Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Bass
Brown (FL)
Carter
Fincher
Hanna
Joyce
Keating
McAllister
Miller, Gary
Neal
Perlmutter
Runyan
Schwartz
Stewart
Stockman

□ 1517

Ms. SINEMA changed her vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 96.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 544 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 96.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1521

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 96) establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2015 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2016 through 2024, with Mr. HASTINGS of Washington in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the concurrent resolution is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 4 hours, with 3 hours confined to the congressional budget, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget, and 1 hour on the subject of economic goals and policies, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), or their designees.

The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) each will control 90 minutes of debate on the congressional budget.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am here to rise in support of H. Con. Res. 96, for the fiscal year 2015.

This is the fourth year we have done this—this being bringing a budget to the floor to balance the budget and pay down the national debt.

This is exactly what our economy needs today. We ask the Congressional Budget Office to look at this kind of deficit reduction. What would it do? Well, it is very clear that it would promote economic growth.

In 2024, economic output would be 1.8 percent higher than it otherwise would be. What does that mean? That means by getting our fiscal house in order, by balancing our budget, paying off our debt, and reducing the deficit, take-home pay for Americans will be $1,100 higher than it otherwise would be if we don't do something like this. That is just part of our budget.

We also call for more job creation, economic growth policies like tax reform, and energy development. All of these things would help get our economy back on track.

I also understand that there is a lot of confusion about what is going on in our budget. I would like to spend a few moments sort of clarifying and clearing up some of that confusion.

First, our budget does repeal ObamaCare. Let me say it again. Our budget does repeal ObamaCare because we think it is going to do great damage to our economy, to our budget, to health care. We don't keep the tax hikes in ObamaCare. Instead, we propose revenue neutral comprehensive tax reform. Our critics like to claim we are keeping it. What we are saying is let's scrap this Tax Code in favor of a better Tax Code, including replacing ObamaCare taxes with pro-growth tax reform to create jobs, increase take-home pay, and get this economy growing.

Second, we end the raid on Medicare. The dirty little secret that the other side won't want to talk about is the fact that they turned Medicare into a piggy bank for ObamaCare. They raided $716 billion from Medicare to pay for ObamaCare. We say that those savings from Medicare need to stay with Medicare to make it more solvent, and if some of those savings from Medicare are doing damage to the Medicare provider network, like reducing access to things like Medicare Advantage, then we have a mechanism in here to make sure that we can fix that, just like we did for the SGR, otherwise known as the ''doc fix.''

We think we need to save and strengthen this program, not only so that it is there intact for those in the near retirement, but for future generations who are facing a bankrupt program if we don't do something to reform it.

Second, we don't slash the safety net. If anything, we strengthen the safety net.

This administration has made all sorts of promises that it has no way of keeping, or it has made all sorts of promises and it is not telling us in any way how they are going to keep these promises. It has promised major expansions in programs like Medicaid and Pell grants. How they plan to pay for it, we have no idea. We refuse to be complicit with the demise of these programs.

We spend $3.5 trillion over the next 10 years on Medicaid. Under our budget, program spending will continue to rise by population plus inflation. We grow the program each and every year after fiscal year 2016 onward. We simply slow the growth rate by giving Governors and State legislators more flexibility to customize these programs to meet the unique needs of their populations instead of cramming down their throats some one-size-fits-all Washington-knows-best approach, which has been failing the Medicare population in our health care provider network.

This budget spends $600 billion over the next 10 years on food stamps. It is a program that has quadrupled since 2002. We propose to give Governors more flexibility so that they can customize this program to meet the needs of their populations, but not until 2019, until CBO says the economy will have recovered by then.

CBO says that the Pell grant is going bankrupt. It is going to face a fiscal shortfall in 2016 and every year thereafter. So instead of making all these Pell promises that the government has no way of keeping, the budget maintains the current Pell award, $5,730, throughout each of the next 10 years and funds it.

Our budget all told cuts $5.1 trillion in spending over the next 10 years. We do this by cutting waste, by cutting abuse, by stopping the age-old Washington practice of spending money we just don't have, and by making much needed reforms to government programs.

Our critics call this draconian. Look at it this way. On the current path, we are set to spend $48 trillion of hardworking taxpayer dollars or borrow it from the next generation—$48 trillion over the next 10 years. Under this path, we will spend $43 trillion.

By contrast, under the current path, Federal Government spending is slated to rise by 5.2 percent on average for the next decade. Under this budget, it will rise by 3.5 percent over the next decade. Hardly draconian.

Mr. Chairman, there is nothing compassionate about making promises that the government cannot keep. When that bill comes due, it is going to hurt the vulnerable, the first and the worst, and the voiceless. This is why we need to get spending under control.

Let me show you what we are proposing in a nutshell. The red shows you our national debt. Our national debt is on course to hit catastrophic levels. Our national debt is going to hit these catastrophic levels which guarantee that the next generation of Americans inherit a bleak future, a lower standard of living, a burden of debt that they cannot have a high standard of living with.

We in our generation have to make tough choices. We have got to face up to this issue. What we are saying here with this budget is, the sooner we get on top of our fiscal problems, the better off everybody is going to be.

□ 1530

We are saying, if we get ahead of these problems now, we can phase in reforms, such as Medicare reforms that don't even affect people in or near retirement. The sooner we tackle these fiscal problems, the better off everybody is going to be, the faster the economy grows, and the more we can guarantee that the next generation inherits a debt-free future.

We have never given the next generation a diminished future in this country before. That is the great legacy of this Nation, work hard and make tough choices, so that the next generation can be better off. We know, without a shadow of a doubt, that that is not going to be the case.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, we know that, in a couple of years, the debt starts taking back off, and we are back to $1 trillion deficits. Our tax revenues are at an alltime high this year. The problem is that spending is outpacing that. The sooner we can get our fiscal house in order, the sooner we can create jobs and get economic growth.

The sooner we can bring solvency to our safety net, to our social contract, the more that people can depend on these programs, and the sooner we can bring these reforms to get our spending in line with our revenues, the faster we can pay off this debt.

Just like a family, a government that lives beyond its means today necessarily has to live below its means tomorrow. We want to make right by the next generation. We want to grow this economy.

We want to create jobs and increase take-home pay, and we want to get people to work. That is what this budget is designed to do, and that is why I am proud to bring this balanced budget to the floor.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We are looking forward to the debate on the budget over the next couple of days. Chairman RYAN mentioned that the critics of this budget call it draconian. I would just point out to the gentleman that the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee just referred to the budget that is before this House as draconian.

Now, the chairman and I do agree on one thing, which is that these budgets that we bring before this Congress reflect our different visions of America. They reflect the choices that we make. They show what we care about, and they show what we care less about. They are fundamentally different blueprints for the future of this country.

The President has presented a budget that will boost job growth, sharpen Americans' competitive edge, and expand opportunity in the United States of America. Now, we have before us the congressional Republican budget, and of all of the Republican budgets that we have seen on the floor of this House since 2010, this one is the worst for America.

Many will argue, Mr. Chairman, that we should not be taking this budget seriously because, after all, we have a short-term bipartisan agreement and that the Senate would never pass this budget, but I urge the country to take it seriously because what it tells America is what our Republican colleagues would do to the country if they had the power to do it.

If they could impose their will, this is the budget that they would impose, so we need to look hard at the consequences. What does it mean for America? What choices does the budget before us make for our country?

At its core, it rigs the rules of the game for very wealthy and very powerful special interests at the expense of everybody else in the country and at the expense of other priorities in the country.

For example, if you are a multimillionaire, under this budget, you will have your top tax rate cut by one-third, all the way from 39 percent, where it is today, down to 25 percent. That is an average tax break for millionaires of $200,000. That is great for people who are well off.

What does this budget do to the rest of this country? It guts vital investments in our children's future, it squeezes the middle class, and it violates important commitments to our seniors.

Now, let's step back because the chairman mentioned the economic benefits of this budget. The reality is that our economic competitors around the world will eat our lunch if we pass this Republican budget. It provides for perverse tax incentives that ship American jobs overseas while shortchanging investments in jobs right here at home.

As we will see over the next couple of days, it guts important investments that historically have helped power our economy, and the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office tells us that, in the next couple of years, this is going to slow down economic growth, that it is going to slow down job growth. One estimate puts the job loss at 3 million jobs.

At a time when we need to be modernizing our national infrastructure—the backbone of our economy—this budget slashes the transportation budget by $52 billion in this year alone, stopping new projects, throwing construction workers off the job.

It will condemn the United States to a potholed road of economic decline, and it refuses to include one thing that the Congressional Budget Office says will help boost our economy right now, which is to pass bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform.

Mr. Chairman, as this budget provides these windfall tax breaks for the folks at the very top, let's see what it does to others in our country.

We all depend on our kids getting a good education. It is good for families. It is good for the country. The saddest part about this budget is that it casts a dark shadow over the American Dream, and it violates the fundamental promise that every hardworking American should have a fair shot at success.

At a time when we should be investing more in education in the United States, all told, if you look at early education—K–12—and college education, this budget cuts it by $370 billion below current services. That has devastating impacts on everything from Head Start to Early Head Start to K–12 to college.

Let me just mention one of the things it does to college student loans. It starts charging college students' interest while they are still in college, before they have gotten out and gotten a job. That saves $40 billion in this budget—actually, a little more than that—in the same budget that provides huge tax breaks to the wealthiest in this country.

So much for wanting to address the lack of upward mobility in America; rung by rung, this budget knocks out the steps of that ladder of opportunity. If you are to the manor born, you are going to be just fine under this budget, but for everybody else, tough luck and worse.

Let's look at seniors as our next example. Those on Medicare will immediately pay more if they have high prescription drug costs, right? The chairman mentioned that the Democratic budget cut Medicare and turned it into something else.

The reality is that the savings that were achieved in Medicare by ending

some of the overpayments in the Democratic budget were recycled to strengthen key parts of Medicare, including to close what has been called the prescription drug doughnut hole.

The Republican budget here reopens the prescription drug doughnut hole. If you are a senior with high prescription drug costs, it is $1,200 more per year, on average, as a result of this budget.

Seniors who have been able to get preventative health services without having to put down copayments will no longer get those screenings, and now, they will be at risk of not getting the treatment and care when they need it.

On top of all of that, it ends the Medicare guarantee by creating a voucher program. For seniors who decide to stay in the traditional Medicare program, they will see their premiums hiked by 50 percent when that goes into effect. They can stay, but they will have to pay big time to stay. That is not the Medicare guarantee.

Middle class families—I mentioned that this budget cuts the top tax rate for millionaires from 39 percent to 25 percent. That is a 30 percent tax cut, but it says it is going to do that in a deficit-neutral manner, so it is simple math, Mr. Chairman.

If you are going to do that, you are going to squeeze middle class taxpayers. In fact, this budget pretends that Chairman CAMP and the exercise he went through in the Ways and Means Committee—the fact-based exercise—never happened because what Chairman CAMP found was that you couldn't bring that top rate down to 25 percent without squeezing middle-income taxpayers.

That is why he had a top rate of 35 percent in his plan, and yet this says let's go to a 25 percent top rate. That means $2,000 more in taxes for a family with kids to finance the tax breaks for the folks at the very top.

This budget reserves, perhaps, its cruelest blow for those who are seeking to climb out of poverty into the middle class, to have an opportunity to participate in the American Dream.

In the last election, the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, said he really didn't care about the 47 percent. This Republican budget sets out to prove that statement. If you look at this budget, it is an assault on Americans who are struggling to climb out of the middle class.

We had a big debate in this Congress about food nutrition programs. The Republican plan called for $40 billion in cuts. It ended up being $8 billion. In this budget, it is $137 billion.

Millions of more kids will go hungry as a result of cutting that safety net, and that is why faith-based groups that have looked at these Republican budgets over the last 3 years have said that they don't meet the tests of a society that cares for the least of these.

I want to close by asking a question because our Republican colleagues say the goal has to be 10 years to hit this political target. It is interesting because the Republican budget 3 years ago didn't balance until around 2040, but now, we have this sort of political target that they have to hit.

