

Let us look at the facts. Holding Florida to the measure of other States' growth rate is completely unfair. The numbers just do not add up. I do not care how you slice it, a cut is a cut is a cut.

The Florida delegation should be working together in a bipartisan fashion to protect Florida. If these Medicaid cuts pass, we may well be declaring Florida a permanent disaster area.

Not only are the Republicans cutting away at funds for these programs, they are cutting away Federal Medicaid protection for our Nation's seniors. Over 60 percent of our nursing home residents get help from Medicaid. In 1994, over 100,000 Florida seniors lived in our State's 649 nursing homes. Right now, these nursing home residents have rights. They are protected by the Federal guidelines. The Republican Medicaid plans cut out quality care standards which are currently in place.

Take out these provisions, and I can see the newspaper headlines now: "Abuse in Nursing Homes Increase." "Doesn't Anyone Care About Nursing Home Residents?" "Where Have All the Nursing Home Watchdogs Gone?" This is outrageous, and the Republicans should be ashamed of themselves.

So, although I share the goals of balancing the budget, I cannot, in good faith, balance the budget on the backs of the poor, women, children, elderly, and the disabled.

Last week in Florida, I spoke to the National Council of Senior Citizens; and, as I close, I want to close with one saying: Wake up, America. In particular, wake up Florida.

EFFECTS OF BUDGET CUTS ON AMERICA'S CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, let me begin tonight with a quote from Hubert Humphrey, and this is something that Hubert Humphrey said in 1977, and I quote:

It was once said that 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 the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.

When this Congress is put to those tests, it fails miserably on all of these counts. Last week, the GOP budget ax came down on seniors; and, this week, it comes down on kids.

Now, my Republican colleagues will argue that they are making tough decisions to balance that budget, that this budget represents a shared sacrifice for a noble purpose; but, folks, the sacrifice is not shared, and the purpose is not noble.

There is nothing noble in asking the poor to sacrifice for the rich. There is

nothing noble in asking the sick to sacrifice for the healthy. There is nothing noble in asking the weak to sacrifice for the strong.

Winners in this budget are the corporations that will now be allowed to legally dodge paying taxes and the other special interest whose loopholes have been left wide open.

The sacrifices in this budget come from our most vulnerable citizens: the poor, the sick, the disabled, the elderly and, yes, our children.

Yesterday, the White House released a report on the impact of the Republican budget on America's children. In its analysis, the White House, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Urban Institute, looked at nine areas where kids will be asked to bear the brunt of GOP budget cuts.

According to the study, the health of our children will be put in jeopardy by a combination of Medicaid cuts, the repeal—I repeat, the repeal of the vaccines for children program, and cuts in child nutrition.

Consider the number of children who benefit from these programs and the number of children who stand to lose under the GOP budget. Medicaid pays for immunizations, regular checkups, and intensive care in case of emergencies for about 18 million children in America. In fact, one half of Medicaid beneficiaries are children.

The Republican budget would eliminate this health care coverage for as many as 4.4 million children nationwide. Let me repeat that. Mr. Speaker, 4.4 million children nationwide would have their health care coverage eliminated.

Among the children who could be denied coverage, many are disabled. This budget would deny as many as 755,000 disabled children cash benefits in the year 2002. For disabled children, Medicaid helps to pay for wheelchairs, for communication devices for therapy, for respite care for families, and for home modifications. Without this help, patients may be forced to seek institutional placement for their disabled children.

The Republican budget repeals the vaccines for children program. Now, that means it cuts \$1.5 billion that would otherwise provide vaccinations, immunizations for our children.

As the White House was releasing its findings yesterday, I was visiting with administrators and the staff in New Haven, CT at the Children's Hospital, Yale University's Children's Hospital. I was there to brief them on the budget process and to better understand how Medicaid cuts would impact their young patients. The health care professionals that I visited with told me that they do not know how they are going to provide the same level of care for our children if Medicaid is cut back by 20 to 30 percent, as the Republican budget proposes.

Let me talk a little bit about Connecticut. Connecticut health care pro-

viders have every single right to be concerned about children in our State, because 14 percent of them, of our children, rely on Medicaid for their basic health needs. And according to the study that was released yesterday, the Republican budget cuts will hit Connecticut children hard.

Let me repeat some of those cuts for Connecticut children, the cuts that I talked to the Yale Children's Hospital about yesterday.

Medicaid pays for basic health services for 166,000 children in the State of Connecticut. The budget would eliminate Medicaid coverage for as many as 57,983 children in the State of Connecticut. It will deny as many as 4,000 disabled children in Connecticut cash benefits in the year 2002.

