

jobs, get Americans back to work, get our economy back to work. And the President's laid out a good, bold program.

Incidentally, it's paid for. We're not going to borrow money to put these construction workers back to work. It's paid for. The way it's paid for is that those 1 percent of Americans, the superwealthy who've had an income of more than a million dollars a year after all of the deductions—that's after adjusted gross income, a million dollars or more—they have enjoyed enormous tax reductions over the last 11 years, what we would ask is some basic fairness, that they contribute to putting Americans back to work with a small increase in their taxes over and above a million dollars. No increase below.

Mr. TONKO. Well, I think to just match some words to what your most recent statement was, we have to think back, too, and look at recent history to have it speak to us. We borrowed totally for the millionaire-billionaire tax cuts and for two wars that were being fought, and now we wonder why we have a problem, a deficit situation, and why we want to blame the worker.

Now, look. We say it's about investing in the human fabric, in the core individual, making certain that the skills that can be unleashed by that investment are put into a work situation that can enable us to be a nation of discovery, a nation of innovation, of design, of invention. That's America in her greatest moments, and I think those moments lie ahead of us.

I'm optimistic that if we do this plan of investment, we will see tremendous growth in our economy. We will see our competitive edge in the global market get all the sharper and more keen. However, it takes that investment. It takes that vision, laser sharp, and it takes the commitment to stand up against this tide to just slash and burn, as you indicated, after so many were witnessing that the very few were given a gift for which we borrowed.

□ 1600

Now we're asking for someone else to have their turn—America's middle class.

Pursuing the American Dream deserves that sort of attention. It deserves the dignity of work. It deserves the respect of those who lead this Nation, and for them to do it in a fashion that is going to respond in fullest measure.

Representative GARAMENDI, it has been a pleasure to join with you on the floor.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The gentleman from New York says it so eloquently.

Long ago, I did a study of the California economy. We decided there were basically five things that needed to be done, and now, from the Federal level, I'd add a sixth. They are the things that you've been talking about:

Education, the best education in the world, so that our workers are capable of carrying on the new tasks.

Research, as I discussed earlier, from our laboratories and our universities of the new products.

We need to make sure the research is there and then take the research out of the laboratories and create the new products—making it in America because manufacturing matters.

The fourth thing is the infrastructure, which I was discussing and that I know you discussed while I was gone here, and laying the foundation upon which the economy will grow—transportation, communication, sanitation, water-flood protection—all of those infrastructure items.

Then we need to always think in this context about our Nation's security and use our money wisely to provide the kind of defense and security that we need. That's also an energy issue, which we didn't bring up today but that we will the next time we talk.

Finally, the sixth thing is one that I think is so very, very important, which is the willingness to change. What we did yesterday will probably not work today or tomorrow, so we must always be willing to change and not be stuck back in the 1790s, but rather deal with the reality of the world in which we live today and change our systems and be willing to adapt and change.

Mr. TONKO. This has been a Special Order hour that I've enjoyed. I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And I thank you.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

GOP WOMEN'S HOUR: A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIBBLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, I really want to talk about something that I think is very critical for this Nation. It's about how we get our spending in order.

I came from local government before I got here and then State government before I got here. Actually, I came from a household where I ran the checking account for my husband and myself and our family. In all cases, I balanced things. When I made out my bills once a month, I did what this lady is doing right here: I balanced the checkbook first to see how much money I had in the account so I knew how much I was spending and, more importantly, whether I was overspending, so that next month I could ratchet back on the spending to balance things out. When I was a township trustee, the same thing. We looked at our revenue sheets and our income sheets at every single meeting twice a month and balanced things out. In Ohio, like 49 other States, we have to balance our State budget, in our case, every 2 years.

So you can imagine the surprise I had when I got to Congress and realized we don't balance our budget at the Federal level, that we don't balance our checkbook. I was amazed why we don't do this. Maybe that's the reason we continue to have bloated spending that is weighing down, not just the future that lays before us, but our children's future and their children's future.

In 1982, Ronald Reagan said regarding a balanced budget that only a constitutional amendment will do the job. He said, We've tried the carrot and it failed. With the stick of a balanced budget amendment, we can stop government's squandering, overtaxing ways and save our economy.

Man, that was 29 years ago. I've got to repeat that because that's kind of like where we are today.

Only a constitutional amendment will do the job. We've tried the carrot and it failed. With the stick of a balanced budget amendment, we can stop government's squandering, overtaxing ways and save our economy.

