

Mr. Speaker, this proposal makes no sense and is immoral. We cannot balance the budget on the back of the poor.

People across the country responded with compassion and generosity to the suffering and devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the federal government must continue to play a role to reduce the suffering of our fellow Americans in the gulf region.

It is not compassionate to cut funding for critical programs that in many cases would hurt those very communities.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this budget resolution.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this horrible legislation. In all my years in Congress, this is easily one of the ugliest bills I have ever seen. I can't think of a more glaring example of pandering to the rich on the backs of the poor. It's no wonder the Republican leadership needed all the extra time to bring it to the floor.

The cuts in this legislation will result in the reduction, if not elimination, of services to those who need it most, and those who are able to fight for them least. I hope that those in the faith-based community are watching closely: this is the true face of "compassionate conservatism." This from the party which claims to have cornered the market on morality.

It is hard to identify what is most egregious about this bill—there is such a litany of problems here. Is it the cuts in food stamps that will leave hundreds of thousands hungry? Is it that Medicaid funding has been decimated, adding to the rolls of the millions without adequate health insurance? Is it the hits that student loan programs take, leaving our Nation's youth with still more financial burdens? Is it the insidious weakening of environmental provisions, inserted under cover of darkness? The list goes on and on.

And despite the rhetoric from the other side, this bill will do nothing to reduce the staggering deficits we've been seeing. That is because, under the Republican fiscal policies, deficits are built into the system. As a result of the tax cuts for the wealthy that the Republicans forced down this country's throat several years ago, there is simply not enough revenue coming into the treasury to eliminate the shortfall. Indeed, unless Republicans are planning to gut just about all discretionary spending, there is simply no way to plug the hole. It's basic arithmetic.

No, what's going on here is that my Republican friends have created a monster. Their tax cuts have starved our government of its resources, and have brought us from record surpluses to record deficits. But will budget reconciliation reduce the deficit and begin to fix the problem, as they claim? No. This bill actually increases the deficit. This bill is about making room for still more tax cuts. In fact, the bill allows for up to \$106 billion in new tax cuts during FY 06, not just the \$75 billion specified in the bill. \$50 billion in spending cuts, and \$106 billion fewer dollars in the treasury, leads to an increase in the deficit to \$56 billion!

And the \$106 billion in tax cuts will not benefit the families of the troops fighting in Iraq, nor those who suffered in the gulf coast. No, these cuts are targeted to benefit corporations and the wealthy.

Three hundred thousand low-income Americans will lose food stamp assistance; 17 million Americans, half of them children, will see increased costs in Medicaid; the average student will suffer an almost \$6,000 increase in his or her college costs because of \$14.3 billion in cuts to student loan programs. So we give tax cuts to those who don't even need them, and the back of our hand to those who need assistance. This is a disgraceful bill. It is socially unjust, and it will aggravate, not help cure, our Nation's fiscal crisis. In the strongest possible terms, I urge a no vote on this bill.

DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, tonight the House leadership is making a second attempt at passing its 2005 budget reconciliation bill. This is still the wrong bill at the wrong time for America, and I will oppose it.

We have heard a host of arguments from the majority in support of this bill, which will cut vital Federal programs by approximately \$50 billion over 5 years. Some have made the case that higher deficits hurt our Nation's economy. I agree, but although this bill is titled the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, it will do nothing to ease our deficit situation.

H.R. 4241 is part of a larger strategy by the House leadership resolution that calls for a total of \$106 billion in additional tax cuts. This strategy includes \$70 billion in reconciled tax cuts and \$36 billion in unreconciled tax cuts. The spending cuts in this bill are the initial step. The majority intends to follow tonight's vote with a tax cut bill. After the tax cuts are passed and in place, there will no funds available to pay for hurricane relief. In the end, the House leadership's charade will not reduce the deficit; it will make the deficit even larger than it is today.

In the weeks after Hurricane Katrina devastated the land and the lives of so many on the gulf coast, many lawmakers said they had a newfound understanding of the extent and depth of poverty in America. They also said that the photographs from New Orleans, particularly those taken at the Superdome and the Convention Center, had demonstrated that government does have an important role in lifting Americans out of poverty. There seemed to be bipartisan support for authentic, meaningful approaches to addressing the plight of poor Americans. I would hope that this sentiment still remains. But if it does, it is not evident in the majority's reconciliation bill that is on the House floor tonight.

This bill reduces access to health care for the poor. It contains \$11.9 billion in cuts to Medicaid, including cuts of \$8.8 billion that are borne by low-income beneficiaries through higher cost-sharing and new premiums. It also gives the States the green light to eliminate periodic health care examinations and the treatment of conditions picked up by those ex-

aminations for many of America's neediest children. Maryland's Medicaid rolls cover 430,000 children and health services for 90,000 of them will be jeopardized by this provision. Approximately \$2.5 billion of the Medicaid cuts will affect elderly Americans, who will lose access to nursing home care through tougher restrictions on eligibility.

This bill reduces access to higher education. It contains \$14.3 billion in reductions to Federal student loan programs over 5 years, by increasing the interest rates and imposing a new 1 percent origination fee on all loans.

This bill will hurt many families who rely on child support payments. It reduces the Federal match for child support administrative costs from 66 percent to 50 percent, eliminating \$4.9 billion in help for the States to enforce child support orders. The majority, which claims to want to help our States, is shifting the cost of enforcement to them. It will not save money in the long run, and it will hurt struggling single parent families across America.

As a result of this bill, fewer children in foster care will be eligible for payments, and \$577 million will be cut from these funds. This bill will also limit food stamp eligibility to only those households who are receiving cash assistance through TANF, and requires that legal permanent residents live here for 7 years, rather than the current 5 years, before they can receive food stamps. The result will be \$844 million less in food stamp assistance to low-income families.

The legislation before us is also making it harder for some of the most disadvantaged Americans, those who receive Supplemental Security Income, SSI, to receive assistance. It imposes an extra level of review for certain disability determinations and for those who are found eligible after lengthy delays, this bill requires that retroactive payments are spread out over a longer period of time, for a total savings of \$732 million.

So in the name of paying for hurricane relief, we cut funding for the programs that would help the neediest Americans, including many of the gulf coast citizens who were affected by that disaster.

At this time of economic uncertainty for our country, the so-called Deficit Reduction Act places the burden on the shoulders of the American families least able to carry it. It is clear that this legislation will make painful cuts, and when combined with the tax legislation will increase deficit problems that we face, and so I must vote against it.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR,
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Conference Report on H.R. 3010, which provides Federal funding for health, education and worker programs.

On healthcare, the bill takes a huge step backward in efforts to maintain basic health