Mr. Speaker, the dean of the Yale School of Medicine, Dr. Joseph Warshaw, was at this meeting yesterday; and I would like to quote Dr. Warshaw. And the quote is, "If we abandon this safety net, the kids are really going to suffer." I am not making that up. You can see that quote in the New Haven Register today.

The vice president for administration spoke up and talked about how the hospital would certainly accept all those children who were faced with a health care problem and would not want to deny them any health care, but they were going to be faced with how they were going to try to have to deal with the level of services they may have to and how they would probably have to cut back on services.

Kids are really going to suffer. That is a pretty strong statement. And let me be very honest with you. That statement does not come from a Democratic Member of the House of Representatives, and I am a Democratic Member of the House of Representatives. It does not come from someone with any kind of a partisan interest in this debate. It comes from a health care provider who understands what these cuts in Medicaid will mean in real terms to the children that he sees every single day at this hospital.

Our debate on the magnitude of these Medicaid cuts is about more than ideology. It is about more than a political philosophy. It is more than an intellectual or an academic exercise. That is not what this is all about. It is about reality and real people. It is about the reality that these deep Medicaid cuts are going to hit kids, kids in this country, kids in the State of Connecticut, very, very hard. And that is why tonight some of us are here as we stand with these photographs of American families that rely on Medicaid for their basic health care needs.

I would like to just introduce you to one family and tell you their story in their own words. A mother from Illinois tells us how Medicaid has helped her to earn her nursing degree without putting her children's health at risk. This is a quote.

In December of 1996, I will graduate with an associate degree in nursing and a lot of

pride knowing that I am fully capable of supporting my family. I would not be in this position today if public aid was not there to bridge the gap of no medical coverage.

That was signed by Kathy Davis, and these are Kathy Davis' children. Kathy Davis does not want a handout. She wants a helping hand. Here is a woman who is doing all the right things trying to provide for her family, build a better future for these two youngsters in this photograph.

The Government should not be in the business of punishing people who are working hard, and working hard to improve their own standard of living. We should be in the business of helping them to raise that standard of living. That is what our job is all about here. That is what the mission of government is.

Mr. Speaker, Medicaid is a safety net for millions of American families just like Kathy Davis and her family and her two young children here. This budget cuts that safety net away, and it is our Nation's children who are going to take the fall.

I urge my colleagues to look at these faces. I urge them to think about these kids on Thursday, this week, when the budget comes to the floor for a vote; and I ask my colleagues to ask yourself, is it worth it? Is it worth it?

Balancing the budget is a tremendously important goal, but if we balance the budget on the backs of sick children, disabled children, of just children in general, it will be a truly shameful day in the history of this great Nation of ours; and it will be a sad day in the history of this institution, which is charged with creating good public policy, sound public policy, responsible public policy that will allow the people in this country, in fact, to have a better standard of living for themselves and for their families, especially when they are working as hard as they are and playing by the rules and trying to help themselves and their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to ask the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE], who has joined with me and with several of us almost on a nightly basis, to talk about some of these issues: Medicare, Medicaid and the budget and its impact. I would like to ask my colleague from New Jersey to let us know about his sentiments on this issue.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] for allowing me some time to talk about some of the same subjects, particularly with regard to children.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to start by pointing out that last week when the House passed the Medicare bill it passed the largest tax increase on senior citizens in the history of this Congress through Speaker GINGRICH's Medicare plan, while reducing the quality of health care that seniors can expect to receive.

Many of us, including the gentlewoman from Connecticut and myself, have continued to talk the last few weeks about how this Medicare plan forces seniors to pay more and essentially get less. But this week Congress will be voting on what we call the budget reconciliation, which will include once again this Medicare package.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that New Jersey can count again on most of its Members, as they did last week on the Medicare bill, to stay firm and vote again to oppose this terrible Medicare legislation. The majority of New Jersey Members in the House of Representatives, both Democrat and Republican, ended up voting against the Medicare bill.

In addition to incorporating Medicare into this budget package, there are other cuts like the Medicare cuts in Medicaid, which is the health insurance program for poorer people, as well as cuts in nutrition assistance and the school lunch programs.

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So in a sense what we are seeing is both senior citizens with Medicare and now also children, with Medicaid, nutrition, and school lunches are being cut. Their programs are being cut or raided in order to provide tax cuts for the wealthy, for the wealthiest Americans.

