired. It should here too, Mr. Speaker, and I hope America is paying attention.

So I ask, what in the world have the majority Members been doing over the last month and a half that they cannot get these constitutionally-mandated appropriations bills done on time?

We know that they have not dealt with FEMA. I have been trying to get them to deal with FEMA since the agency messed up Florida recovery efforts in the year 2004. And now look at where their neglect got us. Republicans have not dealt with the national security leaks in the Bush White House. They have not dealt with increasing access to health care or investing in affordable housing for low and moderate incomes. They have not dealt with unemployment in this Nation.

In fact, this morning the chairman of the Rules Committee said to us that we have "full employment" in this Nation. He identifies that as 6 percent. I guess there is no one looking for a job in San Dimas where he is from or the greater Los Angeles area.

So forgive me, Mr. Speaker, if I feel it unnecessary to grant Republicans another 30 days to fix a problem that they, one, created on their own, and two, have shown zero ability that they are capable of leading our country in a responsibly fiscal manner.

The problem is not Hurricanes Katrina or Wilma or other disasters. It is not even the failing war in Iraq. The problem Republicans have is their beloved tax cuts that 95 percent of the people in this country barely benefit from. Their problem is themselves and their failed fiscal policies.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Perhaps I misspoke earlier saying that this would be the least controversial item we would deal with this morning. I recognize that we all had to get up early to be at Rules this morning, and apparently it is affecting some of our temperaments.

I would just point out that we finished all of the House's work, and I gave equal credit to both our chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the rest of his committee and the ranking member, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY), who finished all of our work by July 4, all of our appropriations processes in regular order, in an individual manner instead of having to bundle them up into a train at the end of the legislative season.

To date, we have finished seven of those 11 appropriations bills. We will do the eighth in a couple of hours here on this floor today, which leaves three remaining waiting to be returned from their conference work with the Senate.

So it is often said at times in the House that your opposition is the other party, but your enemy is the other Chamber. And when it comes to the enemy of time and being at the end of the legislative calendar, that, unfortunately, is the case with the appropriations process that we are waiting on regular order, the conference committees with the House and the Senate to finish their work on those three remaining bills.

With respect to the gentleman's concerns about a closed rule, this is a continuing resolution that is one sentence long. It funds the operations of government from now until December 17. The stifling of debate is nonexistent. There are no speakers on either side for this. The fact that it is a closed rule indicates that there is really no other option about how to approach a continuing resolution other than should it be December 16 instead of December 17?

Would the gentleman have the CR expire on Thanksgiving Day when no one will be in this Chamber to act to fund the operations of the government so that national parks remain open and Social Security checks continue to go out?

What would the amendments be that the gentleman would offer if December 17 is an inadequate solution to funding the operations of government until we finish the three remaining conference reports on appropriations?

To say that that is stifling democracy is nothing more than hyperbole.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would inform my good friend from Florida that getting up for a 7 a.m. Rules Committee does not alter my temperament. The suggestion that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle should have completed their

work by September 30 is mandated by our responsibilities here in the House of Representatives. And I find it disingenuous to speak of the other body, which I heartily endorse what my colleague said with reference to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) in this House of Representatives but the other body is controlled by the majority. The White House is controlled by the majority. And it is y'all that have it all. And so under the circumstances, it is your responsibility to have done it by September 30.

To answer the gentleman, what we would have done perhaps if we did not go home for Thanksgiving and take Thanksgiving dinner up here. The gentleman asks for another date or debate about this continuing resolution, doubtless what we would have been able to do is stay here and that may have lit a fire under some of the people in the other body who need to get their work done.

We have all sorts of problems in this Nation and there is no reason for us not to complete our work.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. PUTNAM. Just briefly, I respect the gentleman's observation that the majority party in the Senate is the party that I share, the Republican party, but I learned a long time ago to stop trying to answer for that Chamber over there. That is a tough body to figure out. The gentleman knows as well as I do that they tend to bog down in the oratory and slow down on the action.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO.)

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlemen for yielding me time.

Despite what the Member from Florida said, there are some who would like to speak to this issue. He said what does 30 days matter? Should it be 29?