If it is so important to hit that, why do they ask everything of our kids and of our seniors and of struggling families and of nothing from very powerful special interests?

This budget does not close one special interest tax break for the purpose of reducing the deficit, not one—not a special interest tax break for hedge fund owners, not a special tax break for big oil companies. We have a race to hit their political timetable here, but we are not going to ask those special interest groups to pay one dime to help reduce the deficit.

Here is the really strange thing: after all is said and done, this Republican budget does not balance in 10 years if, at the same time, the Republicans claim to be repealing the Affordable Care Act. It just doesn't add up. The math isn't there.

What this Republican budget does is this: it gets rid of all of the benefits in the Affordable Care Act. It gets rid of the tax credits that help Americans purchase affordable care. It gets rid of the provision that says you can stay on your parents' insurance policy until you are 26.

It gets rid of the provisions that say you cannot be denied coverage because you have a preexisting condition. It gets rid of all of the benefits.

Guess what it keeps? It keeps all of the tax revenue from the Affordable Care Act.

You don't have to take my word for it. This is The Heritage Foundation. This isn't some liberal group.

Here is what they say:

> Perhaps the biggest shortcoming of this budget is that it keeps the tax increases associated with ObamaCare.

It is what they said about last year's budget. This year is exactly the same. This budget also keeps all of the savings from Medicare. It doesn't recycle any of those savings to strengthen it as the Democratic budget does, but it keeps them.

If you actually look at this chart, you will see that, in 2024, when the Republican budget claims to balance, without the revenues and the savings from Medicare, it doesn't come close to balancing.

So our Republican colleagues have got to choose. Either you claim to have a balanced budget and you recognize that you support all of the revenues and savings in the Affordable Care Act or not, but you can't have it both ways. The sad thing is, after hitting everybody but the very wealthy in this budget, they still can't achieve what they claim is their goal.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds to say: you can't have it both ways.

That is interesting. You can raid Medicare by $716 billion to pay for ObamaCare and then count that money as if it is going back to Medicare, counting the same dollar twice. That is not our word. That is the word of the Congressional Budget Office and of the actuaries, themselves, at Medicare, which is what the other side did with ObamaCare.

Look, apparently, the only way to revive and protect the American Dream is to bring our debt from $17 trillion to $24 trillion and, on the way there, raise taxes on hardworking Americans another $1.8 trillion, and if you are not for that, you are against the American Dream.

□ 1545

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY).

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this budget because I believe it is the necessary fiscal path to secure our children's future. I hear from my constituents every time I go back home. We can't keep borrowing nearly 40 cents on every dollar we spend.

This budget is a commonsense blueprint that grows our economy. It will force Washington to live within its means by cutting $5.1 trillion over 10 years to balance the budget. Under this plan, we will make much-needed reforms to the complicated and oversized Tax Code that will make Americans more competitive and create jobs. It will keep the promise to our seniors by strengthening Social Security and give our troops the tools they need to secure our country. This budget will provide relief from rising health care costs by repealing ObamaCare.

Families across my congressional district will be able to keep more of what they earn, which is exactly what we need to have happen to grow our economy. Right now, too many of them are struggling paycheck-to-paycheck under this Obama economy. Gas prices are still high and volatile. My constituents are paying higher health care premiums because of ObamaCare.

Families need a break, Mr. Chairman. This budget gives them a chance to get ahead while holding Washington accountable for its stewardship of your money.

Since we have a budget agreement, I am looking forward to seeing the Senate budget and when they will vote on it. I would encourage our friends on the other side of the aisle to keep HARRY REID's feet to the fire and make sure they do have a budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE), a distinguished member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. CICILLINE. I thank the ranking member for his extraordinary leadership and for developing a budget proposal that actually reflects our Nation's values and priorities.

Mr. Chairman, this Republican budget, offered by my colleague from Wisconsin, is another attempt to impose a

failed economic theory on the American people. This budget would damage economic growth in the short term and it disinvests in our future in the long term. It is absolutely the wrong course.

Millions of Americans continue to struggle to find work. Congress should be investing in priorities that will create jobs, priorities like education, rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, and investing in advanced manufacturing and innovation that will help set the platform for a 21st century economy.

The Ryan Republican budget does exactly the opposite. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, compared to current law, the Ryan Republican budget would stifle our economic growth, reducing gross national product per capita by about 0.5 percent in each of the next 3 years.

Let that sink in. If you are searching for work or struggling to get by in this difficult economy, the message from this budget is clear: it is about to get a whole lot worse.

What could possibly be their rationale?

To my colleagues who say we need to make this sacrifice in the short term so we can experience long-term economic gains, they have it backwards. We need to invest in the short term to have long-term economic prosperity.

How does a budget that freezes Pell grants and slashes funding for higher education by approximately $260 billion grow our economy in the long term?

Our Nation's infrastructure is the backbone of our economy and is essential to move goods and services in the short and long term. So how does a budget that cuts investments in transportation by $52 billion next year alone help our economy?

How can you say a budget that singles out for elimination bipartisan programs like the Manufacturing Extension Partnership will boost our economy in the long term, a program that leverages Federal funding to provide small- and medium-sized manufacturers the capacity to grow, innovate, and prepare for a 21st century focus on advanced manufacturing? The answer is you can't.

Let's be clear: this budget cuts from today and disinvests from tomorrow. And for what purpose? To pay for another round of tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans, amounting to about $4 trillion in the next 10 years. But it is okay, they claim, because the benefits will trickle down to the middle class. This budget goes after Medicare, Medicaid, and nutrition programs for hungry children, all to pay for another round of tax cuts for the wealthy. This is immoral. And we know, from past experience, it is the wrong strategy for our economy.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to reject this budget because it will hurt jobs and inflict unnecessary pain on working families and our economy.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chair, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), a distinguished member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Chairman, in August of 2010, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs warned that the greatest threat to our national security was our national debt. That was $4 trillion of debt ago. In fact, since the inauguration in 2009, we have accumulated more total government debt than we have run up from the very first day of the Washington administration through the third year of the George W. Bush administration.

We were told this would jump-start the economy. It hasn't. Instead, it has deprived markets of the capital that would otherwise be loaned to businesses seeking to expand jobs, to consumers seeking to make purchases, and to home buyers seeking to reenter the housing market.

I would remind the House that we cannot provide for the common defense or promote the general welfare if we cannot pay for them, and the ability of our government to do so is being slowly and surely destroyed by our debt. Balancing this budget and ultimately paying down the national debt is a national security imperative, it is an economic imperative, and it is a moral imperative.

Under Chairman RYAN's leadership, the House is about to pass the fourth budget in a row to balance. It stands in stark contrast to the President's budget that never balances and that condemns our Nation to a debt spiral that will consume our future. It reforms and reorganizes our social safety nets. It prevents their impending bankruptcy, and it restores them to financial sound foundations for the generations to come.

This is not beyond our ability. President Clinton, working in cooperation with a Republican Congress, delivered four balanced budgets in a row. Together, a Democratic President and a Republican Congress cut Federal spending by 4 percent of GDP. They enacted what amounted to the biggest capital gains tax cut in American history. They reformed entitlement spending by abolishing the open-ended welfare system. The economy blossomed.

In the years since, under both Republican and Democratic administrations, we have veered far from these policies of fiscal responsibility and economic expansion, and the economy languishes.

The budget before us combines the policies necessary not only to restore solvency to the government and save the social safety net, but it also restores prosperity to the American people. All we lack is the same cooperation from the President and the Senate that we had just two decades ago.

Time is not our ally. Every day we delay, the problem becomes more intractable and the road back becomes more difficult, protracted, and perilous.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just point out that I think it is useful to look at this through the perspective of history, because the last time we had balanced budgets in this country was at the end of the Clinton administration, and shortly after that, when President Bush came into office, we saw back-to-back tax cuts.

The theory at that time was if you dropped the top tax rate on high-income individuals, it will trickle down to everybody else and power-charge the economy. The only problem is that didn't work. It did not work at all. The trickle-down theory of economics did not work. We didn't get that boost of economic growth. What we did get was huge, huge deficits as far as the eye could see.

And so the problem with this budget is that it is a U-turn back to that philosophy—the idea that we are going to provide these tax cuts and it will create a big boost of economic activity. But reality has shown that it doesn't work that way. We should be building our economy from the middle out and from the bottom up. The top-down approach doesn't work.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON), a distinguished member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, this budget is worse than a wolf in sheep's clothing. It is like a Dracula in sheep's clothing coming in to suck the blood out of the middle class.

Under the false pretense of deficit reduction and a balanced budget, House Republicans have brought forth another attack on American seniors, students, workers, and middle class families, all the while protecting giveaways for the wealthy and corporations that ship jobs overseas.

This budget kills jobs at home by gutting critical investments in education and technological research and throws a wrench in the engine of American innovation. Instead of laying the foundation for innovation to create the new middle-class jobs of tomorrow or spur new technology, economic growth, and the next generation of entrepreneurs, this Republican budget uses fuzzy math and magic asterisks to hide its attack on the middle class.

This embarrassing budget is an excuse to assault the social safety net that has saved millions of Americans who fell off the economic ladder of opportunity during the Bush recession. Programs like food stamps, unemployment insurance, Medicaid, and job retraining are helping to get Americans back on their feet—Americans who lost their jobs and homes due to no fault of their own, but instead due to the fault of reckless Wall Street speculators. The victims include defenseless infants and dependent children, as well as the sick and the elderly.

The Republican budget uses these programs as punching bags for their

reckless agenda today to cut and gut. Republicans' relentless attacks on these programs will only hasten the descent and harden the fall of Americans who are already teetering on the brink.

Mr. Chairman, Republicans are playing their favorite game with the budget—hide and cut it. First, they hide behind budget gimmicks and magic asterisks, and then they cut unnamed programs that all magically fall only upon the backs of the poor, working families, seniors, and the middle class.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds to say, wow, that sounds horrible. Good thing it is not true. Only in Washington is a slower increase in spending awful, blood-curdling, cut-throating, terrible, and draconian cuts.

If we are going to get our fiscal house in order, what we are saying in this budget is, instead of increasing spending 5.2 percent a year on average, let's do it by 3.5 percent a year on average—hardly draconian.

And by the way, maybe people closer to the problems, like our States, might have a better idea on how to help people in their communities. Those are the principles we are talking about here.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM), the chief deputy whip.

Mr. ROSKAM. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

My home State is Illinois. The State of Illinois, Mr. Chairman, is a delightful place. It is the ''Land of Lincoln'' and the birthplace of Ronald Reagan, but it is a fiscal basket case. From a fiscal point of view, my home State is a national punch line, because one party—the other party—has dominated State government for years. For a decade, they have had the Governor's mansion. They have got majorities in both the Illinois House and the Illinois Senate.

And what has happened? It has been avoidance behavior, Mr. Chairman. An unwillingness to take on serious issues.

So what did the Democrats in Springfield, Illinois, do? They raised taxes. They didn't deal with the underlying fiscal problem.

And what was the net result? The budget gap didn't close, higher than average unemployment, and more per capita debt than nearly any other State in the Union on the taxpayers of Illinois.

□ 1600

All right. So what does that all that have to do with this?

Springfield, Illinois, is a foreshadowing, Mr. Chairman, of what not to do. Basically, we need to look at the fiscal situation in Springfield, Illinois, and look at it like a big, big traffic signal that says, don't come here; don't go this route; don't take this pathway. Instead, go another direction.

The direction that we need to go is the direction that the chairman has articulated, and that I think a majority is going to vote for tomorrow, and it is a pathway that says, let's look clearly at these difficulties. Let's articulate them clearly. Let's be clear-eyed about what they are, and let's make decisions.

So what does this budget do?

The budget repeals ObamaCare and makes way for a patient-centered approach on health care that our constituencies are calling out for.

It says that we are going to empower States to make decisions. It says we are going to keep promises that are going to be made, not false promises, not telling folks that something is going to be there, and then just assuming that there is going to be some pixie dust that makes these problems go away.

No, these problems are going to be dealt with, and they are going to be dealt with in a forthright manner.

