

oil cartels that drive up oil prices globally and in the United States. President Bush has threatened to veto this bill.

Energy Market Manipulation Prevention—The new Farm Bill increases Commodity Futures Trading Commission oversight authority to detect and prevent manipulation of energy prices. President Bush vetoed this bill, but the Congress has overridden that veto.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Washington is as follows:

AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 1233 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF WASHINGTON

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 3. Notwithstanding any other provision of this resolution or the operation of the previous question, it shall be in order to consider any amendment to the bill which the proponent asserts, if enacted, would have the effect of lowering the national average price per gallon of regular unleaded gasoline. Such amendments shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for thirty minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 of rule XXI. For purposes of compliance with clause 9(a)(3) of rule XXI, a statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the proponent of such amendment prior to its consideration shall have the same effect as a statement actually printed.

(The information contained herein was provided by Democratic Minority on multiple occasions throughout the 109th Congress.)

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Democratic majority agenda and a vote to allow the opposition, at least for the moment, to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's *Precedents of the House of Representatives*, (VI, 308-311) describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

Because the vote today may look bad for the Democratic majority they will say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what

they have always said. Listen to the definition of the previous question used in the *Floor Procedures Manual* published by the Rules Committee in the 109th Congress (page 56). Here's how the Rules Committee described the rule using information from *Congressional Quarterly's "American Congressional Dictionary"*: "If the previous question is defeated, control of debate shifts to the leading opposition member (usually the minority Floor Manager) who then manages an hour of debate and may offer a germane amendment to the pending business."

Deschler's *Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives*, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Democratic majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. ARCURI. I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, given the stated concerns of borrowing by the majority, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that pursuant to rule XXVIII of the Rules of the House, upon adoption of the conference report on the budget by both the House and the Senate, the Clerk of the House will be instructed to prepare a joint resolution adjusting the public debt limit; is that correct?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is correct.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, further inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, am I further correct that by operation of rule XXVIII, upon adoption of this conference report by both the House and the Senate, this joint

resolution adjusting the debt limit will be considered as passed by the House and transmitted to the Senate?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Further inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, will there be a separate vote in the House on passing this joint resolution adjusting the debt limit upwards?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Not by operation of rule XXVIII.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Further inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his inquiry.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, by operation of this rule, will the vote by which the conference report is passed by the House be considered the vote on passage of the joint resolution adjusting the debt limit?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is correct.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. CON. RES. 70, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 1214, I call up the conference report on the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 70) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2009 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2008 and 2010 through 2013.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1214, the conference report is considered read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of May 20, 2008, at page H4217.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to that rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, every year the Budget Committee has one all-important task, and that's to outline a budget for Congress to follow. Today, we do just that as we pass the conference agreement on the budget for fiscal 2009. The Senate passed the conference agreement just yesterday.

Passing a budget is never an easy task. This, in fact, will be the first time in 8 years that Congress has passed a concurrent budget resolution in an election year. Our conference agreement charts a new course. It returns the budget to balance reaching a surplus of \$22 billion in the year 2012 and staying in surplus through 2013. Our budget adheres to pay-as-you-go

because we believe in it. It embraces middle-income tax cuts and holds non-defense domestic discretionary spending to an increase of about 1 percent over inflation.

□ 1100

Our budget begins by undoing the damages done by the President's budget to services that people depend upon.

Take Medicare and Medicaid, for example, pillars of medical care for millions of Americans. The President would cut Medicare by \$479 billion over the next 10 years and Medicaid by \$94 billion. We reject those cuts. We restore Medicare and Medicaid to current services, and we accommodate adding up to \$50 billion more for the Children's Health Insurance Program, fully offset, to reach the millions of children who are eligible but not yet enrolled in CHIP.

The President proposes \$18 billion in cuts over 5 years in new fees on military retirees and veterans, actually increases in fees of \$18 billion. We reject those fees and add \$3.7 billion above current services to the veterans' health care system.

The President even digs into education, cutting Function 500, education, training, employment and social services, not only next year but over the next 5 years by \$32.7 billion. We reject the President's cuts in education and, in particular, his elimination of 47 educational programs. Instead, we make significant increases for education every year over the next 5 years.

Our budget supports not just investments in education as such, but in research and development and science and innovation, through NIH and NSF and other entities, providing substantially more than the President requested.

Finally, since strong countries are made up of strong communities, we believe that law enforcement grants and community development grants and transportation grants are part of the Federal role. We, therefore, reverse the President's deep cuts in the community development and social services block grants and in LIHEAP and law enforcement, and our budget invests in the Nation's infrastructure.

Because this budget upholds all of these priorities, it has drawn support from dozens of nonpartisan groups, from the AARP to the American Legion to the American Hospital Association. All of them and many more have sent us letters of support, and I encourage my colleagues to support it as well.

We face in this country not just this budget deficit, not just a trade deficit, but an energy deficit that is on the minds of us all. Read the President's budget, however, and you will find little that's new about skyrocketing energy costs, renewable energy, clean fuel technology, conservation, and efficiency. What you will find are heavy hits on LIHEAP, the one program that helps families weather the high price of

fuel oil, heat their homes in winter and cool them in summer. Our budget restores LIHEAP to a level that's \$3 billion above the President's budget. And for funding development of alternative fuels, renewable energies, and other energy initiatives, our budget provides \$7.7 billion.

As I mentioned, this conference agreement extends tax cuts to help middle-income families caught in the current slump. For example, we protect 20 million middle-income households from being hit by the alternative minimum tax, 20 million Americans for whom it was never intended. We accommodate the extension of the middle-income tax cuts, the child tax credit, marriage penalty relief, and the 10 percent individual income tax bracket.

Our colleagues on the other side will claim, however, that this budget raises taxes. Let me say emphatically, this budget does not raise taxes. But don't take my word for it. Here's what outside experts say.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget: "The conference agreement does not raise taxes."

The Hamilton Project of the Brookings Institution: "The budget would not raise taxes."

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: "This year's budget does not include a tax increase."

There is one other criticism our colleagues across the aisle may make but cannot sustain as to this conference agreement. In terms of national security, we provide the same dollars as the President's base budget requested, except that we call for better stewardship and better priorities, such as non-proliferation, supporting nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and materials, maybe the most menacing threat facing us.

If anything, our conference agreement protects the homeland and internal security more than the President's budget because we reverse his cuts in local law enforcement and firefighters and the Coast Guard and the first responders. Most important of all, we do everything that I have cited within the context of a balanced budget.

When President Bush took office in 2001 the budget was in surplus by \$236 billion. His economists looked out over 10 years and saw nothing but surpluses, \$5.6 trillion in all. President Bush told the country we could have it all, guns, butter and tax cuts, too, and never mind the deficit. Now, almost 8 years later, we see the disastrous consequences. Under the fiscal policies of this administration, the Bush administration, our national debt has mushroomed, increased from \$5.7 trillion in 2001 to \$10 trillion in 2009.

Since the Republicans controlled the House, the Senate and the White House during much of this time, they cannot escape responsibility for these abysmal fiscal results.

Faced with these grim facts, what does the President's budget propose for 2009? More of the same. He is still in ef-

fect saying that we can have the guns and the butter and the tax cuts, too, and that deficits don't really matter because foreign investors will keep buying our Treasury bonds.

In contrast, the budget before us is a step in the right direction. It may not be the grand or final solution, but this budget moves us in the right direction, enforcing fiscal responsibility, though not to the exclusion of other values that we hold dear.

I urge support for this conference agreement by all Members of the House.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

First off, I want to start by congratulating Chairman SPRATT. I mentioned this last time, but I think it is worth repeating. It is never easy to bring a budget conference report to bear, particularly in an election year, and Congress has had a pretty spotty, spotty track record on this lately, and the chairman deserves accolades for keeping this process going, keeping this process alive.

We've had problems with the farm bill, and this bill being on the floor today is real proof of the skill and determination by the Budget chairman, and so I want to give him the compliment he deserves for bringing this to the floor.

It's important that we have a budget process. It's important that we recognize the need to budget in this institution, and doing this today recognizes that. But at the same time, Congress actually should budget, and I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that this budget is really nothing more than the congressional baseline with about a quarter of a trillion dollars slopped on top of it for the Appropriations Committee.

And so what is the opportunity we have here today if we were actually really budgeting? I think there's three things that we ought to be doing in this budget in this Congress.

One, let's have solid growth in our economy, and let's make sure we put ourselves in the position to lead in the international marketplace by having an economic policy that puts America ahead, in the lead and in a position to win in this era of global competition.

Number two, we need to reform our health and retirement security programs so we can fulfill the mission of our health and retirement security programs in this country. The government is making promises to people right now in health and retirement security that it knows it can't keep. We all know this here. We know, Republicans, Democrats, that our government is making promises to a generation of Americans and another generation of Americans that we know are unsustainable. So we need to come up with a plan to make good on that promise, which right now is not being fulfilled.

And number three, while we do that, we have got to lift this burden of debt

on the next generation. We, with this budget, are going faster down the pathway of sending a crushing burden of debt and taxes on the next generation. Both parties are to blame for this. So I'm not simply saying that all of the sudden now the Democrats are running Congress it's all bad. Both parties have been responsible for not addressing these problems. But now that my friends on the other side of the aisle are in the majority, this is their opportunity. This is their chance and opportunity to actually address this problem and take it head-on. And what are they doing? Nothing about it.

Here's the problem, Mr. Speaker. Not only does this budget propose to do nothing to address these issues, it makes them worse. Because by doing nothing, we're going deeper into debt.