Ronald Reagan was right. In fact, in 1995, under legislation that was in the House, which was controlled by the Republicans under Newt Gingrich, they tried to pass a balanced budget amendment. Lost it by one vote. I believe tomorrow or the next day or sometime this week, under the leadership of JOHN BOEHNER, we're going to try this same thing again. I just think it's imperative that we don't lose that vote.

The American people, I believe, are on the side of myself and my female colleagues who are going to join me here this afternoon, because the American people get the fact that we are not balancing the checkbook. When we don't balance the checkbook, we don't know what we're spending. If we don't know what we're spending, we don't know how to correct our past mistakes and plan appropriately for the future.

So, in the last election in 2010, when a lot of seats were changed in this very room, I believe it was a mandate by the citizens of our great Nation who said, Enough is enough. Stop the spending and stop it now. The United States is staring down the barrel of a \$15 trillion accumulation of debt. \$3.7 trillion of new debt in just 2 years is more than a figure, my colleagues—it is a wake-up call.

When President Obama took office, he said he would correct the problem, and in 2009, he put out an \$821 billion stimulus program to stimulate the economy. Of course it cost us over \$1 trillion with interest because, you see, we didn't balance the checkbook, so we really didn't know what that was going to cost. Guess what? It didn't stimulate the economy. It didn't resolve unemployment.

For the last 33 months, it has been over 8 percent. In fact, for 31 of 33 months, it has been at 9 percent or higher. In October of this year, 14 million workers were unemployed, with an additional 8.9 million working part

time because they couldn't find full-time work. There were 2.5 million workers who were available for work but who had to stop actively searching because of poor economic conditions. All told, over 16 percent of the United States workforce is now unemployed or underemployed. I truly believe it's because we can't get our fiscal house in order right here on Capitol Hill, and I believe the linchpin in all that is a balanced budget amendment.

I'm going to turn right now to one of my colleagues to have her weigh in on this, the gentlelady from the good State of Alabama.

Mrs. ROBY. I thank my friend from Ohio for yielding, and I do appreciate the opportunity to spend time again with my GOP women colleagues here on the floor to talk about these important issues.

With your visual here on the floor, I think you have really done a great job of encapsulating what the issue is, which is that hardworking American taxpayers are balancing their budgets every single day. That's why almost 75 percent of Americans are with us on this. They want this balanced budget amendment, and this is a bipartisan action that can be taken in order to restore fiscal sanity. We know that every day there are more and more Americans who are out of work and that there are more and more Americans who have just given up looking for a job. We're not setting a real good example here in Congress when we can't get our fiscal house in order.

□ 1610

I just want to point back to our jobs agenda, the 22 bills that we have sitting over in the hands of the Senate right now that we know will get government out of the way so that the private sector can do what they do best, and that is create jobs. You know, there are so many men and women, small business owners throughout this country that are looking to us to reduce the size of government, get the job-killing regulations out of the way. And they have capital to invest, to create jobs, but they're not doing it because of the uncertainty associated with what's going on right here in Washington, D.C.

Here we have a proposal before us. We have a way for us to restore this fiscal sanity; and that is for us to balance our budget, not spend more money than we bring in. We've talked about this before when we were down here during the debt ceiling debate. You can't pick up the phone and call your credit card company and say, Hey, I owe you all this money, and I can't make my monthly payment, and I can't make the interest payment, so can you make me another loan just so I can pay the interest payment on the money that I already owe you? That's where this Federal Government is right now. Now if you can't do that from your kitchen table with the bills that you owe, why in the world should the

Federal Government be allowed to do that either?

So I would just say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in both the House and the Senate, let's do this together. Let's do this for the American people. Let's do this for all the people that are out of work who are looking to us to lead by example and get our fiscal house in order, just like the millions of hardworking, tax-paying Americans do every single day.

Thank you for the opportunity again to share this hour with you.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. I thank my colleague from Alabama.

I would just like to add with all of this that I think the reason why we have such uncertainty in the marketplace with the job creators is because they're looking at us and are saying, You lack fiscal discipline here on Capitol Hill.

One of my colleagues said to me, Well, why do we need a balanced budget amendment to do this? Well, quite frankly, because it will tie our hands and force us to do what every single American is doing across the Nation, which is looking at their cash on hand to figure out how much they've got and how much they can spend, balancing the checkbook before they even attempt to pay a bill. And if you don't have it in the form of an amendment, future legislators will be able to undo anything we do here today or tomorrow, and that's why the amendment is critical. It will force us to do what 49 out of 50 States already do, which is what local governments do all across Ohio and across the Nation, which is what families do at their kitchen table each and every month, if not more than a month, balance the checkbook and figure out what's in there.