Just to give you some statistics, according to the U.S. Treasury, Office of Tax Analysis, and this is with regard to the Senate version of budget reconciliation, income earners who make up to \$30,000 per year can expect a \$19 to \$88 tax increase. In other words, not a tax cut but a tax increase if your income is up to \$30,000 a year.

Meanwhile the average American who earns over \$200,000 a year will receive a \$3,416 tax cut. I would ask you, is that fair, particularly when we see who is impacted? Again, mostly senior citizens and children.

Now, while many of the Republicans are claiming to be balancing the budget for the future of our children and suggest that somehow this budget plan is actually going to benefit children, their plans actually hurt children. It is just the opposite of what they say.

I am sympathetic to this, Mr. Speaker. Right now I have two young children, one is about 8 months old and another is a little over 2 years old. And when I look at them and I think about how difficult it would be for someone earning a lot less than myself to be able to provide for them, particularly with regard to health care, it really makes me wonder where we are going in this Congress with this terrible budget bill.

I just wanted to quote from a recent New York Times article that was in the New York Times, Monday October 23. It says, and I quote,

The specific spending cuts in the Republican plans would fall very heavily on poor and lower middle income children today, leaving them less able to hold jobs in the years ahead.

I think what the New York Times is pointing out is that if we cut these programs for children, then in the long run we are not going to have adults who can really compete and do a good job as Americans in the marketplace. And ultimately we are essentially making it more difficult for these children when they become adults to contribute to society. So it really makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is totally inappropriate to balance the budget and provide tax cuts for the wealthy on the backs of children. I just wanted to give an example, if I could. To my left here are two kids who really could be my own, in fact in some way they remind me of my own. This is used basically to illustrate the terrible impact of the cuts in Medicaid, which is the health income program for low-income Americans, which provides health care coverage now for one in four American children.

It is a statement basically from their mom whose name is Leslie. She is a 26-year-old mother of the two children, ages 6 and 2. And she says she is recently divorced and caring for her children as an at-home mother. Her income is substantially below the poverty line but with careful planning she manages to feed, clothe, and provide shelter for her children. And she says that her finances must be stretched out obviously to cover the budget, which is very strained. Without Medicaid, which again is the health insurance program for poorer children, even the best laid financial plans would surely collapse. The dilemma she would face without Medicaid in place would be basically to decide whether or not to feed her children or to provide shelter for her children. And she just goes on to point out how difficult it would be without Medicaid, again, the health care program for low-income Americans.

Childrens hospitals, as we know, receive about 40 to 70 percent of their revenue from Medicaid. So it is not only a question of when you cut Medicaid you hurt low-income children. But you also hurt all children in a way because, for example, the hospitals where oftentimes we go in order to deal with the problems that affect children would be significantly cut back in terms of the type of services that they could provide. Medicaid, as I said, provides health care to about 36 million low-income Americans. But two-thirds of the funding is utilized by the blind, disabled, and the elderly for acute and long-term care. What we are trying to point out here is that a lot of people, disabled people, elderly people, as well as children, are impacted by these cuts in Medicare.

And what I would like to ask, and I know the gentlewoman from Connecticut is here, it is incredible to me that we can cut \$182 billion out of Medicaid when we spend more for defense in this budget bill. It actually is more money that goes for defense while we are making these cuts in Medicaid.

Why are the Republicans cutting funding for school nutrition programs? School nutrition programs we know work. In my districts there are a lot of children that are able to take advantage of them. We are also cutting or reducing child abuse protections by nearly 20 percent in this bill.

And to me it just boggles the mind. The Speaker, Speaker GINGRICH, and the Republican leadership, I believe, are destroying the next generation and whacking seniors, who have already made this country great, through Medicaid, Medicare, nutrition program, and other program cuts. All of this just in order to pay for tax cuts for the rich. I think there are other ways to balance the budget. I voted in the past to support balanced budgets, but this budget plan is terrible. I really would urge my colleagues to vote against it.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut, once again, for organizing this, because I think it is very important to point out that just as these Republican plans last week in Medicare were hurting the elderly, now with this budget reconciliation, we are really hurting severely children.

Ms. DELAURO. I thank my colleague for his comments and say it really is rather incredible. I take a look at some of the other cuts in Connecticut, and you have similar numbers and probably larger numbers in New Jersey. But we are going to see that about 1,374 children in Connecticut will be denied Head Start, about 180,000 children nationwide; 9,200 Connecticut children will be denied basic and advanced skills, and that happens through the cuts in the title I program of our education budget. It is a 17-percent cut in 1996.