Under this budget, what this budget proposes we do for 5 years, by doing nothing to address the two biggest problems we have, the two biggest programs we have, the two biggest unfulfilled promises we have, namely, Medicare and Social Security, this budget proposes to go \$14 trillion deeper in debt to just those two programs alone; by doing nothing for 1 year according to the trustees of Medicare and Social Security, \$2 trillion deeper into debt. This budget, \$14 trillion increase.

But here's also what this budget does propose. What it does propose is the largest tax increase in American history, \$683 billion over the next 5 years. That equals about \$2,000 in per year tax increase on the average American family, and there's no effort to cut wasteful spending in government whatsoever.

We've heard about the Bridge to Nowhere. We've heard about the \$50 million rain forest museum. We heard about the bill passed 2 weeks ago to give \$250 million for one earmark from a Senator from the other side of the Rotunda for one company. We're earmarking ourselves to oblivion in this Congress, and this bill does nothing to curtail that. This bill basically assumes that there's no waste in the Federal Government, that every taxpayer dollar is being spent well and wisely and with full accounting and full transparency, and because of that, this ought to give the government even more money to spend on top of the baseline.

This bill will push the appropriations above the \$1 trillion mark in the next coming year. That's an increase of \$80 billion, an increase of 9 percent over last year. This bill, as a consequence of giving this 9 percent increase in discretionary spending, will lead to the largest annual increase in the debt in our Nation's history.

And so for all the talk of fiscal conservatism, for all the talk of fiscal responsibility we're going to hear in the next hour, this bill right here we're debating, right here, largest increase in debt in our Nation's history, exceeding the \$1 trillion mark in government agency spending.

And this bill does absolutely nothing, absolutely nothing, to address the upcoming entitlement crisis. As I mentioned, this bill adds to the entitlement crisis. It increases the entitlement liability in this country by 37 percent, \$14 trillion increase in unfulfilled promises and contingent liability, a 37 percent increase.

Now, given the fact that this bill does nothing to address the long-run problems in this country, what about the short-run? What about the problems in the short-run? This bill does nothing to propose any new energy policy whatsoever.

We have \$4 gasoline, and this is where it really hits close to home. This is where I really have a personal problem with the fact that we're doing this bill. You know, just 2 days ago in my hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin, General Motors just announced they're shutting down the factory there, the factory that has produced the Yukon, the Tahoe and the Suburban. And the reason they're shutting down the factory at the end of this model year is because of \$4 gas. It costs a hundred bucks to fill up a Suburban, and people aren't buying them. Thirty percent decline in sales just this year alone, and people are scratching their heads and wondering how did this happen, how did this come to be, why do we have \$4 gas.

Well, here's the problem, Mr. Speaker, we're 60 percent dependent on foreign oil, and you know what's so galling about that is the fact that we have about seven times the amount of oil under our ground in this country than Saudi Arabia has under theirs. Yet it's all off-limits.

We have got 16 billion barrels of oil up in ANWR that are off-limits by Congress. We've got 86 billion barrels of oil in the Outer Continental Shelf off-limits by Congress. We have 2 trillion barrels of oil in the Intermountain Region in this country, all off-limits by Congress.

We know how to drill in a very safe and environmentally sound way. And what's more galling from that is the Congressional Research Service is now telling us, just passing the ANWR legislation, the smallest of these three fields I just mentioned, would get us about \$191 billion in revenue to the Federal Government over the next 10 years.

Imagine what we could do with that. Imagine the deficit reduction that could occur as a consequence of that. Imagine the hydrogen, the fuel cells, the research that we could do to actually invest in a Manhattan Project to get us off of oil itself. But unfortunately, my friends on the other side of the aisle are not doing anything.

So while I'm happy we have a budget resolution on the floor, I'm very dispirited and very disappointed in its content. Largest tax increase in American history. Absolutely nothing to confront the entitlement crisis in this country, a 37 percent increase in this

liability. Largest increase in national debt in the American history. And nothing to address the long-term and nothing to address the short-term by making us less dependent on foreign oil.

I find it interesting that our friends on the other side of the aisle are so critical of our foreign policy as being too unilateral; yet what we're simply saying to other countries is we're going to drill for oil in your country and buy that from you and not explore it in our own country. A little bit of a hypocritical stance, I would argue.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. SPRATT. I yield myself 30 seconds before yielding to the gentleman from Texas.

Let me just make clear, this budget moves us to balance in 2012. And the fact of the matter is, the plain history of the matter is that when the Republicans took the White House in 2001, the budget the year before was \$236 billion in surplus. By the year 2004, they had made that surplus advantage to where we had a deficit of \$412 billion, a swing of \$648 billion on their watch. They controlled the House, they controlled the Senate, they controlled the White House; and they've added \$4 trillion to the national debt.

I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, this budget resolution provides "unwavering support for our Nation's sick and disabled veterans, as well as all of the men and women who have so honorably served this country." Those are not my words. They are the words of the Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, AMVETS, and the Paralyzed Veterans of America in a letter sent May 20 to Budget Chairman SPRATT.

After years of veterans' budgets that barely, if at all, kept pace with inflation, leaving America's heroes with inadequate health care and benefits, it is now a new day, a better day for our veterans.

Two weeks ago, the American Legion said this about last year's Democratic budget, "For the first time in decades, the veterans and military community had a budget resolution worthy of the sacrifice asked of America's veterans and their families." It went on to say that, "This budget resolution for fiscal year 2009 reflects the continued commitment to those earned benefits provided by a grateful Nation in recognition of honorable military service." That's what veterans leaders say about this budget.

We, in this resolution, add \$4.9 billion to last year's historic increase in veterans' health care and benefits. This year's increase is \$3.3 billion above President Bush's request. What does this mean? It means improved mental health care services for Iraq and Afghan war vets, more clinics for vets in

rural areas, and shorter waiting times for doctor appointments, and earned benefits.

This budget also targets funding toward our most pressing national security needs, such as military readiness, and protecting Americans from the threat of nuclear terrorism. It rejects the President's proposed TRICARE health care premium increases for those who have served our Nation's military for more than 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, supporting our troops, our veterans, and their families is what Americans do. It is who we are. Since our Nation's founding, shared sacrifice during time of war has been a quintessential American value, a promise to keep. Under the leadership of Speaker PELOSI and Chairman SPRATT, we are keeping that promise to America's heroes.

Vote "yes" on this resolution.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, let me inquire as to how much time remains for each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 21½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from South Carolina has 21 minutes remaining.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. At this time, Mr. Speaker, I will yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, a distinguished member of the Budget Committee, Mr. CONAWAY.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time, and I also want to congratulate our chairman on getting the job done. Getting a budget is obviously never easy in an election year, it's never easy in an off year, but his perseverance has us here today debating a budget that I couldn't be more strongly against.

It fails on a number of occasions, a number of points, not the least of which is that it fails to address entitlement reform. We have recent reports that we've got some \$57 trillion in unfunded promises that we've made to each other; no attempt to address that. What that means is this government, over the next 75 years, would have to run a \$57 trillion surplus in order to make that work. And this government has never been good at running surpluses. In fact, if you look at the last 40 or 45 years, there is only a handful of years in which an actual surplus occurred.

Now, the other side talks often about the projected surpluses that were there in 1999 and 2000, but those projections weren't worth the paper they were written on as it turns out, as no projections are. But the actual surpluses in years totaled some \$17 billion, well short of the \$57 trillion that we'll need to run in order to meet these promises.

This budget does include \$683 billion in new spending that they fund through the tax increases that will automatically happen in the law that's currently in place. Now, you will hear a lot of rhetoric about this being the largest tax increase ever; and we'll say it is, they'll say it's not. It's true,

there is no tax law included in this budget. But what happens with the tax law that's currently in place is that the projections are that it collects an additional \$683 billion in taxes from the hardworking Americans and companies in this country. And this budget gives us a blueprint of what the other side intends to do with it. They don't intend to address the surplus, they intend to spend it on other programs and continue to grow this Federal Government.

So, while I congratulate my chairman on getting this to where we are today, I intend to vote against this bill and urge my colleagues to vote against it as well.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia, a member of the committee, Mr. SCOTT.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the budget, it's helpful to know where we are and how we got here. This chart shows the budget deficit over the years and shows that when President Clinton came in, we reversed the trend of deficit and actually went into surplus and were going to stay into surplus until the Republican leadership had a President who would actually sign their bills. We immediately went in the ditch and have bounced around in the ditch ever since then.

We had, when this administration came in, a projected surplus of \$5.5 trillion, more than enough to pay Social Security for 75 years without reducing benefits. Unfortunately, those 8 years will come in at about a \$3 trillion deficit, a reversal of over \$8.5 trillion deterioration.

And although they overspent the budget that much, they didn't create any jobs. This is the job growth since the Great Depression. These last 8 years have produced the worst job growth since the Great Depression.

And so we have a budget that will reverse this. We have a budget that is fiscally responsible, it balances in 2012, remains in balance using realistic CBO estimates. It posts smaller deficits over the 5 years than the Republican alternative. It continues emphasis on fiscal responsibility by maintaining pay-as-you-go that served us so well during the 1990s.

It also addresses our priorities, increases veterans' funding, energy funding, particularly renewable energy and energy efficiency, and assistance to low-income families. It invests in education and social services. It rejects the administration's cuts in environmental protection. It funds first responders, community development, and other high-priority services. It fully funds the defense budget.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SPRATT. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. It also maintains accommodations for children's

health care, higher education, and rejects the cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. It does this, maintaining the middle class tax cuts. So instead of following the reckless fiscal policies of the past, instead of following the reckless recommendations of this administration, this responsible budget funds our priorities in a fiscally responsible way.