I now would like to yield to my other good friend, the gentlewoman from Kansas.

Ms. JENKINS. I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

As a CPA who spent nearly two decades helping American families chart their way toward fiscal responsibility, I can tell you that if you want to get serious about getting your finances in order, then the very first thing you have to do is balance your budget. If we want to see our economy moving again, if we want to see the job market growing again, if we want to ensure that we remain the most powerful and prosperous nation on Earth, then we must balance our budget.

Yet if we've learned one thing over the past few years, it's that we can't expect Washington to balance its books on its own. To really force the tough spending decisions and to ensure we spend our money as efficiently as possible, we must require that Washington balance its budget. To put it frankly, America needs a balanced budget amendment. We came close 16 years ago; but since then, our national debt has grown from \$4 trillion to \$15 trillion. We're facing a crisis. We need a

balanced budget amendment, and we need it now.

But if you don't want to take my word for it, you can take the word of our colleagues from across the aisle who, in the past few years, have said things like this: "The issue of balancing the budget is not a conservative or liberal one, nor is it an easy one; but it is an essential one." Or again, I quote a friend from across the aisle, "I'm proud to be part of a coalition that is actively working to begin putting our country back on secure economic footing. The balanced budget amendment won't achieve that all by itself, but it will help ensure that we don't repeat the mistakes that helped create our current situation." And finally, again, I quote a friend from across the aisle, "This amendment would send a strong signal to the financial markets, U.S. businesses, and the American people that we are serious about stabilizing our economy for the long term." And what did the Democrat leadership say about this very issue in past years? They said they would welcome it. But what are they saying today? No. They're whipping against it.

It is time for our friends across the aisle to put our children before their politics. Stop fighting this landmark achievement out of sheer partisan spite, and do the right things. We all need to support this measure not because it's easy, but we need to show the courage because this is what matters. So let's come together to take a stand for fiscal responsibility, show our kids and grandkids that we cherish their future, and pass the balanced budget amendment.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. I thank my colleague from Kansas. And I couldn't agree with you more. The passage of a balanced budget amendment will legally prevent us from spending more than we take in. It is the only method guaranteed to control our spending. By controlling our spending, we will lower the deficit, which will lower interest rates, which will contribute to greater economic growth. The passage of a balanced budget amendment will provide job creators with a better understanding of the economic environment in which they can expect to do business—that's called certainty—thereby encouraging investment and expansion. I could go on and on.

I will now turn to my good friend from Florida because I want to hear your thoughts on this balanced budget amendment.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the gentlelady from Ohio for yielding to me, and I congratulate her for her leadership on this very important fiscal issue that really permeates throughout our society and throughout our families and throughout the entire budgetary crisis that we find ourselves in.

I'm so pleased that for the first time in nearly 15 years the House will be voting this week on a constitutional amendment to balance the Federal

budget. As a mother and a grandmother, I have long supported this proposal. It will ensure that we fix the burden—and that's what it is, the burden of endless deficits that has fallen on future generations. Unfortunately, as you know, Mrs. SCHMIDT, the need for this amendment has never been greater. A constitutional amendment can set us on a path to long-term fiscal stability and restore confidence after decades of deficits.

Two years ago, the United States experienced its first trillion-dollar Federal budget deficit. We thought things were bad then. Last year, we experienced our second trillion-dollar deficit. We thought things were bad then. This year, our annual deficit has reached over \$1.3 trillion, the third trillion-dollar-plus deficit in our Nation's history. It took the United States over 200 years, from the presidency of George Washington to the presidency of Bill Clinton, to amass the amount of debt that was added since the year 2006. That is shocking. And according to the U.S. Treasury Department, our Nation's debt currently stands at nearly \$15 trillion. Think of that astronomical amount, \$15 trillion, which amounts to—how much is that per person? Because the figure is so large that we can't fathom, we can't really appreciate what it is. It amounts to a \$47,900 tax for every living American. The debt has sharply increased to nearly 100 percent this year, the highest level since World War II. These are alarming statistics.

Growing debt increases the probability of a sudden fiscal crisis during which investors would lose confidence and the government could lose its ability to borrow at affordable rates. If we do nothing, the annual deficit will grow to consume nearly one-fifth of the entire U.S. economy, and the debt would grow to Greece-like levels of over 100 percent. I believe that just as our families and neighbors—like the lady you show there on that poster—have had to tighten our belts during this recession, well, then, the Federal bureaucracy must do the same.

□ 1620

While the budget reforms that we have passed in the House were a good start, only a constitutional amendment can ensure that we will not stray from the path of a balanced budget as we did 10 years ago. A constitutional amendment will help ensure a future of stability for our children and for our grandchildren.

