

important to note, however, how we arrived at this point.

The last Congress was the first since the modern budget process was instituted that neglected to pass a budget despite the Democrats having complete control of the Federal Government. The inaction of the last Congress certainly did not excuse work on our part in this Congress. Instead, it made our responsibility all the more critical, and Mr. Speaker, this House has met that responsibility.

Through an unprecedented and lengthy debate 2 months ago, the House deliberated and ultimately passed a resolution, cutting \$61 billion in Federal spending. In March, the House passed and sent to the Senate two short-term funding bills that cut a total of \$10 billion and kept the government functioning. Yesterday, again, this Chamber sent to the Senate a bill to avoid a shutdown and to ensure that our men and women in uniform will be paid through the end of the fiscal year. The response from the Senate has been consistent—deafening silence.

Despite their agreement on the two short-term measures, the Senate has not sent a single bill or a single plan for this year's budget to the House. They have a responsibility to act now, and I call on them to pass H.R. 1363 to continue cutting Federal spending and to keep the government open.

Mr. Speaker, this debate is not merely about passing any budget; it is about passing a responsible one. Budgets, despite their countless line items and technical language, fundamentally reflect our priorities and our values as a nation.

Over the past 3 years, the administration and the previous Congress have added \$5 trillion to our national debt, bringing the total to over \$14 trillion. Trillions are being spent each year to feed our spending addiction, with nearly 42 cents of every dollar being mortgaged against our children's future. Perhaps the most sobering fact is that, after July 27, every cent the government spends through the rest of the year will be borrowed. This is money that will have to be repaid by our children and grandchildren long after we are gone. We can no longer saddle the next generation with the bill for today's good intentions.

Mr. Speaker, with America now engaged in three conflicts in the Middle East, with seniors worried about Social Security payments and with Federal services in the balance, shutting down the government sends the wrong message at a critical time—but so does continuing the spending binge that has plagued Washington for far too long. Both must be achieved and we must do so now.

Mr. Speaker, this House has acted. Four times we have passed resolutions to keep the government functioning and to cut out-of-control spending. The overwhelming mandate from the American people last November was that the status quo cannot continue, and we

have answered. Just yesterday, while the Senate and this administration have stalled and delayed, we again passed a resolution that would have cut spending and would have met our responsibilities without interruption.

This Chamber has acted, Mr. Speaker, and I hope the Senate and the administration will answer the call.

MEDICARE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) for 4 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my complete disapproval for the way this House is being run by the Republican majority.

To put it bluntly, the majority is neglecting its duty to address the biggest issues facing this country—creating jobs and implementing a fair and sensible budget that makes investments in our people while bringing down the deficit.

For example, to date, this majority has not brought to the floor a single piece of legislation to help create jobs. Instead, we've seen bill after bill that would actually increase joblessness, including their omnibus spending bill, H.R. 1, which would cut nearly three-quarters of a million American jobs.

While it is clear that we must take aggressive action to bring down the Federal deficit, it shouldn't come at the expense of guaranteeing health care to our seniors. Yet that's exactly the case with the new Republican budget proposal, which uses our deficit as an excuse to achieve their long-held goal of ending Medicare as we know it today.

Medicare has been a very successful program to ensure seniors have guaranteed access to affordable, quality care. It has its problems, to be sure, and they must be addressed, but we should not throw the baby out with the bath water. Before deciding to essentially junk Medicare, as the Republican budget would do, let's go back in time a little.

Before Medicare, seniors were the most likely group to be uninsured. Barely 14 percent of them had health insurance coverage at all. Before Medicare, almost one-third of all seniors were in poverty, and countless others would have been if not for the large sacrifices borne by their families. Before Medicare, seniors needed to make a false choice—go to the doctor and pay out of pocket or put food on the table and pay the bills. It also wasn't for seniors' lack of interest in being insured; it was because insurance companies simply had little interest in insuring a group of people they deemed too expensive to cover.

Let's be honest. The older you get, the more likely you are to need health care. We are not a cohort that insurance companies are exactly fighting each other to cover.