I want to thank the gentleman from South Carolina for his leadership in presenting this fiscally responsible budget. I urge my colleagues to adopt this conference report.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the vice ranking member of the Budget Committee, Mr. BARRETT from South Carolina.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition of the budget conference report.

By allowing tax relief to expire, the House-passed Democrat budget resolution calls for a \$683 billion tax hike. And in my home State of South Carolina, the Democrat budget is about a \$2,500 tax increase for the average South Carolinian's home. This would be, Mr. Speaker, the largest tax increase in history.

The government spends too much money, Mr. Speaker, and I can't imagine giving the government an additional \$683 billion. We have serious challenges facing the Nation, and money is not the answer.

The conference report fails in many areas, but the most notable is in spending. It increases discretionary spending by \$21 billion above the President's request and pushes discretionary spending past the \$1 trillion mark in FY 2009.

It fails to maintain emergency funds that were included in the Republican 2007 budget resolution. It has 37 reserve funds, which include the promise of billions of additional spending, which I can only assume will be paid in additional taxes.

And finally, the House Budget Committee listened to testimony from budget experts indicating that our Nation was facing a financial crisis when it comes to entitlement spending, yet the conference report does nothing to truly address this issue. We cannot continue just to raise taxes and hope that entitlements will be solved by themselves, Mr. Speaker.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, in a time when we have economic hardships with our folks trying to put their entire paycheck in their gas tanks, to bring tax increases, additional spending, more government regulation I think is unconscionable.

So I would urge my colleagues to vote against this budget resolution and bring some fiscal sanity back into this process.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) be allowed to manage time for our side for a moment of time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE), also a member of the committee.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, with the consideration of this budget resolution conference report, we're taking another important step towards restoring fiscal discipline as a priority of our Congress, and that's why I rise today to express my support.

We all know it's going to be a great challenge to get our fiscal house in order after 7 years of mismanagement and an increase in our national debt of \$3.4 trillion. We must recognize the serious fiscal situation our country is in and begin to take practical steps to address it. This budget does it.

I am policy cochair for a group in Congress called the Blue Dog Coalition. We believe in fiscal responsibility and being within a budget, like most American families do, and this budget puts us on a path to reach a balanced budget by 2012.

Responsible budgeting is about enforcing strong budgetary principles, which is why I'm very pleased this budget adheres to what we call PAYGO, pay-as-you-go, and that it contains a commitment to the extension of statutory PAYGO requirements.

This budget directs House committees to conduct regular performance reviews of programs, recommend legislative and administrative measures to improve them, and to identify waste and to eliminate waste and unnecessary spending. These efforts, in combination with the House PAYGO rule, will provide House committees with incentives to seek out and eliminate inefficient programs.

Finally, you will continue to hear talk about this budget raising taxes on middle class and working families. It does nothing of the sort. It specifically calls for a responsible fix of the alternative minimum tax and the extension of middle-income tax relief in a manner that is fiscally responsible and does not pass on trillions of dollars of debt to our children and grandchildren.

This budget resolution is not perfect, but it's another important step towards restoring fiscal discipline as a guiding value of our government. The Blue Dog group in Congress is dedicated to seeing that commitments made in this budget are adhered to so we can put our country back on a sustainable fiscal path, and we're not mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren.

As a member of the House Budget Committee, I would like to thank Chairman SPRATT and his great staff for all the work they do.

I urge a "yes" vote on this resolution.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, it was about 2 weeks ago that the front page of the USA Today publication wrote, "Taxpayers' Bill Leaps By Trillions." The first sentence says, "The Federal Government's long-term financial obligations grew by \$2.5 last year, a reflection of the mushrooming cost of Medicare, Social Security benefits."

\$2.5 trillion, Mr. Speaker, under the Democrat watch imposed upon the next generation. It just so happens that two members of the next generation that I'm very concerned about, my 6-year-old daughter and my 4-year-old son, are in the gallery today. And I take the matter very, very seriously that we have a Democrat budget before us today that is absolutely stone cold silent on the number one threat to their future of greater opportunity and greater freedom. And this budget, this Democrat budget does nothing to reform entitlement spending, to give us greater retirement security and better health care at a more reasonable cost.

Mr. Speaker, there is a tale of two budgets here. One, again, is stone cold silent on reforming entitlement spending that threatens to bankrupt future generations, including my children.

Let me tell you what it's not silent on. It's not silent on tax increases. This budget includes the single largest tax increase in American history. An average family of four working in the Fifth Congressional District of Texas—that I have the honor of representing—over the course of the next 3 years will see a \$3,000-a-year tax increase at a time when they're having to go to the convenience store and making the decision, do I buy a gallon of milk or do I buy a gallon of gas?

What does this budget do? It raises taxes on a family of four by \$3,000. The elderly will see their taxes go up \$2,181. A single parent who has two children could see their taxes go up by over \$1,600. People are wondering, how am I going to send my kids to college? How am I going to put gas into the pick-up truck? How are we going to commute the 25 miles to work every day? And what does this budget do, Mr. Speaker? It raises taxes, single largest tax increase in American history.

Here's another thing this budget does. It says, you know what? The pork barrel factory is alive and well. Let's just keep it going. Let's let Members of Congress continue to have monuments to themselves. Let's continue to subsidize fashion landscaping in the L.A. fashion district, and let's send the bill to the next generation and let's send it to the taxpayers.

□ 1130

Mr. Speaker, this is an outrage, and for the sake of today's taxpayers who are struggling and for the sake of future generations, we must reject this conference report.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the 2009 budget resolution before us today.

I want to thank Chairman SPRATT and my other colleagues on the Budget Committee for their hard work in bringing to the House a bill that represents the priorities of this Congress.

This budget places families and communities first. It increases funding for our veterans so they receive the health care and benefits they have earned and deserve. It increases funding for homeland security officers, including funding for firefighters and police officers, who keep our communities safe. It protects Medicare and Medicaid and includes a plan to increase the State Children's Health Insurance Program to keep our communities healthy. It protects funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program and funds important efforts to promote renewable energy initiatives and protect our environment. This budget stands in sharp contrast to the President's proposals, which included cuts to these vital domestic programs that invest in our children, our communities, and our economy.

In order to strengthen our economy and our country, we must invest in those who drive it: the middle class. That is why this budget also includes a plan which I strongly support that will extend and expand middle class tax cuts, including the child tax credit, marriage penalty relief, and the 10 percent bracket.

This is a budget that will strengthen our middle class, our communities, and our economy and make our country safer. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN).

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, when you try a lawsuit, one of the things they say to you is to pick out just a few salient facts, talk about that during the argument through the questioning of the various witnesses, and, hopefully, those few facts or statements will appear in the instructions to the jury, and then in your final argument you refer to those. So the hope is that, as the jury deliberates, the jury will have a chance to think about the most important facts.

So in attempting to distill this argument about the budget down, I have tried to figure out a couple salient facts. And it seems to me the one needs repeating and repeating and repeating is the most obvious one: the largest single tax increase in the history of this Congress, which means in the history of this Nation, which means in the history of the world, \$683 billion over the next 5 years.

Now, one of the reasons I think it's a salient fact is that we oftentimes just gloss over that. Yesterday we had a bill on the floor in which we were starting an entirely new program where we are now on the Federal level going to be responsible for paying for heating and air conditioning of local schools. Now,

heating and air conditioning of local schools is important, but when did that become a Federal responsibility? But the argument we heard on the floor was, well, they can't afford it at the local level; so, therefore, we magically can support it on the Federal level. What does that translate into? The largest single tax increase in the history of the American people, in the history of this Congress, in the history of the world.

We passed a farm bill, which we found, as it was going through, got larger and larger and larger and larger and larger, and we set up price supports for certain commodities at historically high levels so that if corn, which is now at the all-time high level, which is causing ripples through the international system and one of the reasons causing some lack of food to be available to people, if somehow we come to our senses and say maybe we want too far on corn ethanol production and the price drops, what happens? The American people magically pay for it because we've set price supports up so high that they're above the historically high levels, billions of dollars.

Two weeks ago we voted on this floor for foreign aid for cats and dogs. Now, we bring up suspension bills all the time when we don't have other important things to do, and sometimes at the end of the session, we say now we'll bring out the cats and dogs, and I have been here for 14 years and I've seen that happen. This is the first time in my 14 years that we actually voted on cats and dogs. We voted for foreign aid for cats and dogs. How can we do that? All you have to do is pass the budget with the largest single tax hike in the history of the Nation.

It seems to me, with all due respect to my friend the gentleman from South Carolina, the distinguished chairman of this committee, who has done yeomen's work to try to bring this forward, he is being pushed and pulled, and, unfortunately, we brought forth this, not a mouse but the largest single tax increase in the history of the world.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we have put children in single-parent homes in an untenable situation. On the one hand, we demand that their parents move off welfare and take financial responsibility for these families and that absent parents, fathers typically, work and pay child support, but on the other hand, government bureaucracies continue to skim dollars off child support repayments intended for these needy children because of administrative costs.

Child support payments are often the only safety net still available for kids in single-parent families. Congress should make every effort to ensure that child support is collected and that all of it goes to families to whom they

are owed and who are working so hard to succeed.

That's why I am absolutely delighted that a provision that I introduced, along with my good friend from Wisconsin, the ranking member of the Budget Committee, PAUL RYAN, was included in this budget resolution. It restores the ability of States to pass along every cent of child support collected, ensuring that the dollars get to where they're intended and not into government pocketbooks. This is a commonsense provision that will help parents as the cost of living continues to rise.