So I urge all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in favor of this balanced budget amendment. It's history in the making this week, and I thank Mrs. SCHMIDT for her leadership and for trying to straighten out this fiscal insanity mess that we find ourselves in.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. I thank my good friend from Florida.

As I said a moment ago, a balanced budget amendment will legally prevent

us, tie our hands from spending more than we take in. It's the only method available to control spending in Washington, and it will lower our interest rates which will contribute to economic growth.

This balanced budget amendment is a job creator because it puts certainty back into the marketplace. It will remove legislative gimmicks—you know, the kind of accounting gimmicks that say we've cut when we really haven't—from the budgeting process because it will be just like what this woman is doing with her checkbook, how much in, how much is going out, are we in the black or are we in the red.

Since the passage of a balanced budget amendment, or the attempt to pass a balanced budget amendment in 1995 by a bipartisan House and its subsequent failure by one vote in the Senate, the national debt has grown by \$9 trillion. You know, if we just had that courageous person in the Senate in 1995 to say yes, I dare say we wouldn't be in the position we are in today. The passage of a balanced budget amendment would be a key step to rebuild, restore, and regain the American public's trust and confidence in the United States, and not just the confidence for the Americans to have in us, but the confidence for our creditors around the world.

This resolution does a couple of things. It prohibits outlays for a fiscal year except for those repayment of debt principal from exceeding total receipts for that fiscal year except those derived from borrowing unless Congress by a three-fifths rollcall vote, none of this voice vote, rollcall, we have to put our card in the machine and show how we vote up on the wall, authorizes a specific excess over the outlay. So if you have to overspend, three-fifths of us are going to have to agree to overspending.

It requires a three-fifths rollcall vote of each Chamber to increase the public debt limit. Again, none of these shenanigans about a voice vote when we're all in the corners of the hallways or back home. Each and every one of us are going to have to take our voting card and put it in the machine and Americans are going to see how we voted right on that screen.

It directs the President to submit a balanced budget to Congress annually. Wouldn't that be a breath of fresh air?

It prohibits any bill to increase revenue from becoming law unless approved by a majority of each Chamber by again a rollcall vote. That means putting your card in the machine and having it displayed on the wall.

It authorizes waivers of those provisions when a declaration of war is in effect or under other specified circumstances involving military conflict. So again, in a case of national emergency where we would be placed in harm's way, it allows for those provisions to occur.

My fellow friends in this Chamber, it is so important that we think about

doing this and doing it this week because I do not believe we can wait any longer. You know, the United States, as was said before, has spent almost \$15 trillion of accumulated debt, 3.7 of new debt in just 2 years. It's an alarming figure. No wonder our bond creditors are looking at us and shaking their fingers.

Our spending driven debt crisis poses a lethal threat to our country's economic recovery, our national security and our sovereignty and the standard of living for future generations. And, Mr. Speaker, I have a stake in these future generations because not only do I have a wonderful daughter and a great son-in-law, but I have the two best grandsons a grandmother could ever have. And I look at them and I see such potential in their eye. And I look at them and I remember how my ancestors came from Ellis Island with nothing but pennies in their pockets, maybe not even pennies, how my own father started with nothing and worked and worked and worked to put food on the table and give us the promise for a better future. How me, from an ordinary beginning, born and raised on a farm, could end up serving in the U.S. Congress. All of that is the fabric of the American dream. All of that is the potential that we can be and we should be, and I see it being threatened by our overspending.

Mr. Speaker, about 10 days ago I took the Staten Island ferry to Staten Island. You know me, I'm a runner. I was doing my 90th-whatever marathon it was. My friend, my cousin, said let's take the ferry and we did. It reminded me of the critical juncture we are in in our Nation.

On the way down in the cab, where you catch the ferry is real close to the World Trade Center. My daughter lived in New York during the time of the attack on the World Trade Center. I had just taken her to the Windows of the World for dinner just 3 weeks before those towers came crashing down. So I said to the cab driver: Would you mind driving me around, I want to see what the new building looks like. You know, I saw the rebirth of the brick and mortar of that emblem in New York.

And then I got on the boat, on the ferry. The sun was coming up and it was dancing across the water, and I saw Ellis Island. I thought: Wow, my ancestors came through there; my own grandfather with nothing came through there and ended up in Cincinnati. And then I saw the Statue of Liberty. I thought: Oh, my gosh; that's the beacon of hope. That is where people from across the globe want to come to America because they know they have the chance to be the best person they can be. They have the choice and the chance and the opportunity to be what they want to be, to chart their own destiny. And there are so few places around the world that give them that choice.