I think we are at an inflection point. I think the House is actually at an incredibly important stage right now, and we can go one of two pathways. One pathway we know, one pathway of more taxes, more spending, more avoidance, and not dealing with the underlying spending programs.

This is not theoretical, Mr. Chairman. The State of Illinois has tried that, and it is a mess. It is a mess that becomes worse. The longer the State waits, the worse the options are.

So what the chairman is saying is, let's not get to that point. We have got options. We have got time. We have got choices. We have got remedies, but we need to act now.

So I urge favorable consideration of this budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I think, for the people who may be watching this, and for our colleagues, the question is, how do we achieve the priorities that we hope we all want to achieve, which is jobs growing faster, the economy growing faster, and deal with the long term deficit and debt in a responsible manner?

The glaring problem with the congressional Republican budget is that they don't call for any shared responsibility. They don't ask the most powerful special interests to contribute one dime by closing a single tax break, not one. And because they shelter the most powerful and the most wealthy, everybody else has to take a hit in their budget.

As a result, the entire country takes a hit because those are investments in our kids' education, in basic science and research that are important to help power our entire economy.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), a terrific new member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you to my friend from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) for yielding, and for his leadership.

He is exactly right. What this budget fails to do is address the fundamental questions that we have to address.

As a new member of the Budget Committee, during the most recent budget markup, I offered an amendment. A couple of dozen of our amendments were heard and dismissed rather quickly.

I offered an amendment that would deal with that question of shared sacrifice, an amendment that would have simply said that if you make more than $1 million in this country, you should pay your fair share, applying the so-called Buffett Rule that basically says, if you are doing well, you should at least pay the same rate that another member of your staff would pay.

As Mr. Buffett pointed out, his secretary pays a higher rate. This would have required a 30 percent rate to apply to those folks making $1 million.

What was interesting to me was what I was told by the other side, that this amendment was because people in the working middle class, people who go to work every day, are jealous of those who have done well in the United States.

Let me assure you, this has nothing do with jealousy; it has everything to do with fairness. The only thing we ask is that if we are all going to pitch in to adopt a balanced budget and invest in growing our economy, we should all pitch in and not have a tax system that benefits the wealthiest, and has the rest of us not only have to pay more than our fair share, but not receive the important investments that will grow our economy.

So what this budget doesn't do is require we all pay a fair share. Neither does it extend unemployment insurance to those who are just trying to get from their last job to their next job without losing their house and their car and having their family split up.

It doesn't raise the minimum wage so that those who go to work every day won't live in poverty. It doesn't address the fundamental question facing us, and that is immigration reform, which would have a significant effect on growing our economy. People on the left and the right agree with that.

No, this statement of our collective values fails to address that fundamental question.

But what it does do is cut basic education. It would kick 170,000 kids out of Head Start, changing the trajectory of their lives forever; cuts $89 billion out of education, $35 billion alone out of Title I. Cuts higher education, which is an investment in our future, which we know pays dividends downstream. Cuts infrastructure.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman another 30 seconds.

Mr. KILDEE. Cuts infrastructure, which we have to address. If our companies, if our manufacturers are going to be competitive, we are going to have to make those sorts of investment.

This budget does none of those things. All it does is protect those who

continue to be sheltered by a system that allows for this kind of inequality in this country and doesn't address the fundamental questions facing us.

I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I hope that my colleagues will join me in opposing this budget.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time remains between both sides?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 72½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Maryland has 68 minutes remaining.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE).

Mr. LANCE. Thank you, Chairman RYAN.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the Republican budget, which is a path to prosperity. It includes commonsense priorities and policies that will foster economic growth and job creation.

This is a plan to balance the budget in 10 years and begin to pay down the national debt, and this is exactly what our economy needs.

CBO says that, by reducing the deficit, our budget would promote economic growth. In stark contrast to budgets put forward by the President and by House Democrats, our budget will cut wasteful spending, rein in our national debt and, we hope, balance the budget. And the budget needs to be balanced. This would be done all without raising taxes on hardworking Americans.

It includes pro-growth policies that will harness domestic energy, restore patient-centered health care, strengthen retirement and the safety net programs that are so essential, and it will reform our Tax Code.

I thank my friend, Chairman RYAN, for putting forth a budget blueprint that addresses our Nation's long-term fiscal challenges truthfully and in a fiscally responsible manner.

Let me say that this blueprint spends $43 trillion over the next 10 years. It reduces spending by $5 trillion. Only in Washington can an increase annually of 3.5 percent be considered a cut. That is ridiculous.

At the rate we are going now, our spending would increase by 5.2 percent. We reform it to 3.5 percent annually over the next 10 years.

I applaud Chairman RYAN's hard work and courage, and look forward to an honest discussion here on the floor of the House.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just point out that we hear a lot about the global aggregate numbers, but the distribution of those cuts is important.

If you look at the portion of the budget that we have, historically, used to invest in education, to invest in innovation, to invest in places like the National Institutes of Health, that portion of the budget is cut by 24 percent relative to the bipartisan Ryan-Murray agreement. And it is cut from there.

So the part of the budget that does a lot of damage that we are focused on in terms of future investments, really does mean that we are going to be less competitive as a country. It will dull our competitive edge. And I will tell you, our economic competitors will be cheering.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As the RYAN of the Ryan-Murray agreement, look, I wish that the Murray side of the agreement would have agreed to these out-year numbers. That didn't happen. That agreement is a 2-year agreement, so to compare this budget and the baseline against that of the 24 cut, that is not accurate.

Here is the problem, Mr. Chairman. We are spending money we don't have. We are going through the budget, program by program, line by line, and trying to reform these programs so that they can better deliver on their promises.

We are looking at certain programs, say, like food stamps, and saying, some States have some pretty innovative ideas on how better to deliver these services.

There have been some wasteful and fraudulent activities that needed to be gotten at so that we don't waste taxpayer money.

We think it is important to encourage able-bodied adults who do not have dependents to go to work. When we did that in welfare reform in the 1990s, it worked. People went to work.

By the way, child poverty dropped by double digits. Single moms went to work. It helped reduce poverty. We want to replicate that kind of success with these kind of reforms on these kinds of programs.

When they talk about education, this administration, and this Democratic budget, is making a bunch of empty promises. They are promising the world in Pell grants, but they are not funding that world.

We are saying, let's keep Pell and let's fund it, and let's keep it where it is, but let's fund it throughout the decade. I would rather take a full-funded promise than an empty promise any day. I think that is more honest with our students.

The other part I think we have to look at is, we are feeding tuition inflation. If we just keep pumping more and more borrowed money, empty-promised money into the system, what we are getting out of it is higher tuition.

Why don't we look at why tuition is going up so much in the first place?

Gosh, when we look at that, we are learning the Federal Government is part of the problem. Let's fix that.

Mr. Chairman, we do go through these things line by line.

The gentleman likes to talk about tax reform. What he won't tell you is specifically what this tax reform bill does, because we don't have a specific tax reform in here because this is the budget.

The Ways and Means Committee does specific tax reform. That is where the loophole closers are.

We are saying the outline of it is to get tax rates down on businesses, small and large, so they can compete.

There are $1 trillion in loopholes every year that they can work with to get those tax rates down. So to suggest that this, all of a sudden, does these tax breaks for millionaires and does this for these other people and does that, they are just making that stuff up.

What I think we ought to do is put the rhetoric aside and balance this budget.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I am glad the chairman of the committee recognized that there are about $1 trillion worth of tax expenditures. What does that mean?

That means tax preferences in the Tax Code. $1 trillion a year, he said. That is right.

And yet, the Republican budget doesn't close one penny of those tax expenditures to help reduce our deficit, not one. It says we have to reserve all those tax loophole closures to cut the top rate for millionaires by one-third, from 39 percent to 25 percent. That is what they want to do with all the tax expenditures.

Because they refuse to get rid of one of those tax expenditures for the purposes of deficit reduction, their budget does hit all these students.

What is honest is to tell students who are going to college right now that this budget is going to charge them over $40 billion more in interest because now they are going to have to pay interest while they are still in college, even though it doesn't close one of those tax expenditures for very wealthy people to help meet the targets and reduce the deficit, not one.

So, as we look at the priorities in this budget, we have to ask ourselves, why is it that this Republican budget doesn't call for any shared responsibility?

Why is it that it does provide tax breaks to folks at the very top at the expense of the rest of the country?

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1615

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Yielding myself 15 seconds, the shared responsibility we are asking for is let's fix these problems within our generation and not pass it on to the next generation.

With that, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the policy chair of our conference.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. Chairman, it was the basic principle that George Washington laid out in his farewell address, that every generation should

take care of the responsibilities of that generation, rather than pass it on to their child. It is a 200-year-old concept. It is fairly straightforward.

What is interesting to me is I have been in a personal conversation with our current President of the United States about debt and about balancing the budget. The conversation back and forth was circled around a simple principle: Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich, two decades ago, made it their crowning achievement that they balanced the budget in a bipartisan time period.

My request to this President was: Can we agree that we should set a goal to balance the budget? His response to me was: No. Twenty years ago, that was a good idea, but now, the perception is that we should have sustainable deficits, that is, balance everything except for interest.

This year, our interest payment is $233 billion. CBO forecasts that 10 years from now, our interest payment—single-year, one-year interest payment 10 years from now will be $880 billion.

We must get us back to balance, and when I say balance, I mean real balance. Families balance their budget. Businesses balance their budget. States balance their budget.

We see times in our past when we had a balanced budget and saw the economic activity from that; but for whatever reason, now, we are just going to ignore that. Why? First off, it is because they will say it is hard. It is difficult to balance our budget. Well, I am sorry that it is hard.

This is what leaders do. We make difficult decisions to be able to get our Nation back on track for now and for the future.

The second thing is let's do a balanced approach. Let's raise taxes if we are going to reduce spending. Right now, this year, we have the highest amount of revenue in the history of the United States coming into the Federal Treasury.

Even with a down economy, this is the highest amount of revenue that has ever come into the Treasury, the second highest amount that has ever come into the Treasury, last year.

This is not an issue about not having enough tax revenue. We have the highest amount we have ever come into the Treasury. The issue is we are overspending. That is the key issue that we have got to get into.

The other argument that comes out is, you know what, there are no more efficiencies left. There is nowhere else left to cut in the Federal Government. Well, I have difficulty finding anyone outside of Washington that believes this government is running so efficient; there is no fraud, there is no waste, there are no inefficiencies in government, there is nowhere to cut.

When you walk through our budget, we are not trying to damage our economy. We are trying to protect our economy. We are trying to help grow and establish jobs that are happening by stabilizing the economy.

You go to businesspeople all over the country. They ask for one simple thing: give us a stable plan that gets us back onto balance, give us some stability in our economy, and we will grow our business.

Some predictability, that is what this budget is headed towards. It also is dealing with some simple things, like national defense. National defense is a prime—prime task of the Federal Government. This budget aggressively steps up and says we have a responsibility for national defense. We should maintain that.

The conversation about going to 10 carrier units around the world, 10 aircraft carriers may sound like a lot until you realize only two of them are in the ocean at any given time when you get down to 10.

When we get back up to 11, which is the established amount that we want to have, we can now have three out in our oceans. When you drop down that amount, you are making a decision that we are not going to have a presence somewhere in the ocean.

We have a stable peace when we are strong. It is a basic principle. If we weaken our military presence, we expose ourselves to weakness.

We need to be able to do this. We need to take out ObamaCare. We need to get us back into a stable economy. We need to deal with national defense. That is what this budget is all about.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, let me just point out to the gentleman that the President's budget has two things in it. First of all, it actually calls for a fund to increase defense spending for readiness in fiscal year 2015, which is not included in the Republican budget.

Number two, in the outyears, the President also grows our defense spending; and as the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense have testified, those investments will make sure that the United States is second to none.

In fact, the next 10 countries after that, together, spend much less on defense than the United States, and we will continue to have that additional robust defense spending to make sure that we are strong, but we also need to make sure that our economy is strong to support that kind of budget, and if you have got the important investments that have helped make the economy grow over time, you will not get that.

Now, I will just respond to the gentleman's comments on revenue. Anytime the economy is growing, if you have a certain tax rate, you are going to get more absolute dollars of revenue in, but I mentioned that the last time we had actually had a balanced budget in this country was in the year 1998 through 2001.