It is clear that Medicare has been absolutely critical in providing access to

quality care at an affordable cost for seniors. It is responsible for helping lift so many of our parents and grandparents out of poverty, giving them peace of mind after a lifetime of work. It has also freed up their children as well, giving them the opportunity to invest in the future of their own children instead of having to worry about whether or not their parents are going to get the health care they need.

It is a remarkable success story, one that has helped Americans prosper, but this Republican budget proposal announced this week essentially throws it out the window.

First, it reopens the doughnut hole for today's Medicare beneficiaries, like for Beverly, from Morro Bay, who, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, no longer has to worry about how she will afford her important prescription medications if she reaches the doughnut hole again this year. Their plan will roll back the new preventative screenings and wellness checkups that the law provided for with no co-pays at all. Their plan would roll back important cost-containing and quality-improving measures from the program, and it repeals resources in place to reduce fraud and abuse, making this program more costly and less solvent.

But the centerpiece of the Republican proposal is the plan to privatize this critical program and end Medicare as we know it.

Let's be crystal clear: This isn't a reform. It isn't a tweak. It isn't a natural progression. It is nothing more than the end of the very program which, right now, guarantees health care coverage for America's seniors.

Medicare is much like Social Security, which guarantees a pension for seniors regardless of the twists and the turns of the market and our economy. Medicare guarantees health care coverage for our seniors. It guarantees it. But the Ryan budget bill ends that by turning Medicare into a voucher program with no guarantee of coverage—none at all. Instead, each senior would get a set amount of money to purchase a private insurance policy at an amount not high enough to start with and less each succeeding year. In fact, each year, the voucher would cover less and less.

These are the important factors of this budget, which is why we cannot accept it. We must save Medicare.

Who'll pay the rest of the cost of this care? If you guessed "my grandmother or my grandfather" you'd be right.

And this is how the Ryan budget "saves" money.

It saves the federal government money by shifting the cost directly onto seniors.

In fact, while the government would save about \$600 per beneficiary, the cost to the senior would jump by an estimated \$12,500 a year in premiums, co-pays, and other out-of-pocket expenses—and that amount is expected to grow over time.

That estimate is about double the average annual out-of-pocket cost for a senior in Medicare today.

The CBO is clear in its warning about this program: Some seniors will forgo insurance all together, while others will find barriers to services that might save or improve their lives—both by plans not covering particular services or through such high costs that seniors forgo the care they need.

The bottom line—seniors will pay more for health insurance—much more—than they do today.

Some will get substandard coverage because they can't afford anything better.

Some won't be able to afford a policy at all, so they will forgo coverage and care.

The Republican budget has the wrong priorities.

It focuses on our families and communities for cuts, while doing nothing to root out waste in our tax system—like the tens of billions in subsidies for oil, gas and coal companies, or those that go to giant ethanol corporations.

And it continues the tax cuts for the wealthiest among us as well and even calls for more.

These priorities are all wrong . . . they are dangerous . . . and we must stand up against them.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the Republican Budget that will end Medicare as we know it.

Let's make responsible choices so that we can lower the deficit without doing so on the backs of our seniors.

TAKING A BUTTER KNIFE TO SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RIBBLE) for 3 minutes.

Mr. RIBBLE. Mr. Speaker, we are now drawing close to a government shutdown.

I have been sitting over here, listening to my colleagues from both sides speak this morning. I want everyone to know; I want the American people to know, and I want the folks in northeast Wisconsin to know that this is not about riders or extreme partisan ideology. It is about spending.

I will tell you that I am surprised at some of the language. A moment ago, one of my colleagues said we wanted to take a chain saw to spending. A few days ago, the President said we wanted to use an ax to cut spending. I will tell you that it's more like a butter knife. We spent in March of this year alone \$189 billion in deficit. Our CR would have cut \$8 billion. So instead of \$189 billion, we would have spent \$181 billion in deficit. That is not a chain saw. That is not an ax. Some Americans have been calling me from home, saying it's not even serious.

