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EVE OF THE BUDGET DEBATE

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. The House is about to consider a budget in a dangerous hour in the life of our country. Last year, we barreled past several urgent warning signals—the loss of our Nation's AAA credit rating; the size of the national debt surpassing our entire economy; and a record third straight year of trillion-dollar-plus annual deficits. I believe this is one of the last opportunities to avert a financial crisis unprecedented in our Nation's experience and on a magnitude far greater than that which is now destroying Greece.

The blueprint passed by the House Budget Committee last week is a disappointment to those who believe that the budget can and should be balanced much sooner, and I certainly don't entirely disassociate myself from those sentiments. But the immediate issue before us, as Lincoln put it, "is not 'can any of us imagine better?' but, 'can we all do better?'"

The approaching financial crisis demands first and foremost that we turn this country away from the fiscal precipice and place it back on a course to solvency. This budget does so. Indeed, it improves upon last year's House budget that died in the Senate, which, according to Standard & Poor's, would have preserved the AAA credit rating of the United States Government. This budget, I believe, will restore it.

It is, of course, a long road back, balancing by the late 2030s and ultimately paying off the entire debt by the mid 2050s. But even relying on the static scoring of the CBO which presents a worst-case scenario, it still means that my children, who are now in college, will be able to retire into a prosperous and entirely debt-free America.

True, there's a great deal in it for conservatives not to like, but that is not the issue. The issue is will this Congress and, ultimately, this government change its fiscal trajectory enough to avert the sovereign debt crisis that fiscal experts across the spectrum warn us is just a few years dead ahead.

This is not some moonless night on the Atlantic. We can see this danger right ahead of us, and we can see that it is big enough to sink this great ship of state. We have precious little time remaining to avert it. This budget will turn us just enough to avoid that calamity—and I fear we won't have many more opportunities to do so.

The alternative is unthinkable. The President's budget would subject our Nation to one of the biggest tax increases in its history, striking especially hard at the small businesses that we're depending upon to create two-thirds of the new jobs that Americans desperately need. And even so, by its

own numbers, it never balances and, thus, courts the fiscal collapse of our Nation.

Hemmingway asked, "How do you go bankrupt?"

"Two ways," he said. "Gradually, then suddenly."

For the last decade, this Nation has been going bankrupt gradually. History warns us that if we don't change course very soon, we will cease going bankrupt gradually and start going bankrupt quite suddenly. It may happen through a chain reaction set off by a seemingly minor international incident. It may happen one day when a routine bond auction sours. Interest rates will start rising rapidly. Financial panics will begin. The government will have to respond by increasingly frantic efforts to maintain a stream of capital, either through massive policy dislocations or catastrophic inflation.

The approach of great cataclysms that are so obvious to historians in retrospect are often unheeded by contemporaries at the time. Just 30 days before the outbreak of World War II, Neville Chamberlain recessed Parliament to go on extended holiday. Let that not be how history remembers this Congress. This budget is not perfect, but it is adequate to spare our country from the convulsions of Greece.

I wholeheartedly support this budget for that reason, and I expect that we'll have the overwhelming support of this House. I can only hope that the Senate this time will put aside its own differences and heed Lincoln's plea that:

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise—with the occasion. We must disenthral ourselves, and then we will save our country.

CYCLING: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO TRANSPORTATION

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Often, here on Capitol Hill, issues large and small get sort of lost in the fog, but it was a pleasure last week to watch some moments of clarity as hundreds of bicycle advocates flooded Capitol Hill delivering a simple, concise, powerful message that makes a difference in terms of how people live in their communities large and small. They were delivering a message that Congress ought to deal meaningfully, in a comprehensive fashion, with the transportation legislation that has been stalled. They were delivering a message of: Don't attack cycling. Embrace it as part of a comprehensive approach to transportation. It is, after all, the most efficient form of urban transportation ever designed.

Burning calories instead of fossil fuel doesn't just save you money and make you feel better, it's good for our communities. It's the cheapest, fastest way to reduce congestion and air pollution. A very simple illustration is you can

He was a leader and role model as the head football coach at Miami of Ohio, Northwestern, and the University of Notre Dame, which is located in the congressional district that I'm honored to represent. Mr. Parseghian's impressive record at Notre Dame included two consensus national championships and three bowl victories, accomplishments that resulted in his induction into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1980 as a recognition of his tremendous achievements. More important, though, was his personal leadership and example, and the character he instilled in the players that he coached. To Ara Parseghian, it was a lot more important that his players be good citizens than good football players, although he made sure they were very good football players as well.

What many Americans may not know is that Mr. Parseghian's most important work began after his football career, when he devoted his life to finding a cure for Niemann-Pick type C disease and multiple sclerosis. In 1994, the Parseghian family learned that three of Ara and Katie's youngest grandchildren were diagnosed with Niemann-Pick type C. This tragic disease is a degenerative neurological disorder afflicting thousands of children and is ultimately fatal.

Rather than be overwhelmed by their grief, Mr. Parseghian and his family began a fight to find a cure for this disease. Together, they founded the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation in 1994. It was devoted to funding research and finding a cure for Niemann-Pick type C. In 1997, scientists funded by the Parseghian Foundation were able to isolate the gene responsible for causing Niemann-Pick type C and have since made tremendous strides towards finding a cure.

The Parseghian family lost Michael, Christa, and Maria to this terrible disease, but the family and Katie and Ara have never lost hope. Their efforts will end Niemann-Pick type C and help families all across the world.

Mr. Parseghian's commitment to medical research did not stop with the disease that took the lives of his grandchildren. Ara, whose sister, brother-in-law, and daughter have been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, has fought nonstop against the scourge of MS, which took away his beloved daughter Karen just last month.

While Ara Parseghian has accomplished much as a coach on the football field, his devotion to others will truly define the era of Ara. When I talk to my son about what it means to be a man and what it means to live a good life, I tell him about Coach Parseghian. He and Katie have epitomized devotion to family, faith, and country. May God bless Ara Parseghian, and may He keep the entire Parseghian family in the palm of His hand.