I urge a "yes" vote on this important budget agreement.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this budget. It represents a downpayment on our commitment to restoring middle class prosperity, a clear, practical approach to strengthen our economy, help our workforce thrive, and allow families to reach for the American Dream.

Today the Bush economy continues to weigh heavily on America's families and businesses. Incomes are down; everything else is up. Gas prices, food prices, the cost of health care and higher education.

This back-to-basics budget maintains fiscal discipline, reaching balance in 2012, remains in balance in 2013. If we pass this budget, it will mark the first time since 2000 that the Congress has been able to agree on a budget blueprint in an election year.

What does the budget mean? Middle class tax relief, including an extension to the refundable child tax credit and the Senate reserve fund to lower the income threshold and extend the benefit to more families. Last month we recognized the importance of expanding the child tax credit, lowering the income eligibility threshold to \$8,500, providing relief to more than 12 million children.

It means crucial support for energy initiatives. It means enhancing our competitive edge, increasing funding for math and science education and research. And at the same time, we reject the administration's cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, first responder grants, emergency home heating assistance, and Community Development Block Grants. We bolster our economy's long-term health and help workers by making an investment in our national infrastructure and creating quality jobs, rebuilding crumbling bridges, fixing our roads, and reducing congestion, paving the way for new growth and new opportunity.

I urge my colleagues to stand behind this responsible budget. It is the foundation of a safe country, a strong economy, and future growth.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am pleased to yield 2 min-

utes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN).

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, Congress right now is a dysfunctional place. We've got terrorists who want to kill us, and we can't pass the FISA law. We've got \$4 gas, and we can't drill for more oil. And now in the face of a \$10 trillion national debt, we have a budget in front of us that has the largest tax increase in history and is the largest budget in history. It just doesn't make sense.

In this time of economic uncertainty, with record-high energy prices, with the cost of food and fuel taking an increasing share of the family budget, Congress has a moral responsibility, a moral responsibility, to find ways to tighten its belt. Congress should be laser focused on cutting wasteful and redundant spending from the Federal budget in order to lower taxes to let families and business owners and taxpayers keep more of what they earn.

This budget, the largest in human history, does exactly the opposite. It has the largest tax increase in history to pay for the largest spending in history. This budget spends \$100,000 per second, \$6 million per minute, \$350 million an hour every day for the entire year. It spends more than \$23,000 per family, again, a record amount. Does the average American family feel they're getting their \$23,000 worth from the Federal Government? It sort of reminds me of I think it was Will Rogers, who said, if we ever get all the government we pay for, look out.

Mr. Speaker, this reckless, out-of-control spending is not only unneeded; it has put us on a path toward economic disaster.

And I will be the first to admit Congress' spending problem wasn't created overnight and the blame does not lie in the lap of one single party. In terms of real fiscal year 2000 dollars, real dollars, Congress has quadrupled spending over my lifetime with both parties sharing in the blame. Our priorities have shifted dramatically from national defense and toward entitlement spending. It has become clear to me that here in Congress, the dials are always set to "spend." It's spend and tax. That's always the program.

I think back to the amendments I offered last year during the appropriations process, nine amendments that would have saved \$23 billion by simply asking Federal agencies to do what all kinds of families have had to do: spend the previous year's amount, hold the line on spending. These amendments were defeated on party-line votes, with Members of the majority claiming the sky would fall, the world would end if we could not increase spending at three or more times the rate of inflation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. I yield the gentleman 30 additional seconds.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. The government managed to survive 3 months on

a continuing resolution doing just that, living on the previous year's budget. If we can do it for 3 months, we can do it for a long time and we can save the taxpayers a lot of money.

The American people are ready for change. They're tired of reckless spending that happens in the Halls of their Congress. They demand that we stand up and do the right thing. I would urge my colleagues to join me in rejecting this conference report in favor of a more conservative, fiscally responsible budget that respects taxpayers, business owners, and families across this country.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's newfound concern for the budget deficit, but let me remind him from 2001 through 2007, his party controlled the House, the Senate, and the White House and accumulated a record debt and record deficits, and it takes a long time to turn this battleship around, but that's what we do in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD).

Mr. BOYD of Florida. I thank the chairman, my friend from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), for not only the time but for his hard work in bringing this blueprint to the floor, for our vision about how this government ought to be run and how we manage the economic model.

Mr. Speaker and ladies and gentlemen, running a government shouldn't be rocket science, especially a great government like ours and a great country like ours. You identify the priorities that government should do. You perform those priorities well. They are limited. You know what they are. And you are willing to pay for them. That model, ladies and gentlemen, should continuously strive to enlarge the middle class. Let me say that again. This economic model and this government function should be continuously striving to enlarge and enhance the middle class of this country.

For the last 8 years, 7½ years, we've had policies which have shrunk the middle class. We have had a continuous increase of spending, continuous decrease in revenues. We go to the People's Republic of China and other lenders to fund the difference, and we've got a fiscal mess.

□ 1145

This vision, this blueprint, this budget that JOHN SPRATT and Senator CONRAD have brought to us in the form of a conference report changes that and puts us on a path to balancing our budget, complying with the PAYGO principles, which we strongly believe in, and also performing the functions that a government should perform in this great Nation of ours.

I strongly urge and hope that you will vote for this conference report. Again, I want to thank Chairman SPRATT for all his hard work in getting us to this point.

Mr. HENSARLING. At this time I yield 2 minutes to the champion

against pork barrel spending in the United States, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

Mr. FLAKE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

It was once said of someone who didn't know exactly where he was going that he was traipsing down a flower-strewn path unpricked by thorns of reason. I don't think there's a better description of what this budget is, than that, traipsing down a flower-strewn path unpricked by thorns of reason.

We were just told the other day, the gentleman from Texas mentioned it, that when you include all unfunded liabilities, not just the national debt out there, but all the money that we promise to pay out, that every American citizen owes something like \$500,000. Nearly half a million dollars for every person living. Yet, this budget does nothing to change the course of that.

We will be adding a couple trillion dollars every year in fact that this budget is in place. Over the next 5 years we will go from something like \$39 trillion to \$52 trillion in unfunded liabilities.

I am not here to defend our record as Republicans when we were here. We did terrible, frankly, in terms of reining in spending. We added a new entitlement program, Medicare part D, which Democrats by and large voted against. If you didn't like it, please repeal it now. Some of us on this side didn't either. But it's bankrupting us and we can't continue to traipse down a flower-strewn path unpricked by thorns of reason.

These budgets have consequences, and the consequence here is we are saddling future generations with untold debt, debt that you can't even contemplate, debt that dwarfs most Americans' personal debt, a mortgage that they pay on a house, that they owe to their Federal Government. Yet we still continue to add program after program, new entitlements, new spending.

Just last week, a huge massive bloated farm bill was passed. Just yesterday, we were getting into construction for school facilities. We can't continue to do this.

Please reject this budget.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished majority leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I always think my friend from Arizona is so rational, and I thought he was today. I always appreciate his remarks. It's a shame that together we have not reached what I think we need to reach, whether it's on entitlements, which are obviously an extraordinary challenge, or on discretionary spending, or on taxes, or on revenues, on paying for what we buy.

The flower-strewn path unpricked by reason. Nineteen years of Republican Presidents during my term in the Congress of the United States have presided. They're the one person in the United States of America that can stop

spending in its tracks. The only person. Nineteen years of Republican Presidents, \$4.13 trillion of deficit spending and \$1.68 trillion of that has been in the last 6 years. Eight years under Bill Clinton, \$62.9 billion-surplus. That is the 27 years that I have been in the Congress of the United States.

Now you can attribute that to all sorts of things, but I attribute it to the fact that Democrats have taken the position we ought to pay for what we buy and we ought to have responsible budgets. The Republicans have not passed a budget except for once in an election year. If we pass this one, as surely I hope we will, it will be a precedent.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the chairman of the Budget Committee, JOHN SPRATT. I also want to congratulate the ranking member, who I don't see on the floor, but who is a responsible Member of this body. I disagree with him on some things but he engages in the debate in a responsible way.

I want to thank the members of the Blue Dog Coalition as well for their work, patience, and commitment to passing this budget conference report. This is the first budget adopted in an election year since 2000, the last time we were before this administration, and it is a signal accomplishment of this Congress and a demonstration of our ability to govern effectively.

This conference report is the continuation of the Democratic majority's effort to turn away from this administration's failed policies. In fact, the most reckless fiscal policies in the history of our Nation.

As the father of three grandchildren and as the grandfather of a great-grandchild, I am extraordinarily concerned about that. We have two young women sitting next to my colleague and friend, Congressman ROGERS. I don't know whether they are grandchildren. They are grandchildren. We have put those young children who sit here, these beautiful young women, deeply into debt. This budget is about keeping them out of further debt.

Let's remember, President Bush and the former Republican majorities in Congress turned a projected budget surplus of \$5.6 trillion, and was that a real surplus? It was not. It was a projection for 10 years. Nobody really knows what's going to happen in 10 years. But it was a projected surplus of \$5.6 trillion, on which the Bush administration relied, and in reliance on it, did some things that were extraordinarily irresponsible.

We are now more than \$3 trillion in additional debt in just 6 years. We went from \$5.9 trillion of debt to now \$9.8 trillion. Almost \$4 trillion, which is to say an 80 percent increase in the indebtedness of this Nation in 84 months while the Republicans enjoyed 6 years of hegemony. Total, absolute control.

Yet some of our Republican friends complain, audaciously so, that this budget conference report includes an increase in the debt limit. How soon

they forget. They forget or, more accurately, they deliberately ignore that they increased the debt limit four times in 5 years. Under Bill Clinton's Presidency, during his last 4 years the debt was increased not once. Not once. The debt limit increase included in this conference report is a direct result, a direct and predictable result of the fiscally irresponsible, failed policies of the Republican party, policies that could not be changed overnight.

