

budget amendment to the Constitution has not been considered in the Congress for 15 years, despite overwhelming public support across this country.

Now, I'm for the version of the balanced budget amendment with various limits, but I believe it's vitally important that Republican leadership has chosen to bring the bipartisan version to the floor, to play it straight and give us a fighting chance to get those two-thirds votes necessary to amend the Constitution.

So I rise to announce my support for the Budget Control Act. I rise to express gratitude to Speaker BOEHNER and Leader CANTOR, who listened to colleagues like myself who thought we could improve the circumstances of this vote by accelerating and improving our choices for a balanced budget amendment. And, frankly, I also rise to commend all of my colleagues who have held out for a better deal. I want to say from my heart, this is better.

History is often made in unexpected ways and at unexpected times. I believe, with the consideration of the Budget Control Act on the floor today, we have an opportunity to make progress toward restoring fiscal discipline to Washington, D.C.; but I believe with consideration of the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States tomorrow, we have an opportunity to make history.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Budget Control Act on the floor today. But I also urge all of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats alike, to join us as we make a good faith effort to send a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States to the Senate and to the States. Let us put into the national charter that this national government, for this generation and the next, must again live within our means.

POVERTY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. I rise today as a founding cochair of the 39-Member Out of Poverty Caucus to talk about the millions of people living in poverty in America.

Nearly 45 million Americans live in poverty, and one in five children are growing up in poverty. The recession may be over for big corporations and the superrich, but for far too many Americans the recession is actually a depression.

Yesterday, the Out of Poverty Caucus held a press conference with organizations working on the front lines with low-income and poor people. We heard stories of more homelessness, long lines at food pantries, and the desperation felt by so many. Our Nation's unemployment rate remains at an unacceptably high 9.2 percent. Millions of Americans who have lost their jobs are

finding it harder and harder to find a new one. These new ranks of the long-term unemployed and their families are facing the stark reality of life in poverty for the first time.

The ongoing impact of the recession on struggling families and those facing or living in poverty simply must not be ignored. But instead of working to improve the lives of millions of Americans in poverty, the Republican Party continues their drive to plunge our Nation into default and our economy over the brink.

Speaker BOEHNER has unveiled yet another Republican plan that fails to do what America needs. His plan fails to end the threat of default. His plan targets the programs aimed at America's most vulnerable—our seniors, our children, and our low-income families—for more draconian cuts.

Trying to balance the budget on the backs of the poor is morally wrong.

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We need a balanced approach that balances targeted cuts with the revenue that we need. We must make sure that we can pay the benefits that we owe to our seniors, protect Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, and safeguard our most vulnerable communities.

Mr. Speaker, while the Nation's unemployment level remains unacceptably high, for some minority communities it was double digits even before the recession began. The unemployment rate for African Americans today is recorded at 16.2 percent and Latinos recorded at 11.2 percent. And what many of us have known for a long, long time now, African Americans and Latinos have lost 18 to 20 times their net worth, more so than white Americans due to structural inequalities where race is a factor. These numbers are horrific and speak to the larger crisis facing our Nation, the jobs crisis.

Let me share the story of one American who is looking for a job. Reverend David was laid off from his job as the successful director of a faith-based nonprofit that served the disadvantaged and worked to put people on a path to self-sufficiency. Now he is relying on the very safety net programs that he used to connect others to. He diligently job hunts week after week. David and his wife rely on unemployment benefits to make ends meet, and he is worried about what he will do when he reaches the 99-week limit of those benefits.

Reverend David is not alone. Forty-five million Americans worry about where they will sleep at night, if their children will eat, what will happen if they need medical attention, and when will they secure a living-wage job.

We must work together to help the millions of Americans who are still struggling to recover from the Great Recession.

As the first order of business, I call on the Speaker to bring my legislation, H.R. 589, to the floor for an up-or-down

vote immediately. It would add 14 weeks of retroactive emergency unemployment benefits to those long-term unemployed known as 99ers who continue to face uncertainty and hardships. Passing this extension will stimulate our economy, not to mention that it is our moral responsibility to help those in need.

But people really want to work. Instead of creating jobs, Republicans are holding our economy hostage, putting forth policies that will create more unemployment and more job loss. Instead of quickly passing a clean debt ceiling vote, the Republicans are marching lockstep to create this default.

Instead of supporting the vital human needs programs that will protect our most vulnerable, Republicans are trying to balance the budget on the backs of the poor while maintaining these tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires and Big Oil.

Mr. Speaker, there is no more time for these Republican games. The American people expect us to put partisanship aside to protect our economy and create jobs. The American Dream has been a nightmare for the 45 million living in poverty, and is turning quickly into a nightmare for millions who are falling from middle income into the ranks of the poor.

The bill put forth today by Republicans guarantees this tragic outcome.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2608. An act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes.

LEGACY OF FREEDOM

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

Mr. NUNNELEE. Mr. Speaker, last week the remains of Corporal Judge C. Hellums of Paris, Mississippi, were returned from the Parroy Forest near Luneville, France, and given a proper burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

In the fall of 1944, following the Normandy invasion, Corporal Hellums' unit, the 773rd Tank Battalion, was fighting its way east through France toward the German border. The M-10 tank destroyer to which he was assigned was attacked. Two men survived with serious injuries, but Corporal Hellums, along with Private First Class Lawrence N. Harris of Elkins, West Virginia, and Private Donald D. Owens of Cleveland, Ohio, were killed in the attack. All evidence at the time indicated that their remains had been destroyed.