

good results rather than volume, saving tens of billions more.

Yes, we can fix Medicare. We don't need to destroy it to perpetuate tax cuts.

And then tax cuts create jobs. That's the reason we have to maintain the tax cuts, according to the Republicans. Tax cuts create jobs. Well, we're in the 11th year of the Bush tax cuts, the third year of the Obama tax cuts that supposedly are creating jobs. Well, where are the jobs? In fact, we just had a really good demonstration of this last week.

Last Friday, all taxes on airline tickets expired. Now, Republicans said, well, that will get passed on to the consumers. No. Most of the airlines are keeping the money. That's another issue. But did those tax cuts create jobs? No. Actually so far they've cost us 94,000 jobs—4,000 Federal employees. Now, they hate Federal employees, so that doesn't matter to them. But 90,000 private-sector construction jobs. Building of critical security and safety projects on airports all across the country has ground to a halt because they stopped us from continuing to collect that fee, that tax on people who use the system.

So tax cuts actually have destroyed 94,000 jobs. But they have profited a number of the airlines. One major airline, \$4 million extra a day because, guess what, they raised their ticket prices to capture that money. They didn't refund it. A couple like Alaska have refunded it, but most of the airlines, no.

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So we're putting a lie to a lot of their policies here, and the biggest core part of their policy is trickle-down economics. It failed in the Reagan years and it's failing again now.

Give billionaires, the job-creators, tax cuts, and they'll create jobs for us little people. Well, guess what; no. Maybe they hired another pool boy or someone else on the yacht. There are a few jobs there. They're now hiring private jets to fly their kids to camp in Maine. Yes, there's a job there, but not the jobs that 18 million American people need.

If we restore the taxes on airline tickets, we would put 90,000 construction workers, private sector workers back to work, and 4,000 government employees. And if we fully fund our transportation needs in this country, we could put another 2.7 to 3.5 million people to work.

No, they want to cut investment in transportation and infrastructure. Bridges are failing. They're falling down. The roads are potholed. Transit systems are decrepit, and the Republican answer is: Give people back their money and cut spending on those wasteful things like mass transit, bridges, and highways.

And, oh, by the way, under their plan, we lose another 600,000 private sector jobs on top of the 20 percent unemployment in construction.

It's time to get real around here. Put America back to work. If Americans were working, that would solve one-quarter of the deficit problem. Stop the tax cut mayhem.

OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, I have voted to raise the debt ceiling where the bill makes America's financial condition better, not worse.

In my judgment, both the Reid and Boehner plans fail to adequately address unsustainable deficits that threaten America with insolvency and bankruptcy. Both plans push the debt ceiling issue to 2012 or 2013, at which time a financially weaker America will confront a worse debt ceiling crisis. Both plans simply are not up to the seriousness of the financial challenges America faces.

Washington must put 2012 election considerations aside and put America's interests first and foremost, now. Congress and the White House can and must do better, now. America deserves better, now. And quite frankly, we have no choice but to do better, now.

Years of spending binges by the Federal Government have come home to roost. America's debt exceeds \$14 trillion. America has suffered 3 consecutive years of trillion-dollar deficits and faces trillion-dollar deficits into the foreseeable future. Annual deficits and accumulated debt force America to confront two major financial threats, both with one common cause: unsustainable budget deficits.

In the short term, America faces a debt ceiling crisis. If the debt ceiling is not raised, economic hardship will ensue, unemployment rates will rise, and America's gross domestic product will decline. Over a longer term, however, America faces a larger, more serious debt crisis. If trillion-dollar deficits continue to run rampant, America's insolvency and bankruptcy is certain, which risks America's national defense capabilities, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, NASA, and everything else that the government provides.

The question is not whether Congress will raise the debt ceiling; the question is when and how. I have already voted to raise the debt ceiling \$2.4 trillion as part of the Cut, Cap, and Balance bill. We're cutting FY12 expenditures by a modest \$111 billion in the context of a \$1.5 trillion deficit, capping Federal Government expenditures within historically justifiable 18 to 24 percent ranges, and passing a balanced budget constitutional amendment that protects future generations of Americans from the financial mess we now face.

I am prepared to vote to raise the debt ceiling again, so long as Congress substantively addresses our underlying deficit problem while protecting our

fragile economy and jobs market. As best I can with the limited and changing information available, I have examined both the Boehner and Reid plans. While they differ in many respects, they also share common concepts:

Neither plan purports to immediately raise taxes. Neither plan cuts spending in FY 2012 or 2013 by as much as 5 percent of this year's \$1.5 trillion deficit. Neither plan eliminates annual trillion-dollar deficits in the foreseeable future. Both plans raise the debt ceiling by at least \$1 trillion and as much as \$2.7 trillion. Both plans kick the can down the road and force America to revisit the debt ceiling crisis in either 2012 or 2013, at which time America's debt burden will be much higher and America will be that much weaker. Neither plan heeds Standard and Poor's or Moody's credit downgrade warnings. Neither plan cuts America's short- or long-term deficits enough to minimize the risk of downgrade in America's credit rating, a downgrade that will drive up America's debt service cost and cut funding for all other Federal Government programs. To make matters worse, if America's interest rates go up, State and local private interest rates are likely to also go up, thereby hurting Americans at all levels.

There is only one reliable solution that I can discern that protects America from both financial threats: a debt ceiling increase coupled with a balanced budget constitutional amendment that is phased in over a 5-year period of time.

In as much as constitutional amendments often take years to pass, time that America does not have, the first step must be to raise the debt ceiling when Congress passes a substantive balanced budget constitutional amendment. If the Senate and House concur, this can be done in as little as a week.

The second step, equally important, raises the rest of the debt ceiling when the States ratify the proposed balanced budget amendment, thus giving States a needed incentive to ratify the balanced budget amendment in less than 1 year.

This approach solves both financial threats.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I pray that Washington has the strength to do what it must before it is too late. America is on the verge of a downward spiral. We must act now, and we must act in substantive ways.

DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about our current fiscal situation and how we got to where we are today. The thought that America would default on its obligations is unimaginable.

This afternoon, we're going to begin a debate on Speaker BOEHNER's debt