We are going to cut safe- and drug-free schools, which 170 out of 175 school districts in Connecticut use to keep crime and violence and drugs away from children.

We are jeopardizing the nutrition programs for about 300,000 kids in the State of Connecticut; 130,000 children in Connecticut live in working families that are going to have their taxes raised an average of about \$300 under this Republican budget.

And yet, we are going to see a tax break for the richest people in this country. It is just so out of sync. It is out of whack.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I know we have other speakers, but the gentlewoman mentioned certain things that are really so important. Head Start, which I did not even mention, we have waiting lists, long waiting lists in New Jersey in most of my towns for Head Start. It is a prudent program that was supported by President Bush and President Reagan before him. It was never a partisan issue. All of a sudden now we are talking about cutting back on Head Start.

The earned income tax credit, which again I did not get into, basically goes against the whole philosophy which says that you want to encourage people

to work. The main reason why that was put in place, again, not just by Democrats but also by Republican Presidents beforehand, the way I understood it, was to get people off welfare and let them have a little extra money through a tax break so that they could use it and be discouraged to go back on welfare. Now we are talking about eliminating that earned income tax credit.

Third, you talk about nutrition programs. I spent some time, I guess it was a couple months ago now, going into some of the schools in my district and actually partaking of school lunch with the kids.

Ms. DELAURO. So did I.

Mr. PALLONE. It is amazing. There are some school districts that I represent where overwhelming majorities of the kids take advantage of the school lunch program. Sometimes they get it free or sometimes they have to pay something. But without that school lunch program a lot of them just would not eat. So, again, I yield back, but it is just incredible to think how this impacts children.

Ms. DELAURO. I want to make one more comment and then yield to my colleague from Texas.

There was an article in yesterday's New York Times by Bob Herbert. It is entitled "Kiss and Cut, Empty Promises About Children." I think that there are two pieces that are particularly important in the discussion and the debate that we are going to have over the next few days here, because we are going to hear a lot of talk on this floor.

This is Dr. Irwin Redlener who was president of the Children's Health Fund. Their mission is to deliver services to youngsters in rural and urban communities. He says here, the fact that there are proposals on the table now that will further undermine health care, the health care safety net for children is really incredible. It suggests the possibility of some terrible consequences for society in the future because what it really means is that there will be children who will suffer from disabilities, physical and mental, that will haunt them for the rest of their lives. It is incredibly stupid and shortsighted to take down Medicaid in this way.

Then he concludes the article, because again what we are to hear on this floor in the next couple days is that what we are doing in this budget is saving this country for our children, that all of this, all of these cuts in nutrition and in health care and in education, and just go down the line, all of these cuts are going to be there for our children's future.

There is a particularly, I think, poignant finish to this article. It says, when the budget cutters smile in your face and tell you how much they love your children, ask to see that ugly and arcane region known as the fine print. You will need a guide and a strong stomach. What they do to children there is not to be believed.

I encourage everyone to look, to listen, to watch in the next couple of days about what is in that fine print and what, in fact, is being proposed for the children of this country.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just have to, if I can, interrupt. I had previously quoted from this New York Times story of the same day, yesterday. It is interesting, it is not the same one but a different one from what the gentlewoman has. They bring up how the Republican leaders are basically over the next few days going to emphasize this \$500-a-child tax credit.

What this article says, and I would just quote from it briefly, it says the tax credit would do little to help children in low-income households, and families that have no Federal income tax liability other than exemptions, after other exemptions and deductions, would not be eligible for refunds.

For example, a family of four with both parents working and both children in child care programs would not qualify for the credit if it earned less than \$24,000 a year. It says the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington research group with a reputation for accurate statistics, has calculated that 23.7 million children, or 34 percent of the Nation's children, live in families too poor to qualify for the credit. Another 7.1 million children, or 10 percent, would qualify only for a partial credit. The real winners from the Republican tax and budget plans are likely to be affluent children who receive relatively little direct Federal spending.

So again there is going to be all the emphasis on this \$500-a-child tax credit. It is not a bad idea. But the bottom line is the way they put this together ultimately means that it is primarily affluent children who benefit, and many of the children who really need it are getting nothing.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to yield the balance of my time to my colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE], who truly spends so much time here on behalf of the people of this Nation and really fighting for their causes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 30 minutes.

MORE ON MEDICAID

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her wisdom and also her tenacity in not giving up.

I was on the House floor this morning, and I began to sense maybe even a glimmer of frustration in my own voice because I drew those who were lessening attention that we in this body sometimes tend to view incidences, votes, and occurrences like yesterday's news. We tend to think that it was last

Thursday's vote. It is over with and we go on to something else.