Guess what? The Congress assembled on behalf of the American people, and this administration will borrow \$1.3 billion a day every day for those 30 days. We will be \$39 billion deeper in debt a month from today.

What would we do if we had an open rule? Well, perhaps we could make some real cuts in wasteful programs in the budget, instead of attacking the vulnerable, the students, kids getting lunches at school. They are just eating too much. Kids in foster care, long term care for seniors.

Maybe we could go where the real money is. They asked Willie Sutton, Why did you rob banks? Because that is where the money is.

The Republicans do not want to go where the money is because that is where the special interests are, the people who fund their campaign machine to keep them in the majority, to

keep them borrowing \$1.3 billion a day, indebting the American people as far as the eye can see.

What cuts might we have to make? Well, let us see. The President has this bizarre idea that we should borrow a trillion dollars, one thousand billion dollars to go to Mars while we cannot meet the needs of people here on Earth, here in the United States of America. We do not have money for levees, jet-ties. We do not have money for the school lunch program. We do not have money for student loans, but we should borrow a trillion dollars to go to Mars. But before that, let us borrow \$100 billion to go back to the moon to get some more dust. Great idea.

No, personally, I would like to have an up or down vote on borrowing \$100 billion to go back to the moon.

A few other things, let us revisit Star Wars. The general in charge of Star Wars gave us some very, very encouraging news. He said the system to protect us against missiles that will never be fired against the United States because we could track them back and retaliate, they will smuggle a bomb in if they want to attack us. But he said it has a better than zero chance of working, better than zero after \$100 billion and abrogating the anti-missile treaty.

□ 1045

Whoa, that is good. Well, maybe we could visit that issue in an open rule.

How about corporate farm subsidies? The American people are going to borrow around \$25 billion this year to give subsidies for surplus crops being grown by corporate farmers and others. Well, maybe we could visit that issue on the floor. No, they would not want to touch that. There is a lot of money coming in there.

How about the \$19 billion in the energy bill in subsidies to the oil industry in the hope that they will take money, borrowed by the taxpayers, given to them to go out and explore? Of course, those same oil company execs, of course they were not under oath, I have got to admit that, said that that money, the head of Exxon said it is nothing, it is chump change, and it has no effect on our operations. So maybe we could take back that \$19 billion and spend it on lunch for hungry kids or maybe we could put the money back into the student loan program that you want to cut out in the reconciliation bill.

Then we have a few tax giveaways out there, offshore companies like Accenture, largest homeland security contractor in the history of the United States, \$10 billion, who has moved their headquarters to the Bahamas so they will not pay any taxes in the United States of America, but they are going to defend us against foreign enemies, but they just do not want to pay any taxes here. I would like to be defended against them and those giveaways.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DEFAZIO. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman clearly has come to the floor a little bit early, because all of these things are going to be eligible for debate here in another several hours when we move forward on our deficit reduction package, and the gentleman will have an opportunity to exercise through his vote that savings process, that deficit reduction process.

But I am just curious, in all the gentleman's rhetoric, what would you do differently about the continuing resolution that funds government through December 17 until we finish our regular appropriations process?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would schedule some up-or-down votes on these sorts of major cuts in a much expanded reconciliation under an open rule.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would further yield, does the gentleman object to us funding the government through December 17?

Mr. DEFAZIO. I object to borrowing \$1.3 billion a day between now and then without any attempt at fiscal restraint.

Mr. PUTNAM. Would the gentleman shut down the government to prevent that from occurring?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, that was the ploy of your party. That is not mine, but I would take the time to keep Congress here.

What we are talking about is Congress going on vacation, Congress going away for 2 weeks, have Thanksgiving at home, while we are taking food out of the mouths of kids and depriving students of loans through the reconciliation bill, borrowing \$1.3 billion a day on behalf of the American taxpayers and getting them by another \$39 billion. That is what we are talking about.

On the reconciliation vote, if you would bring the reconciliation bill up as an open rule, you know that is a closed rule, too. You are negotiating cuts only with your side of the aisle. You do not intend to get a single Democratic vote; and the biggest cut in the bill is student loans, the party of opportunity. The second biggest cut in the bill is Medicaid; dump those problems on the States and deprive people of needed health care. Then, of course, we have the cuts in food security and other things in that bill.

