

elected to Congress, I never thought I would be asked to participate in crushing the dreams of American children. But that is exactly what the House majority is asking me to do. The House budget reconciliation bill includes \$14.3 billion in overall cuts to Federal student aid programs over the next 5 years. This cut will be the single largest cut in the entire history of the student aid program. I thought the majority did not want to leave any child behind. But obviously what this cut means is they do not want to leave you behind, until you want to go to college.

I know firsthand the importance of student aid. I would not be standing on the floor of this House if it were not for student aid programs. These loans made my education dreams a reality. I am the only member of the California congressional delegation still paying off her student loans. Each month I proudly write that check because I know the best investment I and my seven brothers and sisters could have made was our investment in our own education.

Can you imagine where we will be in 20 years when we lack the professionals that we need in this country? Make no mistake, these proposed cuts to student aid programs will negatively impact the future of our workforce and our economy.

THE MAINSTREAM

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

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, some liberals opposed to the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court claim that Judge Alito is "outside the mainstream" because he supported the spousal notice provision of the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act. Mind you, this was not paternal notice; it was spousal notice. This was not spousal consent. It was spousal notice. Polling showed nearly 75 percent of the Americans support this provision.

So what is the mainstream in America today? In 2004, 13 States included on their ballot a constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union between a man and a woman. All 13 States passed the measure by wide margins. Today, it is up to 19 States. The polls overwhelmingly support this definition.

A Zogby poll showed 77 percent of Americans support a law requiring a pregnant woman be given information about fetal pain prior to an abortion. Other polls show nearly 90 percent support including the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. A 2005 Gallup poll shows 75 percent of Americans think that State government entities should be allowed to display the 10 Commandments.

Let us not allow liberal interest groups to arbitrarily define the mainstream for us.

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BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Mr. HINOJOSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, tomorrow the leadership of this House will bring up a budget reconciliation bill which makes cuts to Medicaid, food stamp programs for children, student loan aid programs that will force thousands of college students to leave school and prevent thousands more from even beginning higher education at the community college or university of their choice.

At a time when we are importing scientists, engineers, doctors, nurses and other highly trained workers to keep our economy running, this House is going to siphon off student aid dollars to provide \$70 billion of tax cuts for the rich. According to the Congressional Budget Office, there will be nearly \$8 billion in new charges to students and families that will raise the cost of their college loans at a time when the cost of higher education is rising much faster than the rate of inflation.

This reconciliation bill is not about controlling runaway Federal spending. It is about destroying our future for the short-term benefit of a privileged few. I urge my colleagues to oppose this shortsighted budget reconciliation bill.

MEDICAID

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, in the midst of our effort to rein in Federal spending, you have Members of this body and special interest groups telling the American people that we are slashing Medicaid. They are saying that our Deficit Reduction Act will actually cut Medicaid.

Madam Speaker, our plan does not cut. Since when does slowing the growth, and tremendous growth at that, from 7.3 percent to 7 percent a year constitute a cut? The left needs to stop playing games. If they want us to keep spending and spending until there is nothing left, until we cannot spend any more, then they need to be honest about it and they need to say that. But don't call a 0.3 percent reduction in growth a cut. It is dishonest and our constituents deserve better.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

(Mr. SALAZAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I stand united with my fellow Blue Dogs in protest of this reckless budget vote that we will be taking this week. I have said time and time again that our budget is a moral document and it is about our priorities and values as a nation.

Let us be clear about this budget reconciliation and what it will do for America.

It will pay for tax cuts for the rich on the backs of our Nation's poorest, including low-income seniors who receive help from Medicaid.

It abandons rural America by proposing \$1 billion in cuts to ag commodity programs.

It takes aim at valuable research and conservation programs that will help farmers to stay on the land.

And in a time when everyone is concerned about rising energy prices, this bill cuts funds for renewable energy programs. Yet none of these savings will go towards balancing the budget.

Together we can do better. We need to return to responsible budget principles that include pay-as-you-go spending. We need a balanced budget amendment. And we need a Federal budget that is honest with the American people.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this budget reconciliation.

PRESERVING OUR SYSTEM OF JUSTICE

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, last March Atlanta experienced one of the worst instances of courthouse violence on record. A defendant overpowered a courthouse security guard, grabbed her weapon and shot a judge dead in his own courtroom. The defendant then escaped, setting off a massive manhunt until he was captured a short while later.

Incidents of courthouse violence are spreading. Chicago, Illinois, and Tyler, Texas, have also experienced vicious crimes against our judicial system. Many States are working to prevent this from happening again by improving courthouse security. This is a step in the right direction. But we must do more to protect judges, attorneys, jurors, and other courthouse employees from ever having to confront this kind of danger. We must not allow criminals to compromise our judicial system.

Today we have an opportunity to act to strengthen penalties against those who commit courthouse violence and protect Federal judiciary employees from falling prey to criminals attacking their personal finances.

Madam Speaker, the Secure Access to Justice and Court Protection Act is before us today, and I urge my colleagues to support this important initiative to preserve and protect our system of justice.

CRUEL REPUBLICAN MEDICAID CUTS AND MISGUIDED PRIORITIES—AMERICA CAN DO BETTER

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, tomorrow House Republicans will show

America their misguided priorities. In order to once again provide the wealthiest few in our Nation with tax breaks adding up to \$70 billion, House Republicans will cut \$54 billion from needed programs, including \$12 billion to Medicaid.