Nevertheless, congressional Democrats have proposed a fiscally responsible conference report that returns our Federal budget to balance by 2012 and abides by the pay-as-you-go budget rules that we reinstated in January, 2007, which were abandoned in 2001. Why? Because you could not and did not have the courage to pay for your tax cuts.

The only way you could pass your reduction of revenues was to waive PAYGO because you did not have the courage of convictions, nor the votes of your conference to cut spending by the amount you cut revenue. To-wit: Exploding debt.

It's a budget that meets the critical needs of our people, making investments to keep America safe, to boost economic growth, and create jobs, to provide tax relief, and to help families struggling in the Bush economy. This budget matches the President's request for defense, while shifting funds to high priorities, such as nuclear non-proliferation programs. It increases homeland security funding over the President's request. And it rejects the President's proposed cuts to first responder-programs, who, in any emergency caused by terrorists or by natural events, will be the first responders.

It increases funding for veterans health care by \$3.7 billion, increases funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives so we can become energy independent, as well as funding for scientific innovation, education, training and social services to grow our economy, create jobs and make the lives of our people better.

Furthermore, it accommodates an immediate and long-term fix to the alternative minimum tax and additional middle class tax relief. Middle class tax relief in this budget.

Finally, this conference report rejects the President's harmful cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, State and local law enforcement programs, such as COPS, and to Environmental Protection Agency grants to protect public health. It also rejects the President's proposal to increase fees for veterans and military retirees by \$18 billion.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrat majorities in this Congress inherited a fiscal debacle last year. Today, through this budget conference report, we continue to address it and to meet the critical priorities of the American people.

This is a budget that we can be proud of. I urge all of my colleagues to vote

for fiscal responsibility, vote for the appropriate priorities for our country, vote for a brighter future for our children, vote for the conference report.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I listened very carefully to the distinguished majority leader, who spoke eloquently on deficit spending. He should know much about it since, under his budget, the Federal Government's long-term financial obligations grew by \$2.5 trillion last year, and we now have the single largest increase in the national debt.

As I listened carefully to the majority leader, I heard him say much. What I did not hear him deny was that his budget included the single largest tax increase in American history.

Mr. HOYER. Will my friend yield?

Mr. HENSARLING. I would be happy to yield.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Perhaps the distinguished majority leader could get some additional time on his side.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE).

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank Mr. HENSARLING and the ranking member of the Budget Committee for their yeoman's work on the Republican alternative. I also want to express my admiration for the chairman of the Budget Committee, who I believe to be a sincere man and effective legislator.

I must say that I do love following the distinguished majority leader to the floor. He is, as has been said, an eloquent and effective champion for the Democrat agenda in Congress. But the American people deserve to know this budget puts that agenda in high relief. It is more taxes, more spending, no entitlement reform, and pork barrel spending as usual.

Now let me say Tuesday and Wednesday of this week we were beset by terrible tornadoes. I will be heading back home tomorrow after we finish up business. A military base in my district, 40 buildings compromised, some destroyed; dozens of homes destroyed and compromised through Rush County and Shelby County.

But you know what? I know what Hoosiers are doing today. I know what they are doing. They are grabbing a shovel, they are rolling their sleeves up. Some have been out all night long sacrificially coming alongside their neighbors in a community in crisis and they are cleaning up the mess.

I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we are facing a fiscal crisis in this Nation, and it is a mess of extraordinary proportions: \$9.3 billion in national debt, \$43 trillion in unfunded obligation in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

Let me say to the distinguished chairman of this committee: There is

plenty of blame to go around. I do not take issue with the gentleman's characterization that the national debt grew precipitously under Republican control. Pork barrel spending grew precipitously under Republican control. But that is no excuse. Continuing the argument and the blame game is no excuse for not dealing with the problem in the way that the American people sit down and solve problems, and that is by confronting them head-on and coming together with solutions.

The Democrat budget here is not the solution. More spending, more taxes, pork barrel spending as usual, and not one penny of entitlement reform ignores the problem. It doesn't deal with the problem.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans in Congress offered an alternative this year that would face this fiscal crisis head on. The American people deserve to know the Democrat budget is not the answer.

□ 1200

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished chairman of our caucus, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, to my two former speakers on the Republican side, one who described the Republican stewardship as "terrible," the one thing you can say after 6 years of Republican rule with President Bush is that we will forever be in your debt.

You are right. \$3.8 trillion in new debt under your stewardship, and so we are always going to be in your debt. And I just can't you thank you enough on behalf of the American people, because the reason you would use the adjective "terrible" to describe your record is for the fiscal mess you left. And when you describe \$9.8 trillion in debt, don't act like, "look mom, no hands." You had something to do with it, 6 years of your control.

This budget is a beginning, because what is a budget? It is a blueprint for the future. And, yes, we will make it. President Kennedy once said, "to govern is to choose." We are making choices here. We are preserving middle class tax cuts and beginning to put our fiscal house in order and investing in education, health care and technology to start to grow the economy back. That works for middle class families.

Under your stewardship, middle class household income shrunk by \$1,100. Costs for education, health care and energy went up. This is about turning the country around and changing the direction of this country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PAS-TOR). The Chair would remind Members to please address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 4 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, what this is all about is priorities, that

is what budgets are, and when you take a look the priorities in this budget, it is a huge missed opportunity.

I started the beginning of this debate by complimenting the distinguished gentleman from South Carolina for bringing a budget to conclusion, and I really sincerely mean that. I am from Wisconsin. I didn't really know what the definition of a "distinguished southern gentleman" is. I do now know by serving with JOHN SPRATT, and he deserves credit for bringing a budget resolution to the floor in an election year, which is something that is not often done around here. So I sincerely want to compliment the gentleman for that.

But what about the budget we have here being brought to the floor? I see some young people in the audience here, some young people in the well here. I have some young people in my family. I have a daughter who is 6, a son who is 5, and a son who is 3 years old, and by the time my three kids are exactly my age, this Federal Government will be doubling their taxes.

The pathway that we are on right now with the unsustainable fiscal crisis in this country is one in which, instead of taxing 18.3 cents out of every dollar to pay for the Federal Government, which is what we have been doing for the last 40 years, the next generation, my children's generation, when they are raising their kids will be paying 40 cents out of every dollar just to pay for this Federal Government.

We know for a fact that we are shackling the next generation with a mountain of debt and taxes that is unsustainable. We are bequeathing this to the next generation, unless we fix this, unless we step up as every preceding generation has done in this country and make things better.

What does this budget do? Not only in a time of economic recession, not only in a time of \$4 gas prices, not only in a time where the grocery bill is twice as high as it was last year, we are raising taxes across-the-board the most we have ever raised them before, taxes on marriage, taxes on having children, taxes on making money, taxes on starting small businesses, taxes on pensions, taxes on retirement. This budget does that. But what is even worse than that is that this budget proposes to increase this debt, this legacy of debt to our children and our grandchildren, by \$14 trillion for just two programs alone. It is unconscionable.

Both parties lay blame, but should claim responsibility for getting us to where we are. I am not simply saying here that Republicans have always been pristine and Democrats have always been bad. We got into this together. We are going to have to get out of this together. The problem is, this is no way to go. We shouldn't be doing this to our grandchildren, to our children, to the "X Generation."

That is what this budget does, the largest tax increase in American history, which is going to hurt our econ-

omy even further and cost jobs. When you raise taxes, you lower jobs. When you raise taxes, you take money out of paychecks. You hurt families. You don't give them the ability to get going, to succeed. Their paychecks don't get stretched farther, they get stretched shorter.

And when you consign the next generation by simply walking away from the problem and saying to our kids and our grandkids, instead of giving you a \$40 trillion debt for Medicare and Social Security, we are going to give you a \$54 trillion debt for Medicare and Social Security, each household today, if we want just these two programs to work, would have to set aside \$353,000. What this budget says is each household will have to set aside \$474,000.

We are abdicating leadership in this budget. It is wrong. What we need to do is come together, both sides, recognize this problem, and realize that the way to prosperity in this country is not to tax our way out of this problem; it is to address this spending problem in this House, address the culture of earmarks, address the spending that we have here and get it under control so that the next generation can be better off.

That is what my folks told me the legacy of this country is all about. Each generation rises to the challenges in this country and leaves the next generation better off. Well, what we are doing with this budget is we are severing that legacy. We know for a fact, it is guaranteed, it is statistically a truism by all sides of the aisle, we are going to sever that legacy and we are going to give the next generation an inferior standard of living, unless we defeat this budget.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, to close the debate, I now yield the balance of our time to our distinguished Speaker, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman, the Chair of the Budget Committee, for yielding, and I thank him for bringing this excellent document to the floor, a budget which will help us protect our country, grow our economy, give middle income tax cuts, and do so in a fiscally sound way.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, our budget is a statement of our national values. At least it should be. Now for the first time in our New Direction Congress, last year and this year, for 2 years straight, we have put forth a budget resolution, the first time a budget resolution has been put forth in an election year by the Congress since the Republicans took over. Now the Democrats are in charge and we have had 2 years of responsible budgeting.

I listened with interest to our colleagues and their views on this budget. They certainly are entitled to their opinion, but they are not entitled to their own set of facts. I want to just quote from some of the responsible independent budget organizations,

some of them conservative-leaning organizations, when it comes to their false claim about this budget increasing taxes.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget says, "The conference agreement does not raise taxes."