If you look at the amount of revenue that was coming in during that period as a percent of the economy, you will find that revenue was 19.2 percent in 1998, 19.2 percent in 1999, 19.9 percent in 2000, and so on, way ahead of the amount of revenue as a percentage of the economy that this Republican budget calls for in year 10, even though, between now and then, we will have millions more Americans on Medicare and Social Security.

So, again, they just can't bring themselves to close one of these special interest tax breaks, not one for the purpose of reducing the deficit and contributing to our economic well-being.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield myself 2 minutes, Mr. Chairman.

The first priority and responsibility of the Federal Government is to secure our Nation and to provide for the common defense of our Nation.

The gentleman from Maryland mentioned the President has this proposal for this year that would have violated our bipartisan budget agreement. It is a proposal that holds hostage defense for higher taxes and more domestic spending, but worse than that, we had a hearing in the Budget Committee about 2 years ago.

Then-Secretary of Defense Panetta, along with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, came and testified; and they said to our Budget Committee: This is as far as we can go, we can't cut any further without doing damage to our military.

That is effectively where the Republican budget is. That is not where this year's Obama budget is. The President's budget, which is also replicated by the Democratic substitute, cuts the military far lower than that. They are bringing the Army and the Marines to a level we have not seen since before World War II. They are shrinking our Navy to a size we have not seen since before World War I. They are shrinking our Air Force to a level we have never seen before.

They are cutting compensation for our men and women in uniform, not to save money for other parts of the military, like readiness and training and equipment, but they are cutting compensation, cutting force structure, cutting personnel, cutting equipment, cutting defense—not to reduce the deficit, but to spend it on more domestic spending.

The Joint Chiefs have said that now, with this budget submission, it represents a moderate risk of actually affecting our national security. They have never said that before. They have said we have had a low risk.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield myself 15 more seconds to say, of all the problems that we have in the President's budget, it hollows out our military, sends the wrong signals overseas, and we are not going to do that.

With that, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. PRICE, the distinguished vice chair of the Budget Committee.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I want to start by commending the

chairman of the Budget Committee, Mr. RYAN, for his wonderful and positive work on real solutions. When I go back home and I talk to folks, they say: Well, don't y'all have any solutions that will actually work?

That is what this is. This is a real solution, a commonsense solution. My constituents back home in the Sixth District of Georgia also tell me that they are saddened and disheartened by the comments that we hear from the other side, primarily, on dividing Americans, pitting one American against another.

It really is a cynical ploy. It may be politically opportune, but it is not helpful. It is not helpful for the discourse that we have in this country. It is not helpful for us reaching those real solutions; so I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: let's get together and work together and find those real solutions.

What my constituents back home also tell me is that the path we are on just isn't working. The economy is not thriving; record deficits continue. I mentioned the mantra of division that seems to be the MO of the other side, but the other side, the Democrats, seem to be happy with all this.

They seem to be happy with an economy that is not thriving. They seem to be happy with an economy that has resulted in fewer Americans working. They seem to be happy with fewer success stories across this country.

They seem to be happy that more jobs are leaving the country, as opposed to being created here. They seem to be happy with higher and higher taxes and more and more spending. They seem to be happy with borrowing more money from foreign countries. They seem to be happy with compromising opportunities for future generations.

We believe that there is a better way, that there are positive solutions and real solutions, and that is our budget—a responsible, balanced budget; yes, a balanced budget, a path to prosperity for every single American.

We have had a little discussion over the past few minutes about defense. I want to talk about some specific issues in our budget, defense being one of them. This is a very dangerous world.

Our budget recognizes that. It realizes the danger that we have and that our allies have, and we increase spending for defense and for national security. We account for that in our budget in a positive way.

The President, irresponsibly, seems to bury his head in the sand. His budget, as has been mentioned, puts us back at pre-World War II levels for our men and women in uniform. That is not consistent with what the American people see in the real world right now, so what we do is account for that and increase defense spending in a responsible way.

In the area of health care, I am a physician. I recognize that the world of health care is in an upheaval. There are physicians leaving their practices. There are seniors who are losing their doctors. There are new Medicare patients who are unable to find physicians.

In fact, the actuaries of Medicare—not Republican or Democrat—but the actuaries of the Medicare system have said that the system is going broke. Within a 10-year period of time, it will not be able to provide the services for seniors that have currently been promised.

Our budget positively addresses these issues. We save and strengthen and secure Medicare. How? With positive reforms; putting patients in charge, not government in charge.

In fact, the proposal that we outlined a number of years ago and continue to include in our budget right now, the premium support for seniors, making it so that they have more choices, the Congressional Budget Office did a study on that exact program published last September.

They recognize that this program that is proposed by the Republicans will not only save money for seniors, but it will save money for taxpayers—real positive solutions. Again, it will put patients in charge and not government.

Another exciting difference between our proposal, our budget, real solutions and the other side, is that we understand that a growing economy is essential to getting us back on the right track. The past 5 years have certainly not been helpful.

The Congressional Budget Office, once again, has evaluated our proposed policies and has said that, if we are able to get our economy back on the right track by instituting our plan of saving over $5 trillion, that there would be significant benefits to the economy.

Realistic scoring shows that—and I will quote from the Congressional Budget Office—''CBO finds that reducing budget deficits is a net positive for economic growth. Deficit reduction creates long-term economic benefits because it increases the pool of national savings and boosts investment, thereby raising economic growth and job creation. These benefits are both significant and lasting.''

That is our budget, positive growth in the economy and significant and lasting benefits to the American people.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. HOLDING). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield to the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Finally, I want to just mention briefly the issue of the debt. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, said just a few years ago that the number one threat to our national security is not the threats that we see from other nations and rogue regimes, it is the threat of our national debt. The American people know this.

We are over $17 trillion in debt, and the President continues to spend, in his budget, record deficits—record annual deficits. The Path to Prosperity, the plan that we are proposing, gets us back on the right track, gets us on a path to balance, balancing within a 10-year period of time, and on trajectory to pay off the entire debt of the United States of America, thereby increasing economic opportunity and viability and all.

□ 1630

We are for the greatest amount of success for the greatest number of Americans and the greatest number of American Dreams being realized. The way that you do that is through the Path to Prosperity, a balanced and responsible budget.

I urge my colleagues to support this balanced budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I would just note that it is this Republican budget here in the House of Representatives that divides America. And when we point out that this is a budget that protects tax breaks for the very wealthy at the expense of everybody else, our colleagues say, oh, no, no, that is dividing America. But what we are explaining is the Republican budget, and that is, unfortunately, what it does.

The chairman originally said that only in Washington is an increase really a cut. I would just point out that in the President's defense budget, it goes from $521 billion in fiscal year 2015 to $646 billion 10 years from now—hardly a cut, in fact, quite an expansion going forward.

I am now pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO), a distinguished member of the Armed Services Committee who has focused a lot on defense.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Ranking Member VAN HOLLEN, for all of your work on this.

Mr. Chair, there are many damaging cuts in this budget, but I would like to speak just a minute about the cuts to education. In ancient civilizations, literacy and education were closed off to all but the very affluent; and the beauty of America, since its founding, has been the democratization of a way to become educated, make your way into the middle class and to do well.

This budget would threaten that, and it does it in several ways. First, it cuts Pell grants, that is, grants to college students, by $145 billion. It also very significantly makes Pell grant aid unavailable to part-time students.

I want to focus on that for just a second because this is something we see over and over in our districts again: single moms or working parents, men or women, who are trying to balance a job and go to school at the same time. They are trying to take two or three classes maybe, make their way, still be able to work to support their families, but also go to college and finish off and slowly get their degree.

This budget would not allow them to access Pell grants. It would make

achieving their goal of getting their education, maybe training for another kind of job, impossible for millions of Americans. The cuts to Pell grants are especially significant because in States like mine, in Texas, since 2003, tuition has gone up an average of 104 percent for thousands and thousands of Texans.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman from Texas has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. So when Republicans put forward a budget that cuts off access to higher education, what they are doing is cutting off a path to the middle class for millions of Americans, and every American, young and old, should be concerned about that.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I now am very pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), a terrific member of the Budget Committee who is focused on lots of important issues including the challenge of poverty in America.

Ms. LEE of California. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding and for your tremendous support and leadership on behalf of the majority of the American people in our country.

Mr. Chair, I rise, of course, in strong opposition to this very reckless Republican budget. This is yet another Republican messaging document masquerading really as a budget resolution. Once again, Republicans have brought forth a budget that slashes the programs that keep the poorest and most vulnerable Americans healthy, working, and with food on the table.

Under this cruel plan—and, yes, it is a cruel plan—seniors on Medicare would see their payments for services and prescriptions skyrocket. We would see an end to the Medicare guarantee as we know it.

By converting SNAP to a block grant program, Republicans, once again, seek to balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable by cutting our Nation's first line of defense, and that is hunger. Between cuts and policy changes, this budget would cut $137 billion in SNAP benefits over 10 years—$40 billion wasn't enough.

And at the same time that our Nation is facing the greatest income inequality since the Great Depression, this Republican budget would protect some of the most outrageous tax breaks and loopholes for the wealthiest millionaires, billionaires, and Big Oil companies. That is right. Once again, this plan really wreaks havoc on the poor and the middle class, who really pay the price so that my colleagues across the aisle can claim a balanced budget.

Sadly, it does not stop there. While the Republican budget continues to keep the American Dream out of reach for the poor, it would increase spending, mind you, for the already bloated Pentagon budget and continue the Overseas Contingency Operations slush fund, which is really paying for wars hopefully in the future that won't exist. We simply cannot continue to write a blank check for spending on war if we are to ever have a chance of getting our fiscal house in order.

We can't do this to America's struggling families and the working poor. Republicans claim they want to eliminate poverty, and, yes, we are holding this debate. Finally, it has become a national debate. We are debating poverty and how to make sure people find pathways out of poverty. Yet just read this budget. It is a pathway into poverty.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman from California has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LEE of California. Yes, I said a pathway. And thank you, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, because we have looked at this budget and looked at how it will create more poverty. So it is a pathway into poverty.

Budgets are moral documents. They reflect our values. So the underlying values in the Ryan budget really do not reflect who we are as Americans, believing that we really are our brothers' keepers and we really are our sisters' keepers.

So I urge Members to reject this Republican budget and instead support the budget proposals presented by the Democratic Caucus, the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and the Congressional Black Caucus. We need a budget that puts Americans back to work.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman from California has again expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield the gentlelady an additional 10 seconds.

Ms. LEE of California. I just want to conclude by saying we need a budget, and all three of the budgets that I just mentioned put Americans back to work. They invest in our future, they protect the safety net, and they work to reignite the American Dream for all. This budget does just the opposite. So I hope that all of us will vote ''no'' on the Ryan budget.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds just to say there are different visions. We don't think we should take more money from hardworking taxpayers to spend it in Washington and then borrow more from our children. We think we should balance the budget and pay off the debt.

We are going to see a lot of budgets coming to the floor here offered by the other side, which is great. It is their right. I am glad they are offering alternatives.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN's Democratic budget will have a $1.8 trillion tax increase, just like the President's new $1.8 trillion tax increase. The Progressive Caucus budget, they have the candle here: a $6.6 trillion tax increase they are encouraging.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield myself an additional 15 seconds.

Spending by the other side, what they are saying is let's just have a bidding war on how much we can raise people's taxes. Let's even raise spending more. And nobody else is offering a budget that will ever balance the budget. So the idea here is borrow endlessly, never balance it, and give our children an inferior standard of living.

With that, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. NUNNELEE), a distinguished member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. NUNNELEE. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Chairman RYAN for yielding, but, more importantly, thank him for his work and leadership in this area.

Tonight around America, families will sit down at the kitchen table to talk about their family finances. And there always seem to be more needs than there are dollars in a paycheck. So those families will sit down. They may shed tears tonight, and they may have some tense words between them, but before the night is over, they will sit down and make tough decisions about how they will spend their family's budget.