And then we landed, got to the bridge, the Verrazano Bridge, where we

start the marathon. Because I was in the second wave, we started with “America the Beautiful” and then they sang “New York, New York,” you know, the Frank Sinatra song. Actually, it wasn’t “America the Beautiful,” it was “God Bless America,” but I digress. And I started to cry. And it wasn’t just soft tears, these were tears running down my face and I cried because I realized we are at a crossroad. We could lose all of this. All of this could be lost because we’re allowing ourselves to become obese with debt. Let me repeat that, obese with debt.

You know, our First Lady likes to talk about obesity in America. And yes, it’s a problem, but we have become obese with debt and we have no road map to get out of it. The road map to get out of it is a balanced budget amendment because it says you can’t spend more than you take in. You can’t do it. And oh, if you decide in this Chamber to do it, we’re going to see how you vote. And it’s not just going to be 51 percent, or 50 plus one, it’s going to be three-fifths of everybody in this Chamber. And we’re going to have to show America how we voted right there on that wall. So if you’re going to overspend, you better dog on well have a good reason to do it.

Again, let me repeat what this measure does. It requires the Congress not to spend more than it receives in revenues unless a supermajority, three-fifths vote and a rollcall vote to provide otherwise.

It requires a corresponding three-fifths vote to raise that debt ceiling; again, a rollcall vote.

It requires the President to submit a balanced budget to this auspicious body. It requires him to do that—him or her.

□ 1630

It requires a majority rollcall vote for any proposed bill to increase taxes. So if we want to do this by increasing taxes, you’ve got to have three-fifths to do that. It also provides for a limited exemption in times of war and serious military conflict. So it protects us in case we have a national strike against us. And it would take effect beginning the fifth fiscal year after the ratification by the States, because my friends, the problem is our national debt crisis.

I would now like to turn to my good friend from North Carolina.

Mrs. ELLMERS. I thank my good friend from Ohio. Thank you for holding this Special Order. The American people are ready for solutions, as you know. We are working so hard here in the House on coming up with those solutions. We will be voting on a balanced budget amendment—and I’m very excited about that—as has been required by the Budget Control Act that we passed in August.

I’m here now as one of those new freshmen. And it is amazing to me and, of course, we all know that for over 200 years we’ve functioned without the

Federal Government having to be held to—

Mrs. SCHMIDT. May I ask a question? When you do your bills, do you do what this lady is doing and balance your checkbook first? What would happen if you didn’t do that?

Mrs. ELLMERS. Absolutely. All of our homes, we all live by budgets. The American people have had to redo their budgets over and over and over again. Why? Because of the economy that we’re in today, because of the cost. And yet the Federal Government does not do this. Now we are up to what, 930 days that the Senate has not passed a budget? We passed our budget. We passed a budget in the House. The President had a budget. But his budget called for over \$1 trillion more of spending that we were not taking in.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. So it didn’t balance, did it?

Mrs. ELLMERS. It didn’t balance, and it didn’t pass in the Senate. Ours did not come up for a vote. So Washington continues to function without a budget. And yet, again, our households function with a budget. Mothers and fathers are up at 3 o’clock in the morning worrying about how they’re going to pay the bills this month, and yet the Federal Government just says, it doesn’t matter. We can just continue to spend money. As long as we don’t have a budget, we can spend as much we want.

That is the problem. And the American people are tired of this. They are tired of us just with our open checkbook writing, having to raise the debt ceiling to take care of the bills that have already been submitted and the interest that we have to pay.

The balanced budget amendment that we’re talking about passing passed the House in 1995, went on to the Senate, missed passing by one vote. Where would we be today in our economy if that had passed back then? The Federal Government would have been held to a vote, they would have been held to a budget, and we wouldn’t be deciding these things. We wouldn’t be having to pass continuing resolutions that the American people look to us in Washington and say, where is the leadership? How can it possibly be that that’s the way they’re functioning? And yet this is what we have to do to keep Washington running because Washington does have a purpose. We have to provide for the national defense, we have to take care of our seniors, and we have to take care of those individuals who cannot take care of themselves. And yet, without a budget, we have no way of deciding how much that will be. And so we continue on.

This version makes it harder to raise taxes. This version is substantial. The balanced budget amendment says that in order to raise the debt ceiling, the future Congress will have to have a three-fifths majority to vote in each Chamber in order to raise the debt ceiling. That will become even more difficult.