The Hamilton Project of the Brookings Institution says very clearly, "The budget would not raise taxes." Indeed, your budget, Mr. SPRATT, indicates that one of your priorities is making up-front cuts in taxes for alternative minimum tax relief that ultimately would be paid for without increasing the budget deficit.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities says, "Some claim that the budget plan of the conferees would constitute 'the largest tax increase in history.' This claim is inaccurate. This year's budget plan does not include a tax increase. It actually calls for a \$340 billion reduction in revenues."

The problem that our friends on the Republican side have is that these tax cuts are for the middle class, not just for their friends in the upper 1 percent bracket. These tax cuts address the marriage penalty, address the 10 percent tax bracket, address the child tax credit. The middle class and those who aspire to it benefit from this budget.

This is a fiscally sound budget, and for that we are all in Mr. SPRATT's debt. This budget has to be balanced in terms of its spending and its priorities, and, indeed, it is a statement of our values.

I would like to see anyone in this room who supports veterans say they cannot support the budget provisions in this legislation. In this bill, for our veterans it provides an additional \$3.7 billion for veterans health care and services, which is why this budget has the strong support of major veterans groups.

When it comes to energy, an issue of major concern to households across America, this budget provides \$7.7 billion for renewable energy, energy efficiency and other energy initiatives, which is \$2.7 billion more than just last year.

In innovation, let's stop having these stale debates about trade or no trade. Let's educate, innovate, compete and prevail in the global marketplace. This budget provides nearly \$2 billion to fully accommodate the commitments made in the America COMPETES Act, which was voted on by an overwhelming number of Republicans to give us a huge vote in the Congress and signed by the President. This is to spur innovation and invest in basic scientific innovation.

Again, by setting the right priorities and making tough choices, our budget also cuts taxes again for the middle class and those aspiring to it and protects 20 million households from the alternative minimum tax.

In any year, creating a budget is a difficult challenge. In an election year, it is even more challenging, because of all of the competing priorities that

want to be in the budget. But this year we have a budget that is in balance in terms of its values and is in balance in terms of the track that it puts us on.

Thank you, Mr. SPRATT, for putting us on track, with no deficit, for the budget to be in balance by 2012. It is fully compliant with pay-as-you-go rules. It is a budget, again, of the statement of our values, fiscally responsible, pay-as-you-go. It has tremendous merit, and it should have the support of every person in this body.

I urge a "yes" vote on the budget.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disappointed that the FY 2009 budget resolution conference report represents another missed opportunity to address the financial crisis facing our nation. Focusing on these economic challenges, reining in entitlement spending, and curbing Congress's appetite for autopilot spending will take strong bipartisan commitment from both sides of the aisle. Our "long-term" spending crisis has arrived, and our children and grandchildren will bear the burden if Congress does not act.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who was at the heart of the German resistance against Nazism, said, "The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world it leaves to its children."

This Congress is leaving the next generation saddled with \$54 trillion in unfunded liabilities and \$9 trillion in debt, \$1 trillion of which is held by the Chinese. They also face potential loss of our country's triple-A bond rating—as early as 2012, according to Standard & Poor's, or by 2018, according to Moody's Investors Service. This is an economic issue, but also a moral and generational issue.

Representative JIM COOPER and I have been working together with over 100 cosponsors on a solution that would put everything—entitlements and tax policy—on the table in order to turn things around. The Cooper-Wolf SAFE Act would create a bipartisan entitlement review commission, culminating in a required up or down vote by Congress on a legislative proposal born from the commission's work. Mandating action is what makes the SAFE Commission unique.

We had the opportunity in this year's budget process to take the initial steps to get our financial house in order. But again this budget cycle, Congress is choosing to look the other way. I am hopeful that my colleagues will recognize that the budget resolution makes little progress on this pressing issue and join our efforts with the SAFE Commission.

When educating his colleagues in the British Parliament about the horrors of the slave trade in 1789, William Wilberforce said, "Having heard all this you may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say that you did not know."

Not one member of the 110th Congress can say they don't know about the category 5 storm off our shores, which former Comptroller General David Walker says could result in a "tsunami of spending and debt that could swamp our ship of state."

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of 2009 Budget Conference Report. I know many Members here today shared with me the opinion that the President's proposed budget was "dead on arrival." This conference agreement upholds that opinion and goes a step further by rejecting many of the proposed

cuts the President suggested in February including his proposal to gut billions of dollars from Medicare and Medicaid.

For the last two years the House has held true to its commitment to American families by increasing funding for domestic priorities such as energy assistance program, state and local law enforcement programs, education, among many others. And while it might be hard for this administration to grasp, this Congress has proposed increases in funding for domestic priorities without increasing our deficit. In fact, this conference agreement will balance the budget by 2012 and provide a surplus of \$22 billion in 2012 and \$10 billion in 2013.

What I am most pleased about is the commitment this conference agreement makes to areas that are of the most importance to me—Medicare, Medicaid, education, job-training and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, among many others.

Our veterans, many of whom have served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, will benefit from this budget through a \$3.7 billion increase in funding. This is a sharp contrast from what President Bush originally proposed—\$18 billion in new fees over five years. These men and women have served our country honorably and with dedication and under no circumstances do they deserve to come home to a fee from our government.

This budget agreement also strives to address rising energy costs. Just this month gas in Romulus, Michigan, located in the 15th District, hit \$4 gallon. The ever rising cost of fuel in our country is becoming more and more unmanageable for our families. This budget agreement increases funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives, while also providing full funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program which has helped numerous families heat their homes through the winter and cool their homes during the summer. Without a doubt this does not solve our energy problems, however, it does help families whose pocketbooks are already stretched thin.

More importantly, this conference report will provide increased funding that will help prepare our workers to compete in the global marketplace. The America COMPETES Act, which I strongly supported, created a commitment to increase training and funding for math and science education and research. This legislation upholds that commitment. It also increases funding for education that will help to address the rising costs of college tuition and the rigorous standards of No Child Left Behind. A successful workforce depends on access to quality education and this legislation will help our constituents with that.

The Democratic budget provides funding that is crucial for job creation. As we have seen here at home, our economy is heading towards a recession. From 2001–2006 alone, Michigan lost 235,000 jobs, many of them high-paying manufacturing jobs. With the rising unemployment rate, it is clear that we need to invest in our workers and new industries that would promote job creation here at home.

I am again proud to say that this budget proposal will follow through on our commitment to expand children's health insurance coverage by providing a \$50 billion increase to the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) so that we can provide healthcare to millions more children who otherwise would go

uninsured. As we all witnessed last year, the President vetoed legislation expanding SCHIP on two occasions. In my home state of Michigan we have seen the number of uninsured increase to one million Michigan residents. Rather than making healthcare coverage less accessible, Congress must be doing everything it can to ensure that every individual who wants healthcare coverage has the means to get it.

The Democratic budget also rejects the proposed \$500 billion in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid proposed by the President. I have long said that this administration neglects our families and his proposal to cut funding from two of our most important healthcare programs is ill-advised. This Congress will not stand for it and this budget will not stand for it.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the budget process is never easy; however, I stand in support of today's conference report with great pleasure. Not only am I pleased that this is the last budget that this Congress will work on with this administration, but I am also pleased that once again Congress has shown that it will not rubberstamp the priorities of this administration.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in support of the S. Con. Res. 70, the conference report to the FY 2009 Budget.

Every day, new reports suggest our economy is slowing. It is imperative that the Congress help Americans during these tough economic times. I am supportive of the Democratic budget because it will expand health care for needy Americans, provide tax relief for the middle class, strengthen safety net programs, and reject the President's draconian funding cuts. In effect, S. Con. Res 70 will lead America in a new direction.

The Bush budget slashes a half trillion dollars from Medicare and Medicaid over the next decade. The Democratic budget rejects the President's proposed cuts to health care, and instead provides program improvements to State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Last year, the President twice vetoed legislation that would have expanded this essential program. S. Con. Res. 70 will provide \$50 billion for SCHIP, which significantly reduces the number of uninsured children. The Democratic budget further helps Americans with the skyrocketing cost of health care by investments in health information technology and research grants in medical technology.

The Democratic budget provides tax breaks for low- and middle-income families, including an extension of the child tax credit, marriage penalty relief, extension of the 10% individual income tax bracket and an extension of the deduction for state and local sales taxes. S. Con. Res. 70 will also stop the Alternative Minimum Tax from raising taxes on more than 20 million middle-class tax payers.

In this era of globalization, it is crucial that we give our youth the best possible education without burdening them with insurmountable debt. The Bush budget would eliminate important educational programs such as the Thurgood Marshall Legal education, Perkins Loans Cancellations, Mental Health Integration and Reading is Fundamental. In contrast, the Democratic budget provides significant increases to vital programs in education, job training, and social service programs.

Mr. Speaker, my home state of Michigan is facing serious economic challenges, in part

due to the President's failed policies. The Democratic budget will offer working families a chance at the American dream. I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, a budget is a moral document that demonstrates our values and priorities. I want to congratulate Chairman SPRATT for again bringing forth a budget that represents values of which we can be proud. This budget would make real investments in education, hometown security, veterans' programs, healthcare, and research and development while bringing the budget back to surplus by 2012.

I am pleased that this Fiscal Year 2009 budget continues to follow the pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) principle that the House restored at the start of the 110th Congress. This ensures that every new dollar of spending is offset and will not worsen the deficit. Although the budget resolution does not set the taxes or appropriation money, it does lay out the plan for the coming years to spend money and to raise revenues.