Just last week, the State legislature in my State adjourned, but before they did, they made some tough choices. They weren't able to fund everything they wanted to fund, and they had to set priorities. Local governments and county governments are making tough choices.

When it comes to American families sitting around their kitchen table, if the State legislature, if city governments and county governments are making those tough choices, they have every reason to expect their government in Washington to do the same thing. And for 4 years now, under the leadership of Chairman RYAN, we have put forward a budget that does make these tough but necessary decisions about getting control of our Federal spending.

That is why I am proud to join my colleagues and vote for a budget that responsibly cuts $5.1 trillion over the next 10 years by reforming the main drivers of our debt—targeting wasteful spending. At the same time, this budget seeks to expand opportunity to help the private sector create jobs by highlighting policies that will grow the economy.

Meanwhile, the administration wants to take more money out of the paychecks of hardworking Americans by raising their taxes, wants to spend more money, and wants to borrow more money from successive generations and never balance the budget.

This administration has made all sorts of promises it can't keep. For example, the Congressional Budget Office says that Pell grants will begin to have a shortfall in 2016 and every year thereafter. Medicare? My mom and dad

worked all of their life, paid into a program, and their government made them a promise. They said that, when you get to retirement age, we are going to provide you health care; yet the actuarial models say that program is going bankrupt, and the administration doesn't deal with it.

This budget does make tough decisions and makes tough choices. And the critics? They call this budget draconian. Only in Washington is making a tough choice labeled as being controversial.

It is important that we make these decisions and put our government back on a path of sustainable finances to grow our economy. By making these tough choices, we ensure our children and our grandchildren a better future because we are doing more than just balancing a budget. We are living out the American Dream. Beating in the heart of every American since this country was founded is the desire to leave a better way of life to successive generations, not saddle those generations with massive amounts of debt.

So, for those reasons, I support this budget, and I urge my colleagues to support this budget, as well.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman referred to tough decisions. Well, it is true that the House Republican budget is really tough on our kids' education. It cuts deeply into early education, Early Head Start, and Head Start. It cuts very deeply into K–12. That includes Title I and special education for kids with disabilities. As we have talked about, it charges college students higher interest rates.

And it is true that the Republican budget is tough on seniors on Medicare, because if they have high prescription drug costs, the Republican budget reopens the doughnut hole so they will face $1,200 more per year on prescription drugs.

So it is tough on kids' education, and it is tough on seniors.

I will tell you who it is not tough on. It is not tough on powerful special interests, people who are spending millions of dollars right now on TV advertising trying to influence people's votes. It is not tough on them at all. As I said, this budget calls for cutting the top tax rate by, fully, 30 percent.

Now, during the Budget Committee debate, the Democrats said, okay, the only way you can do this mathematically, if you are cutting the top rate by 30 percent, from 39 percent to 25 percent, is if you do it in a deficit neutral way, then you are going to be increasing taxes on middle class taxpayers and families to finance those tax cuts. And so we said to our Republican colleagues, if that is not what you intend to do, let's at least pass an amendment telling the Ways and Means Committee that one of our principles is at least maintaining the current progressivity of the Tax Code so we don't increase taxes on middle class families or lower-income families to finance the tax breaks for the folks at the top, called the Protect the American Middle Class from a Tax Increase amendment.

□ 1645

Republicans said no to that.

They have got all sorts of other instructions to the Ways and Means Committee in their budget, like reducing the top rate by a third for millionaires; but when it came to instructing the Ways and Means Committee not to increase the tax burden on middle class Americans, they said no to that.

So, yes, this Republican budget is tough on the middle class. It is tough on seniors, and it is tough on our kid's education; but for folks at the very top, they just don't ask for any shared sacrifice. We are just pointing that out. It is a fact in their budget.

The chairman talked about all those tax expenditures, $1 trillion a year worth. Not one of those tax expenditures are closed for the purpose of reducing the deficit.

Now, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), a Member of Congress who has worked hard throughout his entire career to try and make sure that our country grows and that every American has opportunity, the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, we have a choice to make. The House Democratic budget and the Republican's budget present very different choices about America's future. The Democratic alternative promotes job growth and expands opportunity. The Republican budget gives away trillions to the wealthy and special interests, while shredding the social safety net.

The Affordable Care Act is the most significant expansion of health coverage in 50 years. It ends discrimination based on preexisting conditions. It promotes health and prevention. It improves quality and lowers cost.

The Republican budget repeals the Affordable Care Act. Over 10 million Americans will lose coverage immediately. Insurers could discriminate based on preexisting conditions. More than 8 million seniors who have saved more than $10 billion on prescription drugs and more than 32 million who have benefited from free preventive services would immediately see higher costs. The 129 million Americans with preexisting conditions would no longer be safe from discrimination.

After they repealed the Affordable Care Act, the Republican budget would slash Medicaid by a full 25 percent. This will hurt millions of seniors in nursing homes, millions of low-income babies whose mothers receive important prenatal care, and millions of people with disabilities. These are immoral and outrageous cuts.

The Republican budget also ends the Medicare guarantee, forcing seniors who stay in fee-for-service to pay more for the coverage they have today. It slashes key domestic spending, cutting biomedical research, key job creation programs, and programs that keep kids from going hungry, just to name a few examples. Are these responsible choices? I don't think that is the path we ought to take.

The Democratic alternative is fiscally responsible and good for our Nation's health. I urge my colleagues to reject the House Republican approach and, instead, support working families, seniors, and people with disabilities by protecting our health care system from these attacks.

I urge a ''no'' vote on the Republican budget. Vote support for the Democratic budget.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chair, at this time, I would like to yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentlelady from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your leadership.

As a member of the Budget Committee and the Armed Services Committee, I am proud to support a balanced budget that stops spending money we don't have. It provides regulatory relief and promotes for a strong defense.

Our Federal debt tops an astonishing $17 trillion. This is unacceptable. It is irresponsible to take more money from hard-working families just to spend more here in Washington.

Our Path to Prosperity budget balances in 10 years by cutting wasteful spending and reforming government. Just as importantly, this budget gets our priorities right again by providing for the common defense. It replaces $274 billion in scheduled defense cuts to ensure the American people have a bright, safe future.

It is imperative we do so because, since taking office, President Obama has directed over $1 trillion in cuts to our military. Under the President's budget, which cuts $75 billion over the next 2 years, with deeper cuts expected if sequestration returns in fiscal year 2016, Secretary of Defense Hagel and other senior defense and military officials acknowledge that these budget choices will create additional risk to our Nation. We can't allow this to happen.

While we cut nearly one-fifth of our defense resources, Russia and China are arming at an alarming rate. Russia's military spending is up roughly 30 percent, and China's has more than doubled in recent years.

Given our military shortfalls, we must build upon the recent compromise and further reverse the current trajectory to mitigate the permanent damage to our national security.

I am proud to support a balanced budget that reins in government spending, promotes job creation, and reprioritizes our national defense. Our Path to Prosperity budget accomplishes these goals.

We cannot keep going to the Department of Defense to cut spending. We must deal with the real drivers of our debt and put our country on a sustainable path to grow the economy. America's future depends on it.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, it is now my privilege to yield 2 minutes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), a fighter for working Americans and a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, a moment ago, the gentleman from Mississippi said that families were sitting around at their kitchen table. Yes, they are sitting at their kitchen table, and they are crying.

They do not have a job. Their unemployment benefits have not been extended. Their wages have stagnated. They can't afford to send their children to college; and this majority fiddles while Rome burns and refuses to address any of these issues, but they certainly make it easy to lower the top tax rate for the richest Americans.

I rise in strong opposition to this cruel budget proposal; yet again, the House majority has put forward an ideological plan that puts all of the burdens on the most vulnerable among us, especially women and families.

Today is Equal Pay Day, a day that women's earnings finally catch up to what men made in 2013, but the fact is this dubious milestone, that it even exists, is a sad testament to the financial pressures that women and families face.

This budget proposal puts more pressure on women and families. Two-thirds of seniors in poverty are women. They rely on the bedrock American institution of Medicare to survive. This budget ends Medicare as we know it. It turns it into a voucher program. Seven in 10 elderly individuals, six in 10 non-elderly individuals rely on Medicaid, they are women.

The budget proposes $2.7 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and other support that help low- and middle-income families buy health insurance.

WIC provides critical food benefits to 8.3 million pregnant postpartum women, infants, and children across America. The budget drastically slashes the program, hurting the same family struggling the most in this economy.

It devastates food stamps, the program in which almost two-thirds of the adult participants are women and children, and they account for nearly half of all recipients.

It cuts 170,000 kids from Head Start, educational services for 3.4 million disadvantaged children. It cuts the Pell grant by over $125 billion. It allows the insurance companies to, once again, charge women more than men.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, it cuts Pell grants, and yet it allows insurance companies to, once again, charge women more than men and to treat pregnancy as a preexisting condition.

According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 69 percent of the cuts in the Republican budget would come from programs serving low- and moderate-income people. This Ryan Republican budget is not a reflection of America's values. It is not who we are as a country. It is an ideological document that threatens American families.

I urge my colleagues to reject it.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I would like to insert into the RECORD a very specific recitation of the Center for Budget Priorities' claim that the gentlewoman mentioned, and at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK), a distinguished member of the Budget Committee.

RESPONSIBLE SPENDING RESTRAINT AND REFORM—RESPONSE TO THE CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

In Brief:

A smaller increase is not a spending cut.

Under this budget, spending will grow, on average, by 3.5 percent a year over the next decade—on the current path, it will grow by 5.2 percent.

This budget spends $3.5 trillion on Medicaid over the next ten years. We increase spending every year from fiscal year 2016 onward.

This budget spends $600 billion on food stamps over the next decade. And it does not convert SNAP into a block grant until 2019, when the economy will have recovered.

This budget maintains the current maximum Pell award ($5,730) throughout each of the next ten years of the budget.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities claims the House Republican budget ''gets 69 percent of its cuts from low-income programs.'' Instead, the House GOP budget grows them at a more sustainable rate.

On the current path, the federal government will spend roughly $48 trillion over the next ten years. By contrast, this budget will spend nearly $43 trillion.

On the current path, spending will grow, on average, by 5.2 percent a year over the next decade. Under this budget, spending will grow, on average, by 3.5 percent a year.

Nearly $43 trillion is enough. Increasing spending by 3.5 percent instead of 5.2 percent is hardly draconian.

President Obama and his party have made promises they can't keep—they've promised huge expansions to safety-net programs that ultimately would bankrupt them.

Medicaid: This budget repeals Obamacare—including the law's massive expansions of Medicaid, which are unsustainable. Instead, this budget spends $3.5 trillion on Medicaid over the next ten years. We grow the program every year from fiscal year 2016 onward. We simply slow the rate of growth and give states the flexibility to meet the unique needs of their people.

SNAP: This budget spends $600 billion on food stamps over the next decade. By capping open-ended federal subsidies and allowing states to develop new, innovative methods, the budget's gradual reforms encourage states to reduce rolls and help recipients find work. The budget also doesn't covert SNAP into a block grant until 2019, when the economy will have fully recovered. The budget also calls for time limits and work requirements like the reforms that helped reduce poverty nationwide in the mid–1990s.

Pell Grants: Congressional Democrats and the President have pushed Pell Grant spending to unsustainable rates. The Congressional Budget Office reports the program will face fiscal shortfalls starting in 2016 and continuing through each year of the budget window. We need to reform the program so it can keep its promises. This budget brings Pell spending under control and makes sure aid helps the truly needy, not university administrators. At the same time, this budget maintains the current maximum Pell award ($5,730) throughout each of the next ten years of the budget.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the House Republican budget plan. Unlike the President's budget, this is a serious proposal that balances our budget and helps our economy grow.

Our Nation is $17.4 trillion in debt. If we want to preserve this country for our children and our grandchildren, we must reform the way Washington works.

Everyone knows that Medicare will soon go bankrupt, and that is why I am so happy that this budget proposal saves this important program for our seniors and future generations. By transitioning to a premium support model, we can preserve Medicare for those in or near retirement and strengthen Medicare for younger generations.

Furthermore, this budget ends ObamaCare's raid on the Medicare trust fund and repeals ObamaCare's Independent Payment Advisory Board to help ensure our seniors get the care they deserve.