This is what the American people are calling for us to do. They’re crying out for leadership. If we pass this balanced budget amendment in the House and it goes on to the Senate and passes there as well, then it will move on to the States for ratification. This will be historic. We will now be saying to the Federal Government, you must adhere to a budget. It’s as simple as that. The most basic function of any household and of any business is to have a working budget in place, and yet the Federal Government, in its arrogance, says, no, we do not. Therefore, we are stuck in this situation that we, as you know, are dealing with every day, trying to figure out how we’re going to pay for the things that we have that the American people need.

Under President Obama, the national debt has increased 34 percent. Clearly, it is time to stop. Clearly, the American people are saying to us, come up with a solution. We’re dealing every day here in Washington with trying to make it through, trying to build a foundation for the future. This balanced budget amendment will be a tool that we can use so that our children and our grandchildren will know prosperity, and we will ensure it. It’s time to get it done.

Thank you so much for letting me speak on this issue.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. I thank you for your attention in this matter, and you’re absolutely right. We’ve got to get control of the spending and get control of it now.

It reminds me of when you’re trying to go on a diet. And so if I’m trying to go on a diet back home—believe it or not, every once in a while I have to watch what I eat—I don’t sit there and have every candy bar in the world out in front of me and open them up. That only entices me to want to eat it. So if I’m going to go on a diet, I don’t buy the candy. I buy an apple, I buy bananas, I buy something that is filling and good for me. But I certainly don’t tempt myself with something that I know is only going to be wasted calories and put on weight. And yet, we don’t do that here at the Federal level. We say, well, it’s okay, we’ll cut spending tomorrow, but we’ll spend today. If we had a balanced budget amendment, we couldn’t have that attitude. We’d have to look at every single dime that is in our checking account and account for it before we built a new program.

Look at how many attempts there are for new programs, small and large, right here in this body. You’ve been here 11 months. How many programs and ideas have come before you and you’ve had to say, can we afford it? But here we don’t have to answer that question. We have the freedom to do it. We may not be able to afford it, but I’m not balancing the checkbook, so we don’t know. It doesn’t matter. It’s okay.

No, it’s not. We have to force ourselves to do what’s right for America, and not just here in 2011, but in 2111

and 2211 and beyond. Our protection, the only protection that we have is with a balanced budget amendment because it ties our hands to future spending. It forces us to balance that checkbook and do what's right for America.

As we are looking at this, we know that the American public is with us on this. Ninety-five percent of Americans believe that the deficit problem is what's ruining our Nation, and almost 75 percent of those that recognize that the problem is the debt and the deficit, almost 75 percent say a balanced budget amendment is the right tool to make the answer. Stop the spending.

I turn now to my good friend from the State of Washington.

□ 1640

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Thank you so much, to my good friend from the State of Ohio, for organizing this Special Order this evening focused on the balanced budget amendment and having the Republican women come together to the talk about the importance of the balanced budget amendment.

We stand together tonight from all across this country as businesswomen, teachers, doctors, farmers, mothers, educators, nurses, and attorneys committed to restoring America's prosperity, committed to getting our fiscal house in order, committed to stopping wasteful spending, and committed to putting Americans back to work. And that's why we stand together united in support of the balanced budget amendment.

As a mom of two young children, I am greatly concerned about the growth of government spending and the government debt. I believe it hurts our economy today and threatens our children tomorrow.

James Madison said that the trickiest question the Constitutional Convention confronted was how to oblige a government to control itself. History records not a single example of a nation that spent, borrowed, and taxed its way to prosperity, but it offers us many, many examples of nations that spent and borrowed and taxed their way to economic ruin and bankruptcy. And history is screaming this warning to us, that nations that bankrupt themselves aren't around very long, because before you can provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty, you have to be able to pay for it.

Not long after the Constitutional Convention, Thomas Jefferson said, if he could make one change to the Constitution, it would have been to limit the Federal Government's ability to borrow money. Ronald Reagan said there were two things he wished he would have accomplished while in office, and that was a line-item veto and a balanced budget amendment. As has been mentioned, we came one vote short in 1995. And I can't help but think what a different world we would

be in today, both economically and as it relates to national security, if we had that balanced budget amendment in place.

Forty-nine States already have a balanced budget amendment. Seventy-four percent of Americans are demanding it. The House Republican women will join together in strong support of a constitutional amendment that will forever change the way Washington spends money. This is our time, this is our moment, and we must seize it.

Thank you again for yielding me some time.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. And I thank you, my good friend, for that eloquent view and argument for the balanced budget amendment because we are at a crisis, we are at a threshold, we are at a fork in the road in our country. And if we don't get this spending under control, your children and my grandchildren—they're about the same age—are going to have a really tough time charting their own destiny.