But we are not going to be allowed to offer amendments to cut Star Wars, the return to the Moon for \$100 billion, corporate farm subsidies, tax giveaways. We will not be allowed to offer any amendments during the consideration of that bill. I would stay here through next week and have debate day after day and go through a series of amendments up or down on bringing some fiscal responsibility to this Congress.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The gentleman is passionate about his concern for the fiscal well-being, but he is clearly misdirected in the

sense that he will have an opportunity to vote on a number of these deficit reduction measures, a number of these savings, a number of these government reform mechanisms; and he will have the opportunity to present all of the things that he talked about in his own recommittal motion, which is a right that has been granted to the minority party.

So all of the things that he talked about, all of the things that he objects to, the sound agricultural policy that guarantees that we continue to have the safest, cheapest food supply in the world, if you want to cut those things, you can put it in your program. If you do not like the fact that we are taking Pell grants up, you could object to that through your recommittal motion.

The point is that we are here today debating the rule on the continuing resolution of the government because we have three regular order appropriations bills yet to move, because I believe, to our credit and to this Chamber's credit, to the credit of the entire House, we are not moving a last minute omnibus choo-choo train that all of us have to go home and then discover something in that that we are not real terribly proud of. I think it is a credit to the appropriators on both sides of the aisle and a credit, frankly, to both Chambers, and as the gentleman from Florida has pointed out, under Republican leadership, that are bringing us 11 individual appropriations bills that can be voted on up or down.

You have an opportunity to make your position publicly known on each of those bills, rather than having things stuffed into a last-minute train, which all of us object to and which diminishes the status of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I join the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), my colleague, in asserting that we should stay here and complete the task that is before us.

I say to my very good friend from Florida that your and my chairman of the Rules Committee speaking about closed rules in another time made the following statement, that closed rules are anathema to democracy.

When you argue that we are going to have time to do this, when we take the budget deficit matter up, what you are talking about is 1 hour on the rule, 1 hour on general debate, you say 2 hours, I will accept that, on general debate, 10 minutes in the motion to recommit, and that then is what 435 Members and five delegates have that they can deal with in terms of time.

The problems pointed out by my friend from Oregon are significant, and the things that you have heard me say in the Rules Committee, the things that disturb me and distress me most are these things having to do with education.

No one can tell me that they are not prepared to make the sacrifices for our children to have afterschool programs; and yet, what we are going to find in that program are substantial cuts. There are no afterschool programs in the counties that I represent.

In Medicaid, it is no secret what is about to happen. When we cut Medicaid, any way you cut it, you can slice it, dice it any way you want, States, get ready, because you are getting ready to have a significant problem with tax increases at that level.

What part of national sacrifice do we not understand? What part of closed rule that I heard so often in 1992 does the majority not understand that that does not give the Members of this body the opportunity to come forward with amendments that might make sense with reference to fiscal responsibility here in the House of Representatives?

Those are some of the issues.

Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and we have kicked off quite a debate here this morning. We know that it is going to be a long day as we approach the debate over the Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill, the ongoing debate over the continuing resolution to fund our government, and later today the deficit reduction package, which I dare say will not take food from any child in America's mouth, despite the overheated rhetoric of the gentleman from Oregon, respectfully the gentleman from Florida and a number of others on that side of the aisle who it would appear from their media statements discuss in the salons and parlors of the Beltway whether Republicans hate children or old people more.

I dare say that as we bring up this Deficit Reduction Act, which finally for the first time since 1997 puts us back on a serious track to finding savings not just in the discretionary side of our spending but in the mandatory side which makes up over half of Federal spending today and which slows the rate of growth in government, again, one of those Washington, D.C.-style cuts, where budgets grow 7 percent instead of 7.3 percent or they grow 6 percent instead of 6.3 percent, and we find \$50 billion worth of savings in a \$2.5 trillion per year budget.