Despite what some critics say, this does not eliminate traditional Medicare. Instead, it ensures that Americans will always have traditional Medicare as an option. Under this plan, every senior will have the support they need to get the care they deserve. Those who attack this reform without offering credible alternatives are complicit in Medicare's demise.

So I want to commend Chairman RYAN and my Republican colleagues on the Budget Committee for leading, where President Obama and the Senate Democrats have failed. One way or another, this country will have to address our out-of-control debt and deficits, and this budget does so responsibly.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, it is now my privilege to yield 4 minutes to a fellow Marylander, Mr. HOYER, the Democratic whip, who has spent a lot of time focused on budgets to empower our economy and to make sure we do so in a fiscally responsible manner.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member for yielding.

I would first observe, Mr. Chairman, that the American people ought to lament another opportunity missed, an opportunity to come together and adopt a big, balanced plan for investment and balance in our fiscal system in America.

Mr. Chairman, last year, we adopted a budget. During the course of its implementation with the consideration of appropriation bills, the Republican chairman of the committee called the sequester numbers adopted in the 2014 Ryan plan unrealistic and ill-conceived.

For 2016 through 2024, Mr. Chairman, this budget has numbers below sequester levels that the chairman said were unrealistic and ill-conceived.

Chairman ROGERS has called the numbers in this budget draconian, Chairman ROGERS, responsible for funding the operations of government and assisting and building our economy and its people.

Mr. Chairman, I believe it is all that and a call to disinvestment. This budget is a call to disinvestment in America's growth and success.

We have heard a lot of claims, of course, about what the Republican budget will do for our country. I have heard those claims from previous Republican chairmen, frankly. They did not pan out.

Let me clear that fog away and get down to the raw numbers which reveal the magnitude of the damage the Republican budget will inflict. As a matter of fact, with all due respect, I call it a retreat—an alliterative retreat of course, the chairman's retreat.

First, the Republican budget would repeal the patient protections and other benefits of the Affordable Care Act, leaving millions without health insurance coverage.

Of course, it keeps the money; it just didn't give the benefits. It would turn Medicaid into a capped block grant program and cut its funding by $732 billion over the next decade.

□ 1700

That is from seniors who need long-term care. That is from people with disabilities who need medical services.

Two-thirds of Medicaid spending goes to low-income seniors, and the Republican budget cuts it by a quarter.

It would also end the Medicare guarantee and reopen the doughnut hole for prescription drugs, shifting costs back to seniors.

Secondly, the Republican budget disinvests, as I said, from many of the very important initiatives Congress has made a priority for the future growth and competitiveness of our economy.

It cuts over $120 billion from middle class college affordability programs like the Pell grant and will leave a college undergraduate taking out a student loan as much as $3,800 deeper in debt.

By eliminating funding for applied research, their budget will reduce Federal research grants by half—by half disinvestment. It could result in 2,400 fewer National Science Foundation research awards and 1,400 fewer National Institutes of Health awards.

The reality is, Mr. Chairman, the Republican budget would decimate pediatric research. We have heard a little bit about that. It would decimate pediatric research. It would decimate all other research as well and other medical research in the lifesaving diseases by billions of dollars, not just pediatric research: cancer, heart, lung, blood, Alzheimer's, and others. $173 billion will be cut from highway spending over the next 10 years, disinvestment, even though infrastructure investments are critical to the growth of our manufacturing sector and job creation.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. HOYER. Overall, the Republican budget reduces our long-term investments in education, research, infrastructure, and job training by over 15 percent over the next decade compared to the deal the Republican chairman negotiated just 4 months ago.

I will tell you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, our competitors around the world are not retreating in terms of investments. Perhaps the most egregious mark against this budget, though, is that it does not achieve the fiscal balance its authors give as the reason for these cuts in the first place.

Instead, it relies on ''dynamic scoring.'' That is, pretend something will happen. Now, if it happens, we would have a bonus and we could use that bonus. But if it doesn't happen, this budget will guarantee that we will be further in the hole.

It has an asterisk for $966 billion. It doesn't say what that $966 billion is about, at least two-thirds of it. But you guess, pretend, hope. If it doesn't happen, you are in the hole.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HOYER. This budget, Mr. Chairman, is a blueprint for economic decline, for vulnerable Americans being left to fend for themselves, and for an America less equipped to protect its citizens.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this resolution and send a message that our country will continue to invest in its priorities: opportunity, security, and growth. Let us not retreat. Let us serve this country and serve its greatness.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 1 minute.

I want to rest the mind of the distinguished minority whip at ease. Chairman ROGERS does support this budget. His comments in 2013 aside, he is a supporter of this budget. This budget balances using CBO numbers.

I would also say this. All these complaints about spending cuts or slower increases in spending aside—this budget, by the way, doesn't specify that NIH is going to have all of that—all of these reductions in spending or reductions in the increase in spending will pale in comparison if we have a debt crisis, if we have a bond market incident, if we have an interest rate shock.

If we keep kicking the can down the road, the solution then will be so much uglier, so much more draconian, than any of this hyperbolic rhetoric even suggests.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee, Dr. ROE.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the House Republican budget.

Today, our national debt exceeds $17.5 trillion. Mr. Chairman, that is a blueprint for decline—more than $55,000 for every man, woman, and child in America. If we fail to address this mounting debt now, our children and our grandchildren will inherit an America that will be poorer, less free, and provide fewer opportunities.

To address this looming crisis, Republicans propose balancing the Federal budget in 10 years. Most Americans don't realize that discretionary spending has decreased 4 consecutive years, a tremendous accomplishment spurred on by House Republicans.

Now we must show the same resolve to tackle our largest drivers of debt, mandatory programs, including Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, and SNAP. We can achieve balance without reducing overall spending—let me say that again—we can achieve balance without reducing overall spending by simply slowing the rate of growth at which spending increases. We must spend hardworking taxpayer dollars smarter.

Mr. Chairman, I am Medicare age, and I realize that for every dollar that we pay in in premiums, we get $3 out in benefits. This is clearly not sustainable.

As a physician, I would like to commend Chairman RYAN for his continued efforts to save and strengthen Medicare. We must act to protect seniors' access to medical care before the Medicare trust fund becomes insolvent in 2026, a short time from now.

This proposal achieves that goal while ensuring those Americans 55 and older experience absolutely no change.

I urge my colleagues to support this very conservative budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Montana (Mr. DAINES).

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Chairman, to create jobs and grow our economy, we must work toward lasting solutions that put our Nation back on solid fiscal ground, stop wasteful Washington spending, and balance our budget.

The American people deserve more accountability from Washington, and Washington has a responsibility to the American people to produce, number one, a budget, and, number two, a budget that balances. Anything less than that is a failure to lead.

That is why I introduced the Balanced Budget Accountability Act, which requires Congress to pass a balanced budget or Members won't get paid. The principles found in my Balanced Budget Accountability Act reflect Montana commonsense, and they stand in stark contrast with the President's budget, which never achieves

balance, and the Senate, where Democrat leaders have decided the American people don't deserve a budget at all. That is irresponsible and will only lead to never-ending deficits and a debt that will take generations to pay off. That is not the Montana way, that is not the American way.

I don't agree with everything in this budget, but I know that the people of Montana want and deserve a solution to our debt crisis, a balanced budget, and a Congress with the courage to lead.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a member of the Budget Committee and the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in yielding me time.

As I am sitting on the floor listening to the back and forth and the division, I was thinking back to a time when there was consensus in this body on important investments for our future.

Indeed, the character of our Nation, our economic vitality, was grounded in the investment the United States made in our ports, our railroads, our highways. The finest infrastructure in the world gave the United States the strength to be victorious in battle in World War I and World War II, to have the economic strength to be able to meet national challenges, and to provide economic security and well-being for our families.

Unfortunately, as families struggle, as we have difficulty providing family-wage jobs for American workers, the American infrastructure is no longer the envy of the world, as it was in the past. In fact, all the independent studies show we are not anywhere near the top of the pack. We fall into the lower ranges of the development world.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has given our infrastructure a grade of D-plus and suggests we will need to invest over $3 trillion over the next 6 years just to remain economically competitive in the global marketplace. The failure to deal with our infrastructure is going to cost American families in terms of wear and tear on their vehicles over $1,000 a year and millions of hours stuck in traffic in congestion.

We are facing a soon-to-be-bankrupt highway trust fund. The clock is ticking. By the end of September, it will run out of money, which means we are seeing cutbacks on Federal contracts this summer, which means some States are having to act now this spring. The decision of Tennessee this last week—it is the 11th State that has announced cutbacks.

The Republican budget being debated today ignores this pending crisis, let alone the growing needs of American communities. Their budget would freeze us in decline, a 30 percent reduction over the next decade from already inadequate levels, making it impossible to deal with projects of national significance and severely straining ongoing maintenance of our highway and transit systems.

It doesn't have to be this way. A broad and powerful coalition ranging from the AFL–CIO to the Chamber of Congress, the trucking association, AAA, bicyclists, environmentalists, local governments, contractors, businesses large and small have joined with a group of 17 bipartisan governors and the heads of 31 State chambers of commerce to urge that Congress face this funding crisis so that we can have a full 6-year reauthorization so that we can put hundreds of thousands of Americans to work, strengthen the economy, and protect our communities.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Instead of wasting more time on a budget that is going nowhere, we should come together to address our failing bridges, roads, and water system. Our future demands it, our constituents expect no less.

I strongly urge the rejection of the Republican budget if for no other reason than it freezes us in this decline for infrastructure and look forward to the day when we will work together to solve this problem.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time is remaining on each side.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Maryland has 40 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 41½ minutes remaining.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Does the chairman have any further speakers?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I do not have any further speakers at the moment.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chair and ranking member of our Budget Committee for the opportunity to share some thoughts.

Mixed messaging—it really grips the American public. Washington Republicans are presenting their budget and proclaiming that we are about reducing the debt and reducing the deficit. We are concerned about our children, we are concerned about our grandchildren.

At the same time, the mixed message is to the crowd that is above a million dollar threshold, income threshold: We have money for you we are going to spend for you. We are so concerned about the debt and the deficit that needs to be reduced, but we will spend on you. We will offer you an average $200,000 tax break, so allow us to spend on you.

Somehow the children and the grandchildren are not a worry then. So the mixed messaging on this one is amazing.

□ 1715

Over the last couple of days, I have had the opportunity to either meet in the office or in group sessions or in large gatherings here in Washington with a number of advocates who are concerned about investments that need to be made in this Federal budget.

There is the Alzheimer's Association that is imploring us to find a cure, to invest in research. Washington Republicans say: no, we need to spend on tax cuts for the wealthy, and we need to use your funds to reduce the debt and the deficit.

Washington Republicans will tell our college-bound students who need an affordable path to that higher ed opportunity that: we can't spend on you or invest in you, we need to spend on tax cuts for the wealthy.

Washington Republicans will sweep the savings and the revenues of the Affordable Care Act and proclaim to the senior community that: we are now repealing the Affordable Care Act, all of the benefits that were there for you are now removed.

Washington Republicans will tell a group that I met with about water infrastructure needs: we can't spend on you because we need to spend on tax cuts for the wealthy.

This is a mixed message that is disingenuous.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I yield the gentleman another 30 seconds.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Chair, I think we should be real with the American public. We either stand for spending or we don't. We want to address the debt and deficit or we don't. We believe in investment, as the Democratic minority in this House believes, that will grow the economy and provide a greater opportunity for jobs.

There is this path to prosperity for a few that the Republicans have put together with their budget. I suggest that we look at a highway for hope that has been advanced by the Democrats in the House that invests in Alzheimer's research, higher ed opportunities, infrastructure for this Nation, and a continuation of the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 2 minutes.

I think there is this view that the pie of life is fixed, that society is static—the economy, a fixed pie—and that we here in Washington should decide how to redistribute the slices of the pie.

We reject that whole, entire premise. Life is dynamic. The economy is dynamic. We want to grow the pie for everybody. You don't grow the pie—grow opportunity or grow the economy—if you drive this country to a debt crisis, if you continue spending way beyond your means, if you spend money we

don't have that is taken from the next generation.