It is time that this Congress takes our fiscal situation seriously for the protection of our country, for the protection of our programs, for the protection of our seniors. It is time for this Congress to act and to act now. Yesterday, we offered up a plan to fund our troops at the request of Secretary Gates, and we've been turned down once again.

I call on my colleagues not to wait another day, another hour, another minute. Let's fund this government,

and let's move on to the big task at hand—the next budget—so that we can do what the last Congress failed to do, which is to provide certainty to the American people and certainty to job creators so they will know what is coming ahead tomorrow.

A KABUKI DANCE OVER CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 4 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, the Kabuki dance is almost over, and like many of you, I'm wondering if we have lost our senses. By all reports by Leader REID and Speaker BOEHNER, they are very close. It's not about money. Do you know what it's about? It's about contraceptive pills. I can't believe that we are sitting here today, about to shut down the government, over contraceptive pills—because that's what it's all about.

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It's all about defunding one organization, Planned Parenthood, that provides explicitly and only services around contraceptive pills, breast cancer screenings, STD screenings, and cervical cancer screenings. Not one dime goes for abortion services. In fact, the services provided under family planning have to be excluded completely. Different locations, different service providers, different staff. And on top of it, it's all audited. So not one dime for abortions. This is only for family planning services.

So in the end we're going to go to the American people and say, yes, we shut down the government, we told all our men and women serving in faraway places, trying to keep the world free, and keep it free for us, and keep terrorists at bay, we are going to tell them, no, you are not going to get paid for a while because we didn't want to fund contraceptive pills for women who are poor in this country.

The women who access Planned Parenthood, and one in five women accesses Planned Parenthood at some time in her life, the average income is \$33,000 a year. These are women who can't access health care for reproductive services because they're working in jobs where they don't have health insurance. And we're saying shut down the government. Shut down the government. Don't pay our men and women serving overseas. Close down the national parks. Make sure none of our exports get to their destinations. Don't let any more small business loans be offered. Just shut it down, because we don't want to make contraceptive pills available to women in this country. It's absolutely shameful.

This is a message to Speaker BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, this is your opportunity for a profile in courage. This is your opportunity to say to your caucus and to the American people, I am not going to allow this country to be shut down over contraceptive pills.

CUT FEDERAL SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) for 3 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I have listened to a textbook case, I believe, of self-induced amnesia this morning from my liberal colleagues. But the American people spoke in November, and I heard the mandate: Cut Federal spending so that more resources can be left in the hands of American families and small businesses so that they can save and invest in order to grow jobs.

I responded to their mandate by voting for billions in cuts. Unfortunately, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle refused to receive the message, but the message is still true.

Let's put the budget issue into a little perspective. It actually is quite simple. They didn't pass the budget when they had control, and now we have to clean up the mess. My liberal Democrat friends want to shut down government in order to maintain their overspending status quo, even at the expense of not sending paychecks to our courageous troops and their families at home.

On the other hand, I and my Republican colleagues want to keep the government open, pay our troops, and respond to the people's demands for cuts in spending and a return to the blessings of freedom.

Our Republican leadership has worked and negotiated with the other side in order to keep the government open, while cutting deficit spending, but it has been to no avail. The Democrats won't give up less than one-half of 1 percent spending in order to keep the government running on a trimmed-down budget and pay our troops. The argument has come down to the size and scope of the spending. And President Obama, Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID, and the Senate Democrats, like a stubborn mule, refuse to move in the direction of their masters, the Constitution and the American people who are telling us to cut spending.

It's time for them to start listening to the American people. It can't be just about the next election; it must be about the next generation.

PAY THE MILITARY

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, we are here because the last Congress did not do its job and for the first time since 1974 didn't have a budget. So we're having to do last year's work in addition to this year's work. And in the meantime, we look around at who is actually being hurt. And there were many of us that were inquiring over the last month, all right, if there is a shutdown, is the military going to be paid?

Well, we find out the military is essential, the military will be working in