This is America. This is the place where streets are "paved in gold," and it's the gold of sweat from the Americans before us, the Americans that are here with us now, and the Americans of our future. But if we don't stop the unbridled spending in Washington, our future is not going to be able to continue to pave the way with gold.

This spending has to stop. To say we'll do it tomorrow is not enough. We have to force ourselves into fiscal discipline. And the only way to do that, the only legal way to bind us is through a constitutional amendment, because the Constitution says one legislative session can't bind a future legislative session with anything unless it is written in the Constitution. That means what? A balanced budget amendment. If we're going to control the spending, we have to have the balanced budget amendment.

I think we're going to take this historic vote on Thursday or Friday. This is not a partisan vote. This is what is right for our future. Three-quarters of Americans get it. That woman that balanced her checkbook on this picture gets it. My family that's back home, my brothers and sister and nieces and nephews that are probably balancing their own checkbooks sometime this week, they get it. The local government that I used to represent, they have to do it, they get it. The State legislature that I came from, they just balanced theirs on June 30 of this year, they get it. I think it's insane that we don't do the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, this week we're going to do something that is right for America. It's not a partisan thing. It's not a bipartisan thing. It is an American thing. It is what will preserve for us the American Dream, not just for our children, but their children and their children. It will promote economic security and national security. It will say to the world we're ready to stand as a nation with a firm financial foundation. It has to happen with a balanced budget amendment.

I yield to my good friend, if you have anything to add.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. You said it well. This is an issue that Americans get. All across this country, families have been making very tough decisions. Small business owners, local governments, States have had to make very difficult decisions because they don't have the luxury that the Federal Government does to either continue to borrow or print money to cover everything that we want to spend money on.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. You know, you're right. If I could go back a little bit, the local government that I represent, they have to ratchet back their revenue spending because their revenues are not what they used to be. The State that I represent, Ohio, they've had to ratchet back on their spending because guess what they have to do? They have to balance their budget. They can't go in the red.

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. I don't pretend for a moment that the balanced budget amendment will solve all our problems, but I do believe that it will force Congress to start living within its means, start setting priorities, start having that debate over what is the appropriate role of the Federal Government? How can services be better delivered? What can we send back to the States? That's the debate that we need. That's the debate that the balanced budget amendment will force.

We came one vote short in 1997. It included JOE BIDEN's vote. He voted for the balanced budget amendment in the Senate because it was what the people wanted, and he felt it was important to be on the side of the people. And that's why we need to just continue to elevate this issue, make sure that Americans are calling their Members of Congress, their Senators and asking for this vote on the balanced budget amendment. This is one of the most important votes that we will take during our time in Congress, and this is one that we need to make sure that we pass.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. I thank you, and I thank you for your time because I know you've got a busy schedule and you've got those two adorable children that you want to throw some love to. And the best love that we can give to our children and our grandchildren is the balanced budget amendment.

Ronald Reagan was right in so many ways, but he was right in 1982 when he said, if we are going to resolve our overspending, it has to be through a balanced budget amendment. My good colleagues, 29 years later, we've got to hear his words and act on them because, if we don't, 29 years from now, I'm not sure if we will be the greatest nation that we are today.

My good friends across the aisle want to talk about how we create jobs, and we do need to create jobs. Our President, as I said earlier, had this stimulus bill that he thought was going to create jobs, and it didn't create any jobs. And then just a few months ago

he rolled out a new jobs bill of a half trillion dollars that he thought was going to create jobs, but I just don't think that it's going to create jobs either. It's just going to add to our national debt. And the reason why he can do all of these things is because he doesn't have to do what this lady does each and every day, and that's to balance the checkbook. Americans want a checkbook that's balanced.

I would like to show another visual. I'd like to talk about what a few other people said in addition to Ronald Reagan.

Ben Franklin: "Creditors have better memories than debtors."

George Washington: "As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible."

□ 1650

Oh, my good friends in the House, if we had only utilized his words, to use it sparingly as possible.

Both sides have been part of the problem. This is not a Republican or a Democrat sin. This is a sin from past Congresses. This is a sin we can rectify.

Thomas Jefferson: "The principle of spending money to be paid by posterity under the name of funding is but swindling futurity on a large scale." The principle of spending money to be paid by posterity under the name of funding is but swindling futurity on a large scale.

He was saying you can't spend your way out of debt. You can't spend today, put the burden on your children of tomorrow and expect a healthy economy. No Nation has ever been successful in doing that. We in America will not be successful in doing that, and that's why we have to have the balanced budget amendment.