This President has already raised taxes $1.7 trillion. The top effective tax rate on successful small businesses is almost 45 percent. The tax rate on big businesses, like corporations, is 35 percent.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself an additional minute.

Our competitors, the countries we compete with, tax their businesses at 25 percent. When we tax ourselves a lot more than our foreign competitors tax themselves, they win, and we lose.

What we are hearing from the other side is that $1.7 trillion tax increase is not enough. Let's go farther and tax another $1.8 trillion.

Then this rhetoric about winners and losers and the few and the this and the that is a notion that all of the good ideas come from Washington. It is a notion that goes beyond the idea that government needs to play a supporting role in our lives, in fulfilling important missions like health and retirement security and a safety net, to government needs to play the commanding role in our lives, that it needs to dictate these things, that government runs the economy, that government decides who wins and who loses.

Guess what, Mr. Chairman? When you do that, the interest groups that they are all complaining about, they are the ones who call the shots up here.

What we are trying to do with this budget is to get the basics right. What we want to do is to make sure that we can make good on these very important missions of health and retirement security, and we want to make sure that people get to decide how it is done in their lives.

We want to make sure that American businesses have what they need to compete and survive and grow and to create jobs in this global economy. What we want to make sure is that we don't live beyond our means so that our kids live below their means. We want to grow this economy.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has again expired.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself an additional minute.

We have got a big debt. We all know that. The question is: Who owns our debt? Who is in control of our future?

We already know we are asking a lot from the next generation, more than any other generation has before. Back when I was born in 1970, 6 percent of our national debt was owned by foreigners. In 1990, when I was in college, 19 percent was owned by foreigners. Today, 47 percent of our national debt is owned by foreigners. They control half of our debt.

That is not in our country's interest. Relying on other countries to cash flow our country—to cash flow our budget—is not smart economics, and we know we are taking control of our country and are ceding it elsewhere.

This is why we have got to get this debt under control, for our kids, for our grandkids, for our economy, and for our sovereignty.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We all believe in a growing economy, and we all believe in greater prosperity. The issue is how do we make sure we have that prosperity as a country.

We have two very important strains in the American character. One strain is the entrepreneurial strain, the self-reliance strain, and that has helped generate great prosperity in this country.

It has helped unleash huge amounts of potential; yet we have also learned as a country that there are some things we can do better by working together than if we are just hundreds of millions of people who are separately operating on their own, with things like investing in our national infrastructure, with things like investing in a world-class college system, with things like working and investing in medical research, so that we are the world's leader in those areas.

Those are what have made us a world economic power and that have allowed us to support our military.

The problem with the Republican budget is that it ignores that part of the American character. We keep hearing from our colleagues about all of those tax expenditures that are out there, but I just have to go back, Mr. Chairman, to point out that they don't close one of those tax loopholes for the purpose of helping to reduce the deficit.

Because they make that decision—because they decide to say: we are not going to touch those very powerful special interests and the very wealthy—their budget mathematically has to come after other people in the country, after the middle class, after seniors, after our kids' education, after our infrastructure. That is what this is all about.

Our budget and the President's budget dramatically reduce the deficit. They reduce the debt as a function of a share of the economy in the outyears going down. The Republican budget didn't balance until 2040 just a few years ago.

So the issue is whether you are going to be driven by the ideological target or whether your fundamental focus will be jobs and opportunity. That is what ours does.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) control the balance of the time.

The CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. I thank Chairman RYAN of the Budget Committee for the hard work that he has been doing over the last several years as we look to get a handle on the spending problem we have here in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Chairman, our debt is out of control. In the past 10 years, it has more than doubled, from $7.1 trillion to $17.6 trillion today. We paid almost $416 billion in interest just last year. Imagine where that money could have been better spent.

The failure to address the debt and deficits reduces opportunity and prosperity for future generations. It directly threatens our ability to pay for our priorities like Social Security, Medicare, a strong national defense, and taking care of our veterans.

Unfortunately, President Obama has offered another budget that increases taxes, that expands the government, that does nothing to save Medicare or Social Security, and that never balances. HARRY REID's Senate will not even consider a budget this year.

The budget we offer to the American people protects and preserves Medicare and Social Security, and it balances in 10 years. When Congress responsibly budgets, we increase economic security for our families and ensure that we leave our children and grandchildren with more opportunities and a brighter future.

Mr. Chairman, I call on my colleagues to do the right thing by workers, families, and future generations. Pass this budget.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, at this point, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), a distinguished member of the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman from Oregon, and I thank all of the Members for a thoughtful and important debate.

Mr. Chairman, that is what this is all about. It is about gripping—taking hold—of the heart and soul of America.

As I said in the Rules Committee, the budget is actually a moral document, a moral compass, of where we want to take this country. I think what needs to be explained to the American public is that, in actuality, we have been making progress.

The deficit has gone down from $1 trillion from the past administration, from the Bush administration, to now $680 billion. We are making progress, from losing 800,000 jobs a month to gaining close to 200,000; yet the document that is on the floor today, the Ryan budget—the Republican budget—chooses not to have the morality and the affection for the American people that is desired.

When you look at their budget, you will see that $3.3 trillion of their budget—69 percent—is cut from programs

for people with low or moderate incomes, from the very people who need a stairstep of opportunity, and they give $200,000 in tax cuts to the top 1 percent.

None of us have any challenge to prosperity and opportunity, but how can you have a budget that hits low-income programs or programs that give opportunity?

How many have gone to school because of Pell grants? $175 million in cuts. How many people have gotten their health care from Medicaid and still do, like children? How many people have needed to have the SNAP program?

I believe that we should have budgets that work for all people. I intend to vote for the CBC budget and for the Democratic budget and ''no'' on this underlying Republican budget. We need to have a standard that respects all people in this country, and this budget does not.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 96, the House Republicans' ''Budget Resolution for Fiscal Year 2015.'' I oppose this irresponsible budget resolution because it continues the reckless approach to fiscal policy that the House majority has championed for years, with disastrous results.

Mr. Chair, the budgeteers on the majority side have a very poor track record when it comes to economic forecasts and projections.

For years, they have based their entire legislative agenda and strategy on their belief that the Affordable Care Act or ''Obamacare'' would be a failure.

The wish was father to the thought. But they were wrong.

Because of Obamacare more than 10 million Americans now know the peace of mind that comes from affordable, quality health insurance that is there when you need it. (7 million through the exchange and 3 million through Medicaid).

House Republicans oppose increasing the minimum wage, claiming that it costs jobs. Wrong again. Every increase in the minimum wage has been accompanied by an expanding economy, especially during the Clinton Administration.

House Republicans opposing comprehensive immigration reform claim that it will lead to lower incomes and lost jobs. Wrong again. Studies conducted by groups as far apart as the Chamber of Commerce and the AFL–CIO consistently show that comprehensive immigration reform will grow the Gross Domestic Product by $1.5 trillion over 10 years.

Given this sorry track record of economic forecasting, I strongly oppose the Republican budget because it favors the wealthy over middle class families and those struggling to enter or remain in the middle class.

I oppose this Republican budget because it asks major sacrifices of seniors who can barely make ends meet, and fundamentally alters the social contract by turning Medicaid and SNAP programs into a block grant and Medicare into a voucher.

I cannot and will not support a resolution that attempts to balance the budget on the backs of working families, seniors, children, the poor, or mortgages the future by failing to make the investments needed to sustain economic growth and opportunity for all Americans.

Mr. Chair, we Democrats have a better way. We understand that we are all in this together and that our current economic situation calls for a balanced approach between increased revenues and responsible reduction in expenditures.

Our plan will protect and strengthen our recovering economy, reduce the deficit in a responsible way, while continuing to invest in the things that make our country strong like education, health care, innovation, and clean energy.

Mr. Chair, this Republican budget is bad for America but it is disastrous for the people from my home state of Texas who sent me here to advocate for their interests. Let me highlight a few examples.

1. If the Republican budget resolution were to become the basis of federal fiscal policy, 3,435,336 Texas seniors would be forced out of traditional Medicare and into a voucher program. Under the Republican plan to end Medicare as we know it, Texas seniors will receive a voucher instead of guaranteed benefits under traditional Medicare.

2. For the 3,435,336 Texans aged 45–54, the value of their vouchers would be capped at growth levels that are lower than the projected increases in health care costs. Previous analyses showed that this type of plan would cut future spending by $5,900 per senior, forcing them to spend more out of pocket and diminishing their access to quality care.

3. Additionally, private insurance plans will aggressively pursue the healthiest, least expensive enrollees, thereby allowing Medicare—currently the lifeline for 3,187,332 Texas seniors—to ''wither on the vine.''

4. If the Republican budget resolution were to be adopted by Congress, 206,304 Texas seniors would pay more for prescription drugs next year.

5. The Republican plan would re-open the ''donut hole,'' forcing seniors to pay the full cost of their prescription drugs if their yearly drug expenses are more than $2,970 for the year.

6. Seniors reaching the prescription drug ''donut hole'' would pay an average of $828 more in prescription drug costs in 2014 and approximately $13,000 more from now through 2022.

7. Under the Republican budget, the 2,445,462 Texas seniors who utilized free preventive services currently covered by Medicare in 2012 will face increased costs in the form of higher deductibles, co-insurance, and copayments for certain services, including even cancer screenings and annual wellness visits.

8. The Republican budget slashes $31.71 billion in nursing home care and other health care services for 754,500 Texas seniors and disabled who currently rely on Medicaid for their long-term care needs.

9. The draconian cuts included in the Republican budget would have a devastating impact on the 1,191 certified nursing homes in Texas that serve 91,717 seniors, with more than half relying on Medicaid as their primary payer. As a result, nursing homes would be forced to slash services, turn away seniors, or close their doors.

Mr. Chair, this budget could have invested in programs that help strengthen the middle class, reduce poverty, and strengthen our economic recovery. Instead, the Republican budget makes deep cuts to the area of the budget helping low-income families put food on the table and make ends meet.

These are families who are already struggling with unemployment, lower wages, and just simply trying to make ends meet.

The House Republican budget will push millions more Americans into poverty and put a large number of low-income children, seniors, and people with disabilities at risk.

It guts Medicare and Medicaid and calls for massive cuts to food assistance, all in order to protect tax breaks for special interests and for multimillionaires who are not even asking for them.

The Republican budget may be characterized in many ways—cruel, irresponsible, shortsighted, reckless—but ''fair and balanced'' is not one of them.

In contrast, the alternative budgets proposed by the Democratic Caucus, Congressional Black Caucus, and Congressional Progressive Caucus, which were made in order by the Rules Committee, are each worthy of support because they fairly balance the need for increased revenues and responsible reductions in expenditures with the imperative of making the necessary investments in human capital required to move our country forward.

Specifically, the Alternative Budgets proposed by the Democratic Caucus, CBC, and CPC:

help create more jobs now;

replace the sequester;

make key education investments;

invest in research and development and clean energy;

invest in long-term infrastructure;

preserve Medicare as we know it;

protect health reform's benefits for seniors;

protect Medicaid for seniors in nursing homes;

preserve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP);

reduce the deficit through a smart, targeted, and steady approach provides tax relief for working families and ends tax breaks for the wealthy;

take a balanced approach to reducing the long-term deficits and debt; and

put the budget on a sustainable path

Mr. Chair, under the Democratic budget, the deficit would fall from 7 percent of GDP in 2014 to 2.3 percent of GDP in 2024.

The Democratic Budget Alternative will generate at least a million more jobs this year compared to the Republicans' ''austerity first'' plan by making the investments needed to create jobs, strengthen the middle class, create greater upward mobility, and ensure opportunity for our children and future generations.

The Democratic alternative budgets extend Emergency Unemployment Compensation for the long-term unemployed, which provides a lifeline to the 2.37 million jobless workers who have already lost their benefits and the 72,000 persons who stand to lose there benefits each week if Congress does not act.

Additionally, the Democratic budget immediately ends the Sequester, which would otherwise cost the economy 750,000 jobs by the end of the year, and replaces it with deficit reduction resulting from a balanced approach combining responsible spending cuts with increased revenues by cutting tax breaks for special interests and wealthy individuals without increasing the tax burden on middle-income Americans.

