

That's why we need to cut spending, Mr. Speaker. We need to cut our spending. We need to cap our spending at no more than 20 percent of the GDP. That's what it was traditionally. It has now eased up to 23 percent. We have to take it back down.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out, as my colleague from Missouri said, that when President Obama was Senator Obama, he spoke on the Senate floor and voted against raising the debt limit, saying that it was a failure of leadership. He doesn't admit that now, that it's a failure of leadership. He doesn't even admit that he's part of the problem. And part of the problem is that he has no plan. When we asked yesterday in Rules, "Where's the President's plan?" we were told it was in his speech at George Washington University. Well, even his own staff people, even his own appointees, say they can't score a speech.

Republicans have a plan, and our plan is to cut, cap, and balance. We need a constitutional amendment, Mr. Speaker, in order to force the Congress to do its job. Past Congresses, as it has been shown, couldn't do it. We're willing to do that. There is no leadership on the part of the Democrats. The budget that the President presented in February was voted down, 97-0, in the Senate. Even his own party will not support him.

And what about all these corporate loopholes that the President and our colleagues keep talking about? The President talks about these corporate jets, but he doesn't admit the fact that the loopholes he's talking about, which he calls subsidies, that loophole was in the stimulus that he forced through this Congress, that no Republican voted for. So the corporate loophole for the jets is one the President put into place, and now he's condemning it.

Mr. Speaker, we need our President and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to fess up to the fact that they've created this problem, they have no plan to solve it, and all they want to do is throw barbs at the Republicans who are showing the courage to do something about this serious debt crisis that we face in this country.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

In 2011, we see that voter suppression is real and rearing its ugly head in too many Republican-led legislatures across this country. With only 15 months left before the next Presidential election, Republicans are rewriting voting laws to require photo identification at the polls, reduce the number of days of early voting, and to enhance voting restrictions against felons and out-of-state students.

Since January, voter ID laws have passed in Florida, Wisconsin, South

Carolina, Alabama, Texas, Kansas, and Tennessee. Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin and Governor Rick Perry of Texas both signed laws this year that would require each voter to show an official, valid photo ID to cast a ballot, despite the fact that studies show up to 11 percent of eligible voters nationwide don't have government-issued IDs.

In Florida, Governor Rick Scott signed a bill to tighten restrictions on third-party voter organizations and shorten the number of early voting days. Governor Scott also helped to pass a ban on felon voting rights, forcing nonviolent offenders to wait 5 years after completing their sentences to apply to have their rights restored.

The Florida legislature also passed new laws that makes it tougher for get-out-the-vote groups to register new voters and reduces the number of early voting days from 14 to 8.

Make no mistake: We've been down this road before with Jim Crow laws. These smoke-and-mirror policies are poll taxes and literacy tests by another name. Communities must be alert and aware of these new laws. We will not allow the work, sacrifice and death of our forefathers and civil rights leaders to have been in vain. We are prepared for this fight, and fight we will.

The new voter ID laws and other restrictions have the potential to disenfranchise millions of eligible voters. Minorities, poor people, seniors, and students are among those that will be impacted the most.

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The Justice Department must get involved. They must make sure that these laws that we have fought so hard for on voting rights are not undermined.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, when I became a Member of Congress, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. And I rise today to affirm that commitment by speaking out against State efforts to undermine the basic right to vote—a right that has been affirmed by no less than three amendments to the Constitution: the Voting Rights Act; over 150 years of litigation, blood, sweat, tears, and lies. No right under the Constitution has been more defended by the American people. Yet Wisconsin just passed a very restrictive voter ID, photo ID card in order to vote.

I can remember when then-Representative Walker and I, the Governor of Wisconsin, debated this issue. And he, like so many other people, said, Well, what's the big deal? What's wrong with having a photo ID? You need a photo ID to go to Blockbuster's and get a video. You need a photo ID to drive. You need a photo ID to get medicine. Well, getting a video from Blockbuster's is not a right. The right to vote is a very, very important badge of democracy in this country. We need a

very high bar before we make it more difficult to exercise our rights as U.S. citizens.

And what's the bar that Wisconsin uses to justify its law? The Wisconsin Attorney General's office found in the 2-year Election Fraud Task Force investigation that there were 20 instances of possible voter fraud out of 3 million votes cast. That's seven-thousandths of 1 percent. And a photo ID would not have prevented any of these discrepancies.

People of color are singled out for disenfranchisement when you consider in Wisconsin that 55 percent of African American women, 49 percent of African American men, 59 per of Latinas, 46 percent of Latinos don't have this kind of ID. And when you consider the 18- to 24-year-old group, 78 percent of African American males don't have this ID and 66 percent of African American women don't have the ID. I wonder who they're trying to disenfranchise.

We implore the Department of Justice to intervene and prevent these extremely transparent efforts to burden likely Democratic voters at the polls.

IN SUPPORT OF THE CUT, CAP, AND BALANCE ACT

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I rise today in support of the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle here to support the bill when it comes to the floor later today. This legislation not only provides a workable framework to avert an economically dangerous default on our obligations but it also sets the stage for real structural changes to the way the Federal Government spends our tax dollars, something that the President has yet to propose.

Lately, there have been stories and speculation about the major credit rating agencies such as Moody's and Standard and Poor's threatening to downgrade America's creditworthiness should we fail to raise the statutory debt ceiling. These ratings are more than letters on paper. They affect Americans in all walks of life and in very real ways. A downgrade of our Nation's credit rating would make mortgages more expensive, make it more difficult to get a loan for a car, and could make student loans unaffordable.

While default would likely ensure downgrade, a debt ceiling increase is no longer alone sufficient to ensure our AAA credit rating. Moody's has warned that the outlook to our bond rating would remain negative should any plan going forward not include long-term deficit reduction. It is not enough to simply raise the limit on the credit card and continue making the minimum monthly payments. We must begin to pay down our debt.

One need look no further than Greece and Portugal as examples of governments which have failed to address