My good friends in the House, this week is a very important week for America. We need to pass the balanced budget amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. NUGENT, from the Committee on Rules (during the Special Order of Mrs. SCHMIDT), submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-285) on the resolution (H. Res. 466) providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

WE NEED A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much the comments of my

friend from Ohio, from Washington State, good people, good observations. It's an honor to serve with devoted people like that.

Spending is at an all-time crisis. We do need a balanced budget amendment. There's no question. We have got to have a balanced budget amendment.

The great Senator from the State of Texas, Phil Gramm, joined forces and got a bill referred to as Gramm-Rudman through. That was supposed to force, legislatively, the House and Senate to only spend within the revenue coming in. But since it was legislation, since both bodies can create such legislation, then both bodies can undo such legislation. Just like both bodies can create a debt ceiling bill, as occurred late July, early August this year, both bodies can decide to do something different a few months later. That's the problem with legislation. That's why we do need a balanced budget amendment.

Now, the bill that was brought through committee this year, this 112th Congress, titled H.J. Res. 1, it passed out of committee, the Judiciary Committee. It says that the purpose is proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Massive number of cosponsors. And it was a good bill. It was, it is.

And all gratitude goes to Mr. BOB GOODLATTE. He has been a strong proponent for advancing a balanced budget amendment for numerous Congresses for many years, and he has done a good thing with this bill. I appreciated his also including an amendment that I brought to committee that was passed in committee and is part of the joint resolution. But it's House Joint Resolution 1. It's a good bill. It's to provide for a balanced budget amendment.

In section 1 it simply says:

Total outlays for any fiscal year shall not exceed total receipts for that fiscal year, unless three-fifths of the whole number of each House of Congress shall provide by law for a specific excess of outlays over receipts by a rollcall vote.

Well, you might think that would be sufficient just to say total outlays cannot exceed total receipts. But those of us who've been around Congress long enough know that's not good enough unless you add, as Mr. GOODLATTE does in Section 8:

Total receipts shall include all receipts of the United States Government except those derived from borrowing.

If Section 8 is not in there, some Member of Congress down the road, if the balanced budget amendment were made into law as an amendment to the U.S. Constitution, would be clever enough to say, hey, it doesn't say you can't borrow. It just says you can't have outlays exceed total receipts. Well receipts, if you get loans, you've got money coming in, even from loans, well, that ought to be good enough.

So we need Section 8 that says total receipts include all receipts except those derived from borrowing. That's a good provision to have in there because

we know that this body, different parties in charge, different groups in here, as Members of the House and Senate, have always had people that found a way, found a loophole, found a way to get around the laws, the Constitution.

A good example of that, no, a great example of that is the ObamaCare bill. Article I of the United States Constitution, section 7 makes very clear that any bill that raises revenue, increases the amount of revenue, it has to start here in the House. It can't originate in the Senate. It has to start in the House. That's where the founders wanted bills involving taxes in any way, that raise revenue at all, had to start in the House.

Over the years, people found a way around that. And we saw that with the ObamaCare bill. The election of SCOTT BROWN in the Senate made clear that they were going to have to do something different than what was originally planned in order to get the ObamaCare bill passed. So they took a House bill—they knew they couldn't wait on the House to do anything. They were going to have to start it.

So to get around the clear requirement of the Constitution that bills that raise revenue, as did the President's health care bill—raised taxes quite a bit actually—they said, okay, we're going to take a House bill that's already passed the House. They took one that provided a tax credit for first-time homebuyers who happened to be veterans. That was the basic intent of the bill.

Beginning with line 1, page 1, the Senate then deleted every word and substituted therein 2,400, 2,500 pages of ObamaCare. That way the Senate could say, hey, it didn't originate here in the Senate. This is a bill that originated in the House. We just struck every single word and put in the Senate bill.

Well, that violates the intent of the Constitution because, clearly, that health care bill did not originate in the House. But that was deemed to be a loophole in the rules and in the constitutional law, and so it's been gotten away with before and it was gotten away with on that bill.

So we know games get played like that. If you don't specify that receipts do not include borrowed money, then somebody's going to figure that out and use it and probably get away with it. So it has to be in there.

The rule has now been reported from the Rules Committee about the balanced budget amendment version that we're going to be taking up. And people keep referring to it as a clean balanced budget amendment. That's the one we're going to take up, one that does not have anything else other than total outlays must not exceed total receipts.

□ 1700

Now, in this House Joint Resolution 1, it has another provision that says:

Total outlays for any fiscal year shall not exceed 18 percent of economic output of the United States, unless two-thirds of each