It is particularly important that we continue to address these issues because I believe that the American people will want us to do the right thing and then themselves will rise up and demand this body, this collective body of the U.S. Senate and of course the U.S. House of Representatives to do the right thing.

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Might I say, Mr. Speaker, something that really caught my attention, and it might be the frustration of some of my colleagues in the other body, but one Member was quoted to say when they were being approached about matters dealing with working out resolutions to avoid having such severe cuts in Medicaid and whether or not they would be willing to compromise and bring those cuts substantially down and maybe out of frustration, this person was heard to say, "I'm willing to swallow a lot to get to that," and I would simply say that the children of this country cannot swallow a lot, they are little, small tykes, and we have an obligation not to be frustrated, not to be overwhelmed, not to worry about the next vote, or the next headline, or the next news byline, but simply to fight, fight, fight, if we have to, for these abominable cuts that are going to devastate our children and those senior citizens, of course, with Medicare, but those in long-term care, by this \$187 billion in Medicaid cuts as well as this budget reconciliation process.

I draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to these children who are standing here with me by way of a photograph, and this really speaks to the issue of what Medicare is all about. Medicare is not about the so-called deadbeat that we have always been hearing about, the one who gets accused of being on the dole. This is about children like this and a mother from Rhode Island, Jacqueline, who says,

I have three children. My two girls are asthmatic, and they have to be on medication at all times. This medicine costs an average of \$110 each month. My third child is a diabetic, and he needs two types of medication. If it was not for Medicaid, I would not be able to keep my children and myself alive.

Mr. Speaker, I think the bottom line here is alive, not even healthy, but alive, a diabetic and asthmatic children, and so, Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening realizing that it has to be a continued opposition to what has to be an extreme response to the alleged interests in balancing the budget. I am a person that believes a balanced budget can occur, and, I think, can occur over a deliberative process, recognizing that health care in this country is an important aspect of the quality of life, and I want this country to live up to its traditions, its aspirations, and the image that it has around this world, and so I rise tonight particularly to attack the mean-spirited effort that is going on

against the Nation's children, and I refer, of course, to the Republican budget cuts.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan to balance the budget would, among other things, eliminate Medicaid coverage for as many as 4.4 million children by 2002. It would deny Social Security benefits to some 755,000 disabled children, and eliminates summer job opportunities for 4 million young people, cut nutrition assistance to 14 million children, reduce child abuse protection by nearly 20 percent, and deny assistance to more than 16,000 homeless children.

Mr. Speaker, when I served as a member of the Houston City Council with citizens comprising of 1.4 million individuals, we faced the real burden and the real concern of seeing every day faces of homeless families, individuals who but for some undesirable occurrence in their life living not in cars, but under bridges with no protection whatsoever. It was certainly the extension of this Government, the McKinney Act, in fact, in provisions thereunder, that recognized that homeless children and families needed opportunities, too.

What do we do in 1995? We discard all of the progress that has been made in helping those families bridge themselves from homelessness to independence by this major budget reconciliation process that then cuts, and cuts, and cuts, and destroys, and destroys, and destroys. There is no doubt that many children will suffer if this effort is successful. That is why it is important that people who are on this side of the Mississippi River and beyond understand the very crux and crisis that we are facing.

My Republican colleagues argue that their progress would benefit children in the long run. Cutting the debt today they argue will save children from paying unbearable taxes in the future. Let me frankly say to you, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether these children will even have an opportunity to be adults and certainly taxpaying adults for we diminish their opportunity with poor health care, Head Start being eliminated and simply not providing an opportunity for them to be educated and to bridge themselves out of poverty. These are innocent children, simply innocent victims, who will look to this country not for a handout, but for a hand up and a helping hand. Republican tax cuts would fall heavily on poor and lower-middle-income children.

Just this morning I heard a constituent citizen of the Nation calling up saying that he is tired of taxes, but he makes \$28,000 a year, and he takes care of at least five persons. Well, you know what? The tax cut that Republicans are proposing would not help this gentleman. The took away his very bridge, the earned income tax credit. He will not get that anymore. He is hard-working. He is not on the dole. He goes to work every day, and he supports his family and his children, but yet when

this Government could do something for him, give him an extra measure of opportunity, not giving him the opportunity to buy a television set or maybe some used 15-year-old car, but possibly providing the extra incentive that he needs, the extra light bill that he has to pay. Maybe it has gotten too cold that year or too hot that year and utilities have gone up. This is the opportunity we provide hard-working Americans under Democrats.