So \$50 billion in savings over 5 years in what would then be a \$14 trillion pot. I think that almost any American would say I think that my budget growing 7 percent instead of 7.3 percent is acceptable, and I dare say to my friend from Florida, who represents, among other counties, Palm Beach County, Florida, the home of Lake Worth Avenue among other places. I think there are a number of counties that would gladly trade their tax base for his, and I would also say that I believe that somewhere in Palm Beach County there is an afterschool program

of some shape or form. There must be an afterschool program somewhere in all of Palm Beach County, Florida.

I believe that as we move through this debate it is important for us to be responsible in our rhetoric and keep our eyes on the ball, which is the looming fiscal crisis that is out there if Congress does not have the courage to get its arms around mandatory spending, which is consuming Federal spending, making up over 50 percent of it today and two-thirds of Federal spending.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield just for a quick correction?

Mr. PUTNAM. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, that is Worth Avenue in Palm Beach, not West Palm Beach. Our colleague MARK FOLEY represents that area, a Republican.

I represent Pahokee and Belle Glade, which are also in Palm Beach, and you are talking about no tax base. I just want to have that correction made.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the gentleman referred to the entire county, not his piece of the county, and I certainly am well aware of Pahokee and Belle Glade and the challenges that they have gone through.

But I believe somewhere in your county you have an afterschool program.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. In private schools.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3010, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 559 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 559

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3010) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies

for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

□ 1100

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 559 is a rule which waives all points of order against the conference report accompanying H.R. 3010 and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, the underlying legislation is one of the most important measures we consider each year. I would like to congratulate the members of the Appropriations Committee for putting together a comprehensive package that will improve the education of our children, care for our seniors and our underprivileged.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that since Republicans took control of Congress, funding for the Department of Education has doubled. More recently, over the last 5 years, total education spending has increased by nearly 50 percent. Our children will benefit from an improved educational system that will enhance their ability to succeed and better prepare the next generation of workers.

The fundamental root of all education is reading. As a parent and a former educator, the time I spent reading with my children will be forever cherished. Unfortunately, some of our youth do not have that opportunity at home. So included in this legislation is \$1 billion for reading programs that will enable States to eliminate the reading deficit through scientific research-based reading programs.

I am also very pleased that the TRIO and GEAR UP programs are included in this all important funding package. These programs assist low-income, first generation college students in their transition from high school to college. This is a difficult transition for any student, but especially for those who are the first in their families to attend college. We must continue to support programs like TRIO and GEAR UP so that these students can continue to flourish.

Mr. Speaker, another important responsibility we have is to ensure that citizens have access to health care facilities and treatments. Included in this legislation is a \$66 million increase in the Community Health Centers that are so vitally important across the Nation, but especially in rural States like my home State of West Virginia.

The National Institutes of Health continues to serve our Nation well by developing new treatments and cures for the many diseases that plague our society. With a total funding level of \$28.6 billion, the researchers at NIH will be able to continue this mission so that we become a healthier Nation and global society.

A key aspect of a healthier society is where all citizens have access to prescription drugs, and I am proud to say that as of November 15, just 2 days ago, Medicare eligible beneficiaries have been able to sign up for a prescription drug plan under Medicare. The resources provided in the underlying legislation will allow the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services to properly conduct an outreach effort that will hopefully enroll every senior that stands to benefit from this program.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the challenges that could potentially face all Americans in the coming winter, especially the high cost of natural gas. I am pleased to say that the State formula grants for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP, are funded at \$2 billion in this legislation and an additional \$1 billion will be included in the House version of the budget reconciliation bill.

As with any appropriations legislation, tough choices were made. These choices are particularly difficult when dealing with the sensitive areas of health and education. The Appropriations Committee allotted the available resources in this bill in a manner that emphasizes these programs most important to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this is solid legislation that I believe all Members should be able to support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from West Virginia for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today we consider House Resolution 559, the rule allowing consideration of the conference report accompanying the fiscal year 2006 Labor HHS Education Appropriations bill. This legislation is the clearest demonstration of the contempt for the proper functioning of this body and ultimately disrespect for democracy.

The Labor HHS Education Appropriations bill is an incredibly important piece of legislation. It determines funding levels for job training programs, community college programs, child labor protections, and community health centers.

This legislation is the primary funding vehicle for the National Institutes of Health. It determines how our government approaches timely and important issues like stem cell research,