

United States is getting its fiscal house in order. And if we do that, we can bring stability to the shaky global economy. We can reassure skeptical business owners and encourage them to create jobs. And we can create a better financial future for our children and our grandchildren.

I believe our choice is clear. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, when you reach for your voting cards today, first take a glance at the pictures in your wallets, of your children and your grandchildren.

We are not Republicans; we are not Democrats. We are Americans. Today, let's put the American people first.

FAMINE IN EASTERN AFRICA

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the catastrophic famine that continues to unfold in the Horn of Africa. Eastern Africa is currently in the grips of the worst drought in 60 years, affecting 11 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya. According to the U.N., Somalia now faces the highest malnutrition rates in the world, and some 3 million Somalis are in desperate need of immediate emergency aid.

The U.N. estimates that tens of thousands of Somalis have died of drought-related causes in the past few months, and acute malnutrition rates in the country's southern region now exceed 30 percent.

Thousands more are fleeing areas controlled by the al Qaeda-affiliated militant group, Al-Shabaab which, even in the face of such large-scale human suffering, refuses to allow major humanitarian groups to deliver aid. Some 50,000 Somalis have returned to the capital, despite continued violence and instability, in search of food and medicine.

Others have sought refuge from hunger and warfare in neighboring countries. Nearly 400,000 Somalis have crowded into Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, a complex designed to house only 90,000 people. Another 9,000 arrive in the camp each week, and thousands of other Somalis continue to flee Ethiopia in search of food. Many, particularly children and the elderly, do not survive the harsh trek.

The warning signs of impending disaster have been visible for months, but the international community has been slow to respond. Aid is slowly now beginning to trickle in, however. The U.N.'s World Food Program has begun an emergency airlift of food. The first flight arrived in Mogadishu yesterday, bringing 10 tons of nutritional supplements for children. The World Food Program says that is enough to treat 3,500 malnourished children for 1 month. Clearly, the need is far greater. The World Food Program plans to increase its efforts in hope of reaching

over 2 million people in Somalia's south.

Likewise, the United States has provided much assistance to 4.4 million drought-affected people in Eastern Africa. Since last October, our government has given \$383 million in life-saving aid, including 348,000 metric tons of food.

□ 1050

Further, this week the Obama administration announced a further \$28 million in emergency assistance for famine relief in Somalia. This aid is critical, and I commend the President for these steps. However, the scale of the current crisis requires a much greater response, as well as creative solutions tailored to the unique threats posed by Somalia's persistent instability and violence. For example, because al Shabaab is a terrorist organization, we continue to impose restrictions on aid organizations delivering assistance to the hard-hit regions under its control. We need to work with these humanitarian groups to ensure that, despite Somalia's continuing warfare and lack of governance, desperately needed aid can reach the most vulnerable men, women, and children.

Mr. Speaker, we need to act quickly to fight famine and save lives. We also need to address the long-term underlying causes that have left Somalia's people so vulnerable to drought and malnutrition. Even before the most recent crisis, Somalia was locked in a cycle of warfare, lawlessness, and bitter poverty. One expert recently called Somalia's current plight a catastrophic failure of all the systems that people rely on to survive. That's why part of our response must be an investment in resilience and food security; part of our response must be an effort to address the long-standing violent conflict that has torn Somalia apart; part of our response must go toward long-term economic development and capacity building.

We need to act immediately to ensure that humanitarian aid can reach the millions of eastern Africans who face imminent malnutrition and starvation that we're watching every day on television. I urge the United States and the international community to immediately scale up efforts to deliver urgent assistance to children and other vulnerable individuals.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

MAKING PROGRESS AND HISTORY WITH THE BUDGET CONTROL ACT AND BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

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

Mr. PENCE. As America watches and the world watches from afar, Washington, D.C., debates a debt ceiling increase and debates various proposals for confronting it in a manner that is consistent with our commitment to this generation and the next.

For the past 10 years, I've been fighting runaway Federal spending, deficits, debt, and takeovers here in Washington, D.C., by both political parties. Now I recognize if you owe debts, pay debts. This Congress has an obligation to defend the full faith and credit of the United States of America and find a way to pay our bills. But this Congress also has an obligation to keep faith with this and future generations by restoring fiscal responsibility and discipline to our national Treasury.

I have come to the conclusion over the last decade that Washington, D.C., is not only broke; it's broken. As a colleague of mine said earlier this week, the American people don't just want a deal, they want a solution. And I rise to say that I believe a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States is that solution.

I told my colleagues earlier this week I did not want to vote for any increase in the debt ceiling unless this Congress did everything in its power to send a balanced budget amendment to the Senate and to the States. Earlier today, we learned that Speaker BOEHNER and Leader CANTOR had made a decision for this Friday to bring two separate balanced budget amendments to the floor, and I heartily support their decision.

The first balanced budget amendment will include spending limitations and require a supermajority on tax increases, and I support those measures. But the second balanced budget amendment hasn't seen action here on the House floor for 15 years. Fifteen years ago, what is commonly referred to as the "historic" or the "clean" balanced budget amendment received overwhelming and bipartisan support, some 300 votes on the floor of the House of Representatives and almost passed the Senate.

I believe that by bringing that historic balanced budget amendment to the floor of this Congress this week we are doing all we can to send the balanced budget amendment to the Senate and to the States. And with that, I inform my colleagues today that I will support the Boehner plan, I will support the Budget Control Act, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in doing the same.

Now, the Budget Control Act has much to recommend it. It has no tax increases, and we have confirmed from the CBO dollar-for-dollar spending cuts to match any increase in the debt ceiling. And there are mechanisms for additional cuts and additional reforms. But the Budget Control Act also includes a requirement that the Senate vote between October and November of this year on a balanced budget amendment. Again, let me say, a balanced