

urge Congress to reject this proposal. Nationally, this bill will cut \$16 billion and result in the loss of more than half a million jobs, which will serve as an abrupt speed bump for our economic recovery. Mr. Speaker, that's unacceptable. We can and must do better.

Twenty-six business leaders in my community—including the Prince William and Fairfax Chambers of Commerce, realtors, builders, and contractors—recently signed a resolution in which they said: New transportation infrastructure is an investment, not a cost. Failure to invest will result in economic decline.

They are right. They have witnessed firsthand the consequence of not making significant, new, dedicated, and reliable investments in infrastructure. Due to this lack of investment at the State level, Federal revenues are now the single-largest source of transportation funding in my State. That's why \$500 million in State dollars are diverted annually from new construction to simple maintenance as more and more roadways deteriorate and along with them our competitiveness in attracting new employers and their families.

But it is not just roads. My community supports a multimodal transportation system that includes bus and van pools, commuter rail, and mass transit. We have the second-highest transit usership in the Nation; yet our success in getting people out of their cars and off the roads is now in jeopardy because of this bill eliminating dedicated funding for transit, breaking a 30-year commitment that we have to supporting multimodal options for commuters all across America. Under this proposal, money that has been dedicated to transit will now go to highways, and a one-time general fund transfer of \$40 billion is somehow supposed to make up for it.

To further salt the wounds of my constituents, House Republicans are proposing to pay for that one-time general fund transfer by gutting the retirement benefits of Federal employees. As a result of the 2-year pay freeze, Federal employees have already contributed \$60 billion over the next 10 years to deficit reduction, but that is not good enough. This new proposal would pile on by increasing out-of-pocket retirement costs by at least three times while reducing overall benefits by 40 percent. Once again, the House Republican majority is using the dedicated Federal workforce as a punching bag politically and discouraging today's young people from even considering a career in public service.

So let me get this straight. The Republican bill will actually reduce spending on transportation, end the reliable user-fee funding system that has been in place since 1956, shifting the burden onto the backs of Federal employees. That's not progress by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, it will just make congestion worse.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this bill and work together on a bipartisan alternative.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As we meditate on all the blessing of life, we especially pray for the blessing of peace in our lives and in our world. Our fervent prayer, O God, is that people will learn to live together in reconciliation and respect, so that the terrors of war, and of dictatorial abuse, will be no more.

As You have created each person, we pray that You would guide our hearts and minds that every person of every place and background might focus on Your great gift of life, and so learn to live in unity.

May Your special blessings be upon the Members of this assembly, in the important, sometimes difficult work they do. Give them wisdom and charity, that they might work together for the common good.

May all that is done this day in the people's House, be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET IS POLITICAL

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President released his budget for 2013, which calls for a cut in defense spending, for the first time since 1998, by almost \$500 billion. It is clear the President is simply taking resources away from our military capabilities and using the funds to grow the size of government to promote more unsustainable domestic programs, putting senior citizens at risk of a devalued dollar and burdening young people and college students with crushing debt.

Instead of focusing on stopping defense cut sequestration, the President is putting our national security at risk and our allies in jeopardy during a time of international instability.

Cutting our defense budget with record-breaking tax increases destroying jobs will not reduce the national deficit, but only represents a diversion of funds. I urge the President to recognize the primary function of the national government is national defense, to provide peace through strength.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

DEMOCRATS PROTECT MEDICARE

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 3 million seniors represented by the Alliance for Retired Americans, I rise with my Democratic colleagues to accept their valentine for our vote to improve Medicare under the health care reform law. Our seniors deserve love, care, and support every day. But today, on a day when people all across the country are celebrating with their loved ones, let us stand together and show our appreciation to the more than 47 million seniors who make up the fabric of our country.

In my State of Maryland, the Affordable Care Act is already working to provide more than 70,000 seniors with preventive care benefits and offers a 50 percent discount for prescription drugs to nearly 4,000 beneficiaries who enter the Medicare part D doughnut hole.