America can do better than slashing health care for low-income children, seniors, and people with disabilities to pay for additional tax breaks for millionaires.

America can do better than slashing a program that provides insurance to a number of every seven Americans, at a time when the number of the uninsured has risen by 6 million under this President.

America can do better than increasing costs for essential health care services for the poorest Americans, including for the first time ever even the poorest children, which will reduce their access to needed health care.

America can do better than a budget package where \$3 out every \$4 in Medicaid cuts are borne directly by individuals who are poor or disabled.

When are the House Republicans going to realize a stronger America is one where we all work together?

Together, America can do better.

IRAQI SPECIAL TRIBUNAL HOUSE RESOLUTION

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

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, the path to a free and democratic Iraq has been dangerous and protracted. Yet, after years of oppression, the Iraqis are closer than ever to having a nation ruled by their people instead of a tyrant.

For the safety of our Nation, I believe we must continue to support the sovereign actions of this developing nation.

Current news headlines are showcasing the trial of Saddam Hussein and what danger accompanies that activity. His trial is important, but a strong, independent Iraqi judicial system is of greater importance.

As Members of Congress, we have an obligation to uphold and support this principle, especially in a land that has been so tormented. The Iraqi Special Tribunal has been impaneled to bring swift and impartial justice to both the victims and the nation of Iraq. I urge Members to support H.R. 534, recognizing the importance and credibility of an independent Iraqi judiciary.

NATIONAL DEBT SURPASSES \$8 TRILLION

(Mr. CARDOZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, just 2 weeks ago, the national debt passed the \$8 trillion mark.

This unfortunate milestone was the direct result of policies put in place by

the leadership of this Congress and the Bush White House. Now our friends on the other side of the aisle want the Members of the Blue Dog Coalition to endorse their latest push to run the debt even higher.

This budget package should be called the "Deficit Expansion Act." It would continue drowning America in red ink in order to finance new tax cuts for the wealthy and privileged. It is time for a real strategy for fiscal responsibility, not more of the same.

The Blue Dog Coalition has put forward a comprehensive, 12-step plan that would dig America out of this fiscal mess. Our proposal includes commonsense reforms such as reinstating PAYGO rules and discretionary spending caps.

I strongly urge my colleagues in Congress to take immediate action on the debt by embracing real bipartisan reform.

A SALUTE TO VETERANS

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, this Friday, Americans will observe Veterans Day, a special day of national observance that we have set aside to remember our veterans and their sacrifices.

The 50 million Americans who have served our country since the American Revolution have done more than just protect our national security. They fought for our freedom, and in so doing, our veterans have provided a shining example for the millions of Americans who followed in their footsteps.

In my own family, my father served in the Navy during World War II in the Pacific theater. He was in the Iwo Jima campaign and was awarded the Bronze Star.

Nearly 2 million veterans live in my home State of Florida. Thousands of my fellow Floridians have served or are on active duty in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some of these soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice and many have suffered grievous wounds. I salute these brave men and women.

Madam Speaker, may God bless our veterans, their families, and this great Nation.

REPUBLICAN CUTS TO FOOD STAMP AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, this week, Republicans will bring a budget reconciliation bill up that cuts critical Federal programs that directly affect the lives of everyday Americans, all so they can turn around and cut taxes that primarily benefit America's millionaires.

Among the proposals they will bring and will try to force through are dra-

matic cuts in food assistance programs to our most vulnerable. According to the CBO, the Republican food stamp cuts would knock nearly 300,000 Americans off nutritional assistance programs. Included in that number are 40,000 children who would no longer receive either free or reduced-price school lunches.

No other group has benefited more from 5 years of Republican domination in Washington than those who are the wealthiest in our Nation, and now Republicans want to take school lunches away from 40,000 children so they can provide America's millionaires another tax break.

These children desperately need the nutrition provided in school lunches. It is cruel, and this bill must be defeated.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I also rise today to pay tribute to America's veterans, whose brave efforts have safeguarded those values we hold dear: freedom, liberty, democracy, and the American way of life.

This week, as we celebrate Veterans Day, I hope all Americans will take the time to thank a veteran for his or her service to our country.

From our Nation's founding days, we have appreciated and recognized the sacrifices and valor of our veterans. General George Washington noted in 1776 that American soldiers "have done all I have asked you to do, and more than can be reasonably expected." Our veterans today rise to this same challenge.

America's veterans fought to preserve our great Nation, to liberate the oppressed, and to hold fast to the idea that freedom and liberty are universal rights worth fighting and, yes, sometimes dying for.

I want to thank all of our veterans for their selfless service. From Omaha Beach and the Pacific seas, to the jungles of Vietnam and the sands of the Middle East, we live every day with the gift of liberty because you secured our freedom and the freedom of generations to come.

BLUE DOGS STAND FIRM AGAINST REPUBLICAN BUDGET CUTS

(Ms. HERSETH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HERSETH. Madam Speaker, I too stand united today with my fellow Blue Dog Democrats in opposition to the majority's budget reconciliation decisions. Blue Dogs have consistently stood for fiscal responsibility, balanced budgets, and an honest, open, and accountable budget process.

So why would Blue Dogs support a proposal that is part of a budget reconciliation package that will increase the deficit, not lower it? Why would we