What we provide now with the Republican leadership and the Budget Reconciliation Act is a cut totally of the earned income tax provision. This smacks in the light and the direction of which we would want this country to go, and that is to applaud those who are working and seeking to be independent and supporting their children. These cuts will now provide us with hungry, malnourished children who cannot be expected to concentrate and do well in school. These children will prove less able to compete for good jobs with children from more affluent families.

Mr. Speaker, all children ought to be loved and appreciated, and so this is not a fight between affluent children and poor children. This is a question of our priorities. This is the question of the moral fabric of this Nation.

The Republicans plan cuts' effect on the one-quarter of the Nation's children who live in poverty would be substantial. The White House has calculated the poorest fifth of American families with children would lose an average of \$1,521 a year in income and \$1,662 a year in health benefits under Republicans. The simple question is: Where do they go from here? What is their alternative? What are we simply saying to them? You cannot pay your rent, so go out into the street? We cannot provide you with health care, so be part of the epidemics of measles and various other childhood diseases that will plague this Nation? There are families with average incomes of \$13,325.

Furthermore, the Republicans' proposed \$500 child tax credit would do little to help children in low-income households, and this becomes a real dilemma. Is anyone accusing or castigating those families who have been able to work and do well, provide for their children and not indicate that the \$500 which the underlying current in that effort is to suggest that children are precious—of course we believe that children are precious, but I would simply ask, and I do not know if we have had a reconciliation on this issue, do we give it to families making \$500,000 a year? \$200,000 a year? Some of the suggestions have been to cap it at \$75,000 a year. The real issue is the families making \$30,000 a year need it as well, and the earned income tax credit is now being eliminated, so that means that we are making less precious the children of those making less money.

Mr. Speaker, I would not want to live in a nation that promotes those kinds of ideals. All children are precious. All

of them should be embraced. All of them should be given the opportunity to fulfill the highest achievement they can possibly achieve, and our physically challenged youngsters should particularly be encouraged for great things they can do, and they can do these great things as we of the Nation provide the underpinnings and the support for them as well. Families that have no Federal income tax liability after other exemptions and deductions would not be eligible for refunds. That is the earned income tax credit which helps so many of the working poor.

We talk and talk in this Congress about children and our family values, but, despite all the lip service given to children, proposed Republican budget cuts are antifamily and antichildren. For the past few months I have been fighting to prevent cuts in health care which would remove the health safety net for many Americans. These cuts were cooked up behind closed doors without discussion and an appreciation of the devastating consequences the proposed cuts would have on the very old and the very young in our society. Even in the Medicare debate simple assets such as mammograms for our senior citizens, denied and rejected. Simple opportunities to provide physicians in underserved areas, denied and rejected. What an attitude, but other kinds of cooked-up deals that smell very smelly to me, they were put into the bill, and they are moving along quite well. It really is a shame that those aspects of the bill that provide the most devastating occurrences were provided and allowed in the Medicare bill that was just passed last week, but, oh well, just as I have said, another headline, another day in the United States Congress.

But I simply say, no, these are devastating consequences proposed by the Republican majority that would have devastating impact on the very old and the very young.

Just this past weekend, as I said this morning, I had the opportunity to visit with seniors at a large luncheon provided, of course, by the city of Houston and provided under Federal funds, sometimes the only meal that these seniors would have, and off to the side an older woman pulled me and said, looking sad, "Can you help me with my utility bill?" This is not the senior citizen that we tend to think is going to be able to survive without Medicare or Medicaid. This is someone truly on the edge, possibly on the edge of living in decent home conditions or living out on the street. It seems, however, that the debate of the past few weeks has fallen on deaf ears.

Mr. Speaker, in my district of Houston, TX, too many children are in poverty too many times. As someone who has been an advocate for the homeless on city council and those children who need well care, health care, I find that we are not listening, and I find that we allow too many of our citizens to live in poverty for we say, if it is not in

front of us, then it is not before us. I would simply say it is a play on words, just as I have done. It is before us, and it is in front of us, and we are going off the edge of a cliff. I find it hard to believe that this Congress would further cut the safety net for these children.

As one doctor of low-income children has said, I see kids literally every day with asthma that has not been treated, asthma so bad that they cannot function. Do you imagine, or can you imagine, what that is like, to see a child hardly able to breathe and getting no relief, to see a child unable to attend school, the same child that you cajole and encourage their parents to get a job, but yet you are creating a situation where this child will either not live to full adulthood or live a very short life. I see kids with ear infections that have led to hearing losses, the doctor says, to the extent they are not functioning in school. We can solve these problems, but we are not doing it.