Mr. Chair, the Democratic alternative budget maintains our commitment to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security; expands the EITC for childless workers; extends the tax credits from the American Taxpayer Relief Act due to expire at the end of 2017, and provides $7.6 billion annually for early childhood education.

It is said often, Mr. Chair, but is no less true, that the federal budget is more than a financial document; it is an expression of the nation's most cherished values. As the late and great former senator and Vice-President Hubert Humphrey said:

"The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped."

For that reason that in evaluating the merits of a budget resolution, it is not enough to subject it only to the test of fiscal responsibility. To keep faith with the nation's past, to be fair to the nation's present, and to safeguard the nation's future, the budget must also pass a "moral test."

The Republican budget resolution fails both of these standards. The Democratic alternatives do not. For these compelling reasons, I stand in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 96 and urge my colleagues to join me in voting against this ill-conceived and unwise measure.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT).

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Chairman, one of the reasons I ran over here right now is that I have been listening to some of the speakers on the left.

As the gentlewoman just spoke, in referring to the budget as a moral document, I actually somewhat agree with that, but let's actually discuss what is moral for the next generation and the generation after that and the generation after that.

For the fun of it, as I was running out the door, I grabbed this little poster which had been dropped off to me last week. It is a little poster from over at the Mercatus Center, which has been doing some calculations of what the United States' debt would look like if you took the debt in the unfunded liabilities of this country and put it on GAAP accounting, so if you actually treated it honestly.

What is the real number, the typical actuarial 75-year window, attached with regular debt?

Process in your mind what you have been told year after year of our unfunded liabilities, and I need you to wipe that number clean. The number they came up with recently has hit $205 trillion of debt in unfunded liabilities.

You do realize, if you go right now to Google and look up the best estimates of the wealth of the world, our unfunded liabilities are now exceeding many of the estimates of the wealth of the entire world.

This is what so many Members are willing to hand to our children, to our great-grandchildren, and to the future generations?

If you want to make a moral argument, that debt—those unfunded liabilities—is the moral argument.

□ 1730

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WELCH. I thank the gentleman.

We are both making an argument that aligns with our points of view on the budget, and the bottom line here is that we have got to invest, we have got to have a balanced budget, and we have got to figure out how to do it. But the question I have about this budget is: What is going to happen to the potholes in America?

I came out of a State legislature where we had constraints on us. We had to find ways to pay our bills within the means of the people of Vermont to be able to pay them. We had to deal with real problems. It required a confident approach to investing in the future. That has to be part of a budget.

America's roads are falling apart. Our bridges are falling down. This is a real disaster when it comes to meeting the infrastructure needs of this country. The American Society of Civil Engineers rates our infrastructure D-plus and estimates that the amount of investment needed by 2020 is $3.6 billion.

This budget accepts the looming insolvency of the highway trust fund, and it does absolutely nothing to fix it. Those potholes are not going to fix themselves. And that is not a Republican or Democratic deal. Those are potholes in your district and mine.

It is scientific research as well. Both sides of the aisle are proud of America's scientific achievements. What this budget continues to do is reduce and squeeze National Institutes of Health grants by about 1,400. Just in the State of Vermont, the University of Vermont has seen a 20 percent drop in those research grants that help those with Ph.D.'s find cures for diseases in the future.

A confident nation is going to fix its roads.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. May I inquire how much time remains?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Wisconsin has approximately 34 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Oregon has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Having the right to close, we have no more speakers on this side.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Just so I understand, the majority has consumed 34 minutes?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 34 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Oregon has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield myself 2 minutes.

I do appreciate the back-and-forth discussion here, but I want to put this in perspective, if I could, because our friends with the Republican budget have assumed, for instance, that we don't necessarily have to raise taxes. We could actually cut some of the loopholes that we have offered repeatedly; and although that is referred to rhetorically, they have never been able to follow through with any that they would cut.

There are Medicaid cuts. And make no mistake about it, these Medicaid cuts are actually reductions in nursing home care for America's most vulnerable. That is two-thirds of this money that it is going to be visited back on the States and impacting families.

They repeal the Affordable Care Act, but they keep all the associated revenues.

We went through a campaign season excoriating Democrats for the reductions in Medicare Advantage, and they keep that in their budget.

There is the magic of dynamic scoring, which we have heard about repeatedly for years, which never really quite proves itself.

And then we have cuts to Pell grants. We heard described in committee that these cuts to Pell grants are not a problem because they are just an excuse to raise tuition and enrich lavish academic salaries.

Mr. Chairman, this Republican budget would not only freeze us into a downward decline in our infrastructure, it would be the lowest level of nonmilitary discretionary spending that we have seen in generations. It is not going to happen; it shouldn't happen; and my Republican friends should not be able to get away with assuming that this is a viable and responsible approach.

I hope we will come to the point again where we can find a way to come together to deal with things that we actually agree on in a tangible way and make some real progress.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, budgeting is about choosing. Budgeting is about setting priorities. In this particular case, it is about setting a path for the country.

We have got serious fiscal challenges unlike any we have ever had before; and when we look at some of these fiscal challenges, it is very clear that the sooner we get on top of these problems, the sooner we deal with these problems, the better off everybody is going to be.

Here, in a nutshell, is our big fiscal issue. It is not a Democrat or Republican thing. It is not a partisan thing. It is really sort of a demographic and math thing.

We are going from roughly 40 million seniors to about 80 million seniors, retirees. The baby boomers are retiring, 10,000 people a day, at this pace, for 10 years. The programs that they rely on, like Medicare—really important programs—grow 6 to 8 percent a year.

So when you have a pay-as-you-go system where current workers pay current taxes under their current paychecks to pay for current retirees—as I

am paying my payroll taxes for my mom's Medicare and Social Security benefits, and when I am retired, my kids will do the same for me—and you have an 89 percent increase in the retirement population but about a 17 percent increase in the taxpaying population, therein lies your challenge.

So these programs are growing so much faster than our ability to pay. They are growing faster than wages, economy, and revenues, to the point where these programs that we rely on that are so special and necessary—I have seen Social Security and Medicare do important things in my own family and my own life—these things are going bankrupt. The sooner we fix it, the better off we are all going to be.

The other problem is, if we don't fix this, if we don't even show the world or the country that we intend to fix this, our economy really suffers, because the economy, businesses, banks, credit unions, creditors, small businesses, and large businesses don't know what the future is going to look like.

So all these things we need to do to get people to take risks and hire people and invest and start a new business, we are slowing that down. That is why the CBO says the economy is slowing down. It is hard to get people out of poverty if we don't have good jobs for them to get out of poverty with.

If you look at this chart, we are going into unchartered territory. We have had big debt before. Our debt was as big as our economy in World War II, but for the years we fought World War II, then it went back down.

Because of this problem I described—not a Republican or Democrat problem, but just America's problem—our debt has grown more than twice the size of our economy. You can't have a prosperous society with that kind of debt. It has never been done before.

And so what we are saying is let's get ahead of this problem. Let's phase in these reforms so that we can make good on our promise to our seniors who have already retired and so that all those people nearing retirement—people in their later fifties thinking and planning for their retirement—let's make good for them. But let's acknowledge that those of us in the X generation and lower—those younger—these programs will not be there for us when we retire. We need to fix this.

And by the way, we need pro-growth solutions: reform the Tax Code, balance the budget, have an energy renaissance in America, and streamline regulations so businesses know how to plan so that we can create jobs and economic growth. This budget does all of that. That is why I urge its adoption, and that is why I look forward to continuing this debate tomorrow.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BARR) having assumed the chair, Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 96) establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2015 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2016 through 2024, had come to no resolution thereon.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Senate acted forcefully by passing legislation to renew emergency unemployment insurance. I would encourage this House to follow that example so we may provide a vital lifeline to over 2 million Americans to provide for their families. These are hardworking Americans who are out there every day looking for employment or receiving education to be better prepared to reenter the workforce.

In Ohio, 75,200 unemployed workers need these extended benefits they earned. As our economy continues recovering from the greatest recession in modern history, let us give them what they earned.

We must avoid making this a partisan issue. Workers in both Democratic and Republican districts desperately need this critical lifeline. The House must act today. Let the Speaker bring the Senate bill up for a vote here so the House can finally pass legislation.

Let us do what is sensible and allow these Americans to keep our economic recovery going by not falling into the ranks of poverty themselves. These hardworking Americans have earned their benefits.

[From The New York Times, Aug. 30, 2012]

MAJORITY OF NEW JOBS PAY LOW WAGES, STUDY FINDS

(By Catherine Rampell)

While a majority of jobs lost during the downturn were in the middle range of wages, a majority of those added during the recovery have been low paying, according to a new report from the National Employment Law Project.

The disappearance of midwage, midskill jobs is part of a longer-term trend that some refer to as a hollowing out of the work force, though it has probably been accelerated by government layoffs.

''The overarching message here is we don't just have a jobs deficit; we have a 'good jobs' deficit,'' said Annette Bernhardt, the report's author and a policy co-director at the National Employment Law Project, a liberal research and advocacy group.

The report looked at 366 occupations tracked by the Labor Department and clumped them into three equal groups by wage, with each representing a third of American employment in 2008. The middle third—occupations in fields like construction, manufacturing and information, with median hourly wages of $13.84 to $21.13—accounted for 60 percent of job losses from the beginning of 2008 to early 2010.

The job market has turned around since then, but those fields have represented only 22 percent of total job growth. Higher-wage occupations—those with a median wage of $21.14 to $54.55—represented 19 percent of job losses when employment was falling, and 20 percent of job gains when employment began growing again.

Lower-wage occupations, with median hourly wages of $7.69 to $13.83, accounted for 21 percent of job losses during the retraction. Since employment started expanding, they have accounted for 58 percent of all job growth.

The occupations with the fastest growth were retail sales (at a median wage of $10.97 an hour) and food preparation workers ($9.04 an hour). Each category has grown by more than 300,000 workers since June 2009.

Some of these new, lower-paying jobs are being taken by people just entering the labor force, like recent high school and college graduates. Many, though, are being filled by older workers who lost more lucrative jobs in the recession and were forced to take something to scrape by.

''I think I've been very resilient and resistant and optimistic, up until very recently,'' said Ellen Pinney, 56, who was dismissed from a $75,000–a-year job in which she managed procurement and supply for an electronics company in March 2008.

Since then, she has cobbled together a series of temporary jobs in retail and home health care and worked as a part-time receptionist for a beauty salon. She is now working as an unpaid intern for a construction company, putting together bids and business plans for green energy projects, and has moved in with her 86-year-old father in Forked River, N.J.

''I really can't bear it anymore,'' she said, noting that her applications to places like PetSmart and Target had gone unanswered. ''From every standpoint—my independence, my sense of purposefulness, my self-esteem, my life planning—this is just not what I was planning.''

As Ms. Pinney's experience shows, low-wage jobs have not been growing especially quickly in this recovery; they account for such a big share of job growth mostly because midwage job growth has been so slow.

Over the last few decades, the number of midwage, midskill jobs has stagnated or declined as employers chose to automate routine tasks or to move them offshore.

Job growth has been concentrated in positions that tend to fall into two categories: manual work that must be done in person, like styling hair or serving food, which usually pays relatively little; and more creative, design-oriented work like engineering or surgery, which often pays quite well.

Since 2001, employment has grown 8.7 percent in lower-wage occupations and 6.6 percent in high-wage ones. Over that period, midwage occupation employment has fallen by 7.3 percent.

This ''polarization'' of skills and wages has been documented meticulously by David H. Autor, an economics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A recent study found that this polarization accelerated in the last three recessions, particularly the last one, as financial pressures forced companies to reorganize more quickly.

''This is not just a nice, smooth process,'' said Henry E. Siu, an economics professor at the University of British Columbia, who helped write the recent study about polarization and the business cycle. ''A lot of these jobs were suddenly wiped out during recession and are not coming back.''

On top of private sector revamps, state and local governments have been shedding workers in recent years. Those jobs lost in the public sector have been primarily in mid and