The budget would require the Ways and Means Committee to find the savings required to prevent millions of new Americans from having to pay the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT), which has slowly morphed into a middle-class tax hike. More families in Central New Jersey are affected by the AMT than anywhere else in the country. Last year, Congress prevented nearly 23 million Americans, including more than 88,000 in the 12th Congressional District, from paying the AMT in 2008. Without action on this issue even more Americans would be affected by the AMT in the future.

With the price of oil now over \$130 a barrel, this budget would make a significant investment in our Nation's energy future by providing \$7.7 billion for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other energy programs. This is \$2.8 billion—or 55 percent—more than the Fiscal Year 2008 budget. In doing so, the budget would reject the President's budget cuts to energy efficiency and renewable energy programs, and instead invest \$2 billion in new programs to create "green collar jobs."

Mr. Speaker, this budget honors our commitment to our Nation's children by investing in education. The budget would provide \$8.4 billion above the President's request—new funding that could support vital programs like Head Start, special education, school improvement programs, and Title 1. The budget also would help make college more affordable and accessible for students in New Jersey and throughout the country by increasing funding that could support Pell grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and programs that broaden access to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Facing difficult and uncertain economic times, this budget would invest in job creation and job training. In addition to investing in programs to create "green collar jobs," we reject the President's cuts to Community Development Block Grants and his proposal to eliminate four job training programs. We also look to a long-term economic growth strategy, one that invests in science and research and development. This budget would support our Innovation Agenda by increasing funding for the America COMPETES Act, which authorized robust funding for research at the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy's Office of Science.

Our budget also addresses the fact that our Nation has more Americans than ever living without health insurance, including over nine million children. We would include funding to provide up to \$50 billion for children's health insurance. This would help insure millions of children. Likewise, our budget recognizes the importance of Medicaid and Medicare and would reject the President's harmful proposal to cut Medicaid by \$94 billion and Medicare by \$479 billion over ten years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of this budget's commitment to making America more safe and secure. Notably, we would provide additional funding to implement the 9/11 commission recommendations, including required 100 percent screening for shipping and air cargo. We would also place a greater emphasis on funding nuclear nonproliferation programs, one of the most severe threats to our security.

Additionally, we would restore funding for vital first responder programs, including the State Homeland Security Grant Program (cut \$705 million), Firefighter Assistance Grants (cut \$463 million), Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (eliminated all formula funding), and COPS (cut \$599 million).

This budget continues our commitment to fully fund veterans' health care by providing \$48.2 billion for 2009, which is \$4.9 billion (11.4 percent) more than the 2008 level. In fact, it would provide \$3.3 billion more than the President's budget for 2009 and \$39 billion more over five years. Consistent with past practice, the President's budget actually cuts funding after the first year. This budget also would allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to treat 5.8 million patients in 2009, including an estimated 333,275 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, many of whom suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, or blast-related injuries. Additionally, the budget rejects the health care fee increases imposed by the President's budget, which total \$2.3 billion over five years, including a new enrollment fee and pharmaceutical co-payment increases. Finally, this budget increases funding to speed disability claims processing, so that VA can continue to reduce its backlog.

I would like to recognize the budget's impact on voting reform. Implementing a nationwide requirement for independently auditable, and audited, vote counts is a priority of mine. As such, I was deeply disappointed that the President's budget made no request for funding under Title II of the Help America Vote Act. Approximately \$560 million of the funding authorized under that Title remains unappropriated, and jurisdictions across the country could use that funding to improve the accuracy, integrity and security of their voting systems, as well as improve the administration of elections generally. Additionally, I was disappointed to see that the President requested only half of what remains authorized to fund disability access grants to ensure polling place accessibility. As we continue to debate the budget, we should address these budget shortfalls.

Mr. Speaker, this budget reflects values for which we can be proud. We reject cuts to important healthcare, education, veterans, and national security programs while maintaining our commitment to fiscal responsibility. By adopting this budget and supporting the designated funding levels throughout the appropriations process, we would be investing in priorities important to our future.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 70, the Fiscal Year 2009 budget resolution.

I want to commend Chairman SPRATT, Ranking Member RYAN, as well as Senators CONRAD and GREGG, for their outstanding work in fashioning a fiscally responsible budget that will improve our Nation's flagging economy and address vital funding priorities.

Many people in Georgia and across the Nation are struggling in these difficult times.

They are struggling with skyrocketing energy costs, especially the high gasoline prices. In some parts of the Georgia's Second Congressional District, the price of a gallon of gas is over four dollars. It is having a ripple effect in many if not all sectors of the economy.

They also are struggling with the rising cost of health care and education. It is especially troubling to me why programs which help low- and middle-income Americans—especially veterans—afford medical care and a college education have been placed on the chopping block by our President over the last 7 years.

They are struggling with the weakening housing market. As many as two million Americans may see their mortgage rates increase in the next two years, with many of them losing their homes as a result of bad lending practices. Tens of millions of homeowners could see the value of their homes—their primary investment—drop in value as well.

America needs to put its fiscal house in order if it wants to retain its competitive edge and remain strong into the future.

I am pleased that the Fiscal Year 2009 budget resolution rejects the President's harmful discretionary spending cuts and makes important investments in veterans' health care, Medicare and Medicaid, affordable housing, education initiatives, our Nation's transportation infrastructure, as well as renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.

As a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, I am especially glad that the budget resolution brings the budget into balance by 2012 and fully complies with the PAYGO rule. It is difficult to believe that over the last 7 years we have gone from a \$5.6 trillion surplus to a \$3.2 trillion deficit. Our gross Federal debt is approaching \$10 trillion dollars—the highest it has ever been in the Nation's history. The amount of this debt that is held by other countries such as China, Japan, and the OPEC nations also has more than doubled since the Bush administration took office in January 2001.

The budget resolution demonstrates that it is possible to fund vital programs, provide middle-income tax relief, eliminate the deficit over the next 5 years, pay down the national debt, and promote economic growth—all in a fiscally responsible manner. I strongly support this conference agreement, and I urge my colleagues to approve it.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of the 2009 Budget Resolution. This legislation strongly reflects the values of Oregonians and Americans across our country and I urge my colleagues to pass the bill.

Today I am especially proud to be a member of the Budget Committee. It is worth noting that this is the first budget passed in an election year since 1998. The new Democratic majority has shown that they are committed to passing a budget despite an uncooperative

President. Today's budget agreement is a balanced budget with balanced priorities. We have rejected the President's misguided cuts to programs that serve as a safety net for our most vulnerable citizens; cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and the Community Development Block Grants.

This budget also recognizes that we must strengthen our middle class, a group that has suffered tremendously over the last 7 years. The budget provides fiscally responsible, deficit-neutral middle income tax relief; including keeping 20 million middle-income households from being hit by the Alternative Minimum Tax. It also extends the child tax credit, marriage penalty relief, and the 10 percent individual income tax bracket.

However, tax relief will do little without reinvestment in the priorities which strengthen our Nation and its citizens. Building our Nation must include a strong commitment to physical infrastructure, human capital, and innovation to keep us competitive globally. This budget does all these things. Recognizing that our current crumbling infrastructure is both structurally unsafe and hindering growth of our economy, the 2009 Budget includes an Infrastructure Reinvestment Reserve Fund to accommodate legislation that would provide robust Federal investment in projects such as rail, bridges, transit, ports, and more. The budget invests in our human capital both by creating a Higher Education Reserve Fund to make college more affordable for families, and by including funding for investment in renewable and energy efficient technologies to train workers in rapidly expanding "green collar" jobs. These investments, along with increased funding for the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health keep our Nation on the cutting edge and maintain our position as a global leader.

Today's budget reflects America's priorities in a fiscally responsible way and brings our budget back into balance by 2012, while abiding by pay-as-you go rules. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me today in supporting and passing the 2009 Budget Conference Agreement.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Conference Report to accompany S. Con. Res. 70, Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2009. This Budget Resolution strengthens our economy, restores fiscal discipline, and makes America safer.

A budget is a statement of our priorities. As the only former State schools chief serving in Congress, I am particularly pleased about this measure's provisions for education and innovation. This resolution rejects the President's proposed education cuts and instead provides greater investment in our Nation's schools, including the school construction bonds Chairman RANGEL and I have been working on for nearly a decade and increased Impact Aid for federally impacted local public schools.

As a Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am pleased that after 7 years of this administration failing to address fully some of our most pressing security needs, this budget provides the necessary resources to meet critical threats to the Nation. Specifically, this budget resolution rejects the President's proposed cuts to critical State and local law enforcement initiatives, including the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, Byrne Grants, and the COPS initiative. I strongly be-

lieve that homeland security starts with hometown security and I am pleased that this resolution rejects the President's misguided cuts.

I am also pleased to report that the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Resolution also makes our Nation's veterans a top priority. This budget is strongly supported by all the major veterans organizations because it provides \$3.3 billion more than the President's proposed budget for 2009 and \$39 billion more over 5 years. This budget continues our commitment to fully fund veterans' health care by providing an 11 percent increase from last year. This resolution also rejects health care fees and TRICARE enrollment fee increases and includes additional funding to speed the veterans' disability claims process. I am proud to represent thousands of veterans in North Carolina's Second Congressional District, and they deserve a budget that reflects the importance of the sacrifice they have made in serving our country.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have become increasingly concerned about the legacy of debt this administration is passing on to future generations. The \$5.6 trillion projected surplus that the administration inherited when it took office has been transformed into a \$3.2 trillion deficit. More than 80 cents of every dollar of new debt since 2001 is owed to foreign investors, including foreign governments. The high level of indebtedness to foreign investors heightens the American economy's exposure to potential instability or even from financial threat from unfriendly foreign governments, and places additional burdens on our children and grandchildren. It is a massively irresponsible tax on posterity.