In short, Mr. Speaker, these cuts are appalling. I am tired of Members of this body giving lip service to children's needs while voting against measures which will protect children's well-being and strengthen families. As it is now when we talk particularly about the city of Houston, I can tell you how hurting this will be for us. The Harris County Hospital District, again for a lack of a better term, will simply be devastated. Already they will be suffering under the Medicare plan which diminishes their opportunity for physicians to treat these citizens as well, but this program, as we look at it during the budget reconciliation effort this week, will find that Medicare coverage will be cut for as many as 206,641 children in Texas and 4.4 million children nationwide. Currently 20 percent of our children in Texas rely on Medicaid for their basic health needs. Medicaid pays for immunization, regular checkups, and intensive care in case of emergencies for about 1,407,000 children in Texas.

That is a particular concern of mine. I worked for many, many years in the city of Houston working with our city health department to move up the well-care checkups for our children, and all the time, as a city, we constantly face the problem no money, no money, no money.

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Obviously, an ounce of cure is worth a pound of prevention. I would simply say, we are being foolhardy, pound-foolish, pennywise, however it goes; we are being foolhardy. I believe that we have to be sensible and understand that our children are our future. The Republican budget cuts Federal Medicaid funding to Texas by \$7 billion over 7 years and by 20 percent in 2002 alone. The sad part about it is that it gets a wide net of our children. It denies as many as 44,070 disabled children in Texas SSI cash benefits by the year

2002. The least of our little ones are left to the wind.

So I think it is time to give some substance to lip service, and as I stand here today, I fear for the future. What we do today will determine how bright or dismal the future will be for millions of children in this country. I urge my colleagues to ask themselves, what is the legacy that the 104th Congress will leave? Will it be one our grandchildren can be proud of, or will it be one of undereducated, underemployed, malnourished, nonimmunized young people?

There comes a time when we need to be able to stand up for things that are right. Over the past couple of weeks, we have simply seen a lockstep attitude. That frightens me, and it frightens me because it leaves little opportunity for any of us to engage in real debate.

Just this past week we saw a headline in the newspaper that talked about the punitive measures that were being brought against Republicans who voted against the Republican Medicare plan. My hat is off to them. They voted for their constituents, not for their political aggrandizement. They were not worried about the last campaign or the last headline.

My call today, as we begin this process of budget reconciliation, is who will you stand for? I am going to stand for the children, working families, senior citizens, Americans. I am going to stand for those who can do better if we help them to do better. I am going to stand for these very children who are here and who would want to be saved and to be contributing Americans.

I pray, humbly so, that I can call upon my Republican colleagues, more of them, that will join the dignity, the respect, the strength, that was offered by their colleagues last week when they voted absolutely no on the Medicare, so-called, Preservation Act. Stand up again this week and join those of us who believe in our country and our children, and make sure that as you do that, you stand up and vote for our children and for our children's children, and all of Americans who are simply trying to grab hold onto the quality of life that we would pretend to have in this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure that, as I close to yield to the gentleman from Maine [Mr. BALDACCI] who has been a great leader on many issues dealing with our children and dealing with hunger, and for his constituents in the State of Maine.

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for yielding to me. I appreciate her very eloquent statements here today. It gives us food for thought.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today to add my voice to those of my colleagues in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Every year domestic violence tops the chart as the leading cause of death among women. Every year more women are at risk of being

killed by their current or former male partners than by any other kind of assailant. And every year more and more children find themselves living in violent homes, often the victims of violence themselves. Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow these staggering statistics to continue.

I will be holding a domestic violence public forum in my district in the coming weeks to explore how to reduce this growing problem. At this forum I will be speaking with professionals from domestic violence and family crisis agencies who last year served over 10,000 individuals in the State of Maine. They provided 10,626 hours of crisis intervention through their hotline; 15,829 bed nights of shelter; and 14,252 hours of community education about the horrors of domestic violence. While we are fortunate that such facilities exist to help us cope with the massive numbers in need of assistance, it is unfortunate that such facilities are needed at all.

We need to continue funding such legislation as the Violence Against Women Act. We need to continue supporting law enforcement and family crisis agencies in their efforts to create community based responses to coping with domestic violence. We need to continue to train health care professionals to recognize and respond to domestic violence. And we need to continue to educate men and women alike about the evils of domestic violence, reminding them that no one asks to be the victim of domestic violence, no one deserves to be beaten while in the supposed safety of one's own home.

Working together, we can create a society where there is no longer a need for shelters, for hotlines, or for domestic violence counselors. Until that time, however, we must continue to work to break the silence surrounding this issue, and to address the critical needs of battered women and their children.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, again I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] for yielding the time to give these remarks in regard to domestic violence and Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and applaud her efforts in bringing more attention to the overall budget reconciliation and what is going to be happening this week in the House. I want to thank the gentlewoman.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. I thank the gentleman from Maine for his very important statement, Mr. Speaker. He is joining in with many of us in adding to some of the problems with the Budget Reconciliation Act. Mr. Speaker, let me applaud him for that, and add, as well, my comments on domestic violence. It is a crisis, and for any diminishing of the domestic violence funding, we are again doing something extremely tragic to this Nation. I will add my comments on this issue for the RECORD and expand on such.

THE RECONCILIATION BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUTE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here tonight with my colleague, the gentleman from the Keystone State of Pennsylvania [Mr. JON FOX], to talk a little bit about this reconciliation bill that we are going to vote on here in the next couple of days. The debate will begin tomorrow. It really is a historic time in American history.

I note that some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle have had pictures of children with them tonight to show. When we were sworn in as new Members of this body, we were given essentially two things. One is this nice little card case that included our voting card, and which some have said is the most expensive credit card in the world, because on this credit card our predecessors have run up something like \$4.9 trillion worth of debt on our children and grandchildren.

I put into my little card case three of the most important people in my life, and they are my three kids. They are all teenagers, and some people would say that teenagers are difficult, and all the things about teenagers you have heard. Some of it is true, but in truth, they are really the inspiration to me about what this is about and what our real responsibilities are.

I carry those picture of my kids with me, because I think when we talk about reconciliation, we talk about the budget, we talk about balancing the budget, we really are talking about what are we going to do for future generations of Americans, what are we going to do on behalf of our kids.

I would like to, before we really get into this, and I want to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, remind my colleagues and some of the folks who may be watching this special order on C-SPAN of a quote, and we have heard a lot about children, but one of my favorite quotes is from one of our colleagues over in the Senate, representative PHIL GRAMM from the great State of Texas. He has said many times that we will hear, especially in the next several days, that this is a debate about children. It is a debate about how much we are going to spend on education and how much we are going to spend on nutrition, how much we are going to spend on medical care.

The truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker, this is not a debate about how much we are going to spend on children or how much we are going to spend on education or how much we are going to spend on health care. This is a debate about who is going to do the spending. We know government bureaucracies and we know families. Some of us on this side of the aisle, at least, know the

difference. So the debate is about who is going to do the spending.

We are talking about balancing the budget for the first time in 25 years, and really, it is about future generations, because historically, and I do not know, you probably do not represent as many farmers as I do, I would say to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX]—

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. We have our share.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Back in my district, it is fairly heavily agricultural, and those who do not actually live on farms are not far removed from living on the farm, and they understand this, that historically what Americans wanted to do was to pay off the mortgage and leave their kids the farm. But what we have been doing as a society and what we have been doing as a government, what this Congress has been doing for the last 40 years, is we have been selling the farm and leaving our kids the mortgage.

I think we all know, deep down in our bones, that there is something fundamentally immoral about that. For the first time in 25 years, as we approach this reconciliation, we are going to do something about that. I think it is a very historic moment. Frankly, the people who should be the most enthusiastic about this are young people, because it is their future that has been mortgaged. I think it is important, that step we are going to take.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the great State of Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX].

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. He has been at the forefront in our freshman class in this 104th Congress in identifying those issues that are most important to Americans, and one of them is to make sure we achieve a balanced budget, without forgetting that we have human concerns to be addressed; that what we want to see is elimination of waste in the Federal Government, but using the moneys we have in the Government to make sure we take care of children, that we take care of working families, that we take care of seniors. We can do that. By having a balanced budget, I believe what we are on the threshold to achieve is to make sure we lower housing costs and in fact balance the budget.

We have heard from the National Association of Realtors that the average 30-year mortgage will drop almost 3 percentage points; that if we balance the budget, we will be lowering car expenses about 2 percentage points lower than they otherwise would be. We will be lowering the cost of college for students. Student loan rates will be 2 percentage points lower because we have balanced the budget. A college student who borrows, for instance, \$11,000 at 8 percent will pay almost \$2,200 less in schooling costs.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. That's \$2,200 less if we balance the budget?

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Finally, after 22 years.