However, this Budget Resolution is a positive step in restoring fiscal responsibility. Using realistic Congressional Budget Office estimates, this budget reaches balance in 2012, remains in balance in 2013, and posts smaller deficits than the President's proposed budget for the next 3 years. In addition, this budget continues the House of Representatives' emphasis on fiscal discipline by following the pay-as-you-go rule.

On behalf of North Carolina's children and working families, I support the Budget Conference Report for Fiscal Year 2009 and urge my colleagues to join me.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I support this conference report and urge its approval.

It deserves support for many reasons, beginning with its very existence—if it is approved we will have a final budget resolution in an election year for the first time for nearly a decade.

To govern is to choose, and one of the most basic responsibilities for those who want to be entrusted with positions of leadership is to make hard choices. This year, Chairman SPRATT and his Budget Act colleagues—and their counterparts in the Senate—have demonstrated real leadership and have reached agreement on a conference report that will enable us to make the choices needed to keep us on a responsible budgetary path.

This conference report will make it possible for us to provide tax relief for the middle class; make needed investments in energy, education, innovation, and infrastructure; and to properly support our troops and veterans. And it does so while maintaining fiscal responsibility, because it complies with a strong pay-as-you-go rule and makes it possible to return the budget to surplus in 2012 and 2013, without raising taxes.

One of its best features, in my opinion, is the way it encourages investment in new businesses and industries that focus on renewable energy, clean fuel technology, and energy efficiency. This will create jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign energy, strengthen the economy, and ultimately help with high energy costs for consumers.

It also rejects the President's budget cuts to energy programs by providing for significant increases in programs such as weatherization assistance, renewable energy, and energy efficiency; and includes a deficit-neutral reserve fund for energy legislation.

It also will enable us to continue working to retain and expand a skilled, technologically literate workforce and a strong research and development base. It provides for increasing funding for the Department of Education, and the National Institutes of Health. It also allows for more funding for science, space, and technology programs.

In addition, it sets the stage for much-needed investment in our nation's infrastructure, including more than President Bush has proposed for discretionary transportation accounts as well as full funding of Highway and Transit programs as authorized in the highway bill and funding for the Airport Improvement Program. All these are very important for Colorado, where the pressures of population growth have put severe strains on our highways, roads, and airports.

As a Member of the Armed Services Committee, I am particularly glad to be able to support the conference report because it will enable us to provide the funding we need for national defense and to address the most critical threats facing our nation. It places a higher priority than the President's budget on programs such as Cooperative Threat Reduction and other nuclear nonproliferation programs, and on improving the quality of life for our troops and their families.

The conference report also recognized the need for higher funding levels for homeland security while rejecting the President's proposed cuts in law enforcement, the COPS program, firefighters, and other first responders.

And it takes an important step to help veterans get the quality health care they need and deserve by providing \$3.3 billion more in discretionary funding for 2009 than the President's budget and \$39 billion more over five years for veterans programs.

Similarly, it strengthens the safety net for those families most in need, allowing for more funding for home energy assistance (LIHEAP), for children's health, for nutrition assistance for women, infants, and children and for the Social Services Block Grant. And it accommodates legislation to reauthorize and expand the trade adjustment assistance program and to improve unemployment insurance.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that despite claims to the contrary, the conference report does not include any tax increases—in fact, it supports significant tax relief, including continued marriage penalty relief, child tax credit, and the 10 percent bracket, and provides for an additional year of tax relief for more than 20 million Americans who would otherwise be subjected to the Alternative Minimum Tax.

Nonetheless, some of our colleagues will object that it does not provide for making permanent all the tax cuts enacted since the Bush Administration took office. I supported

some of those cuts—including the 10 percent tax bracket, the increased child credit, and relief from the marriage penalty—all of which should be made permanent, but this conference report is not the place for an all-or-nothing approach to the entire list. We will have time later to consider which of the rest of President Bush's tax cuts should be extended.

Consistent with that more responsible approach, this conference report allows for only a small increase in revenues above the levels assumed in the President's budget—an increase that can be accomplished through closing loopholes that enable some corporations and affluent taxpayers to take advantage of offshore tax havens, and by doing a better job of collecting taxes that are already due under current law.

Mr. Speaker, seven years of fiscal irresponsibility have left a legacy of deficits and debt that it will take time and work to overcome. But the sooner we begin, the sooner we will complete the job of restoring fiscal responsibility and reordering our national priorities—and now is the time to take an essential step forward by approving this conference report.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the conference report on the fiscal year (FY) 2009 Budget Resolution recognizes the importance of meeting our nation's infrastructure investment needs. Adequate investment in our transportation and other public infrastructure is critical to our nation's economic growth, our competitiveness in the world marketplace, and the quality of life in our communities. Despite the importance of these investments, many of our nation's infrastructure needs are going unmet.

Rather than addressing these unmet needs, the administration's FY 2009 budget proposed to cut virtually every infrastructure investment program within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, including highways, public transit, airports, Amtrak, wastewater treatment, and water resources development.

In contrast to the harmful cuts proposed by the administration, the conference report before us today fully funds highway, transit, and highway safety programs at the levels originally authorized in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The conference report rejects both the negative \$1 billion adjustment for Revenue Aligned Budget Authority, and the administration's proposal to cut highway and transit funding by an additional \$1 billion below the authorized levels, which would be detrimental to short-term economic stimulus efforts, as well as long-term economic growth.

For the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), the conference report rejects the \$765 million cut proposed by the administration, and instead provides the full amounts authorized in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881), as approved by the House last year. Specifically, the conference agreement allocates \$3.8 billion for AIP in FY 2008, increasing to \$3.9 billion in FY 2009, and to \$4.1 billion by FY 2011. This funding will allow the AIP program to keep pace with inflationary cost increases, and begin to address the investment gap in airport safety and capacity needs.

For Amtrak, the conference report rejects the \$525 million cut proposed by the adminis-

tration, which would essentially shut-down our national passenger rail system, and instead increases funding to meet the costs of Amtrak's new labor agreement, pursuant to Presidential Emergency Board 242.

For environmental infrastructure, the conference report rejects the administration's proposed cut to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program, the primary Federal program for funding wastewater infrastructure projects throughout the nation. A year ago, the President requested \$687.5 million in capitalization grants for CWSRFs for FY 2008. At that time, it was the lowest level requested by any administration since the creation of the program. For FY 2009, the administration requested a pitiful \$555 million, a 20 percent cut from last year's appropriation of \$689 million. The administration's proposal puts at risk the water quality gains achieved in recent decades, and the conference report correctly rejects this cut.

Finally, the conference report rejects the administration's proposal to cut funding for the Army Corps of Engineers by \$845 million in FY 2009, and instead provides increased funding to begin to address the growing backlog of water resources development projects, including those authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

I am also pleased that the conference report includes an Infrastructure Investment Reserve Fund, which provides the flexibility necessary to accommodate legislation to increase investment in our nation's infrastructure in FY 2009.

I look forward to working with Chairman SPRATT on continued improvements to our nation's infrastructure, and I urge my colleagues to support the conference report.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the FY2009 budget resolution. This budget includes nearly \$179 billion to fund the war.

Congress should not in good conscience vote to continue the Administration's illegal occupation of Iraq. The greatest tragedy of this war is the staggering loss of life, starting with the 4,091 brave men and women in U.S. military uniform. Tens of thousands more have been injured. Both of these numbers will continue to rise.

The U.S. policies in Iraq have failed as is evidenced by the fact that close to half of the population is struggling in extreme poverty. Estimates are that 1,000,000 innocent Iraqis have died as a result of the U.S. invasion. A reported 70 percent of Iraqis—nearly three quarters of the population—are without clean water; 80 percent lack effective sanitation; and 90 percent of hospitals lack essential surgical and medical supplies needed for Iraqi health and wellbeing.

Iraq's ability to meet the basic needs of its people is in shambles and our beloved troops remain in harms way. This body should act on the mandate of the American public given last November and bring our troops home now. Instead we continue to forfeit the public's trust with this unrelenting commitment to keep the war going when we have the power to end it. All it requires is a refusal to consider any legislation that contains or implies continued funding for this war.

The grand total for all defense related spending, including war funds and nuclear activities, is \$607.8 billion. This is 56% of all discretionary spending in the budget for FY09. In other words, this budget continues the same

failed policies that dedicate the majority of tax payer funds to defense spending while hard working Americans continue to struggle to afford basic necessities such as food, health care, homes and good schools for their kids.

The money in this budget that will go to fund war could be used to provide 39,912,404 people with healthcare; it could be used to offer an additional 1,053,429 affordable housing units; it could be used to provide 20,937,104 college level scholarships to the young minds of America. The budget should be reflective of America's priorities, but this budget falls far short of reflecting the priorities of the majority of Americans, so I oppose it.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank Chairman SPLATT for his leadership and for his hard work on this budget. I also want to thank all the staff, especially Tom Kahn and Scott Russell.

They have put together a very good budget that we should all support.

The Democratic budget restores vital funding to programs that will help American families during these difficult economic times.

The Democratic budget rejects the President's cuts to Medicare and Medicaid, rejects his cuts to food assistance and rejects his cuts to higher education.

Our budget will expand children's healthcare, increase support for first responders and for veterans, expand support for renewable energy initiatives and fund new green job training programs.

I'm also very pleased that the budget retains language that I and Republican WOOLSEY worked on with Chairman SPRATT to address the continuing waste fraud and abuse at the Department of Defense.

Again I want to thank and commend Chairman SPRATT for his work on this budget and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. 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 the conference report to accompany Senate Concurrent Resolution 70.

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

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order: ordering the previous question on House Resolution 1233; adopting