

to those who sell and service, to the people who operate, and, yes, the customers of America's fleet of trucks. Everybody benefits, and we end up with a highway trust fund that is more stable and predictable over time.

I sincerely hope that this is a provision that can find its way into law this year, maybe as early as the transportation conference committee, or in the elaborate dance that will surround the treatment of the expiring tax provisions later this year. Whatever the legislative vehicle, we ought to make the vehicles in America's fleet less expensive and more efficient.

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of National Teacher Day and to say thank you to the many who dedicate themselves to the education of our children. I suspect there's not a person in this body that can't think back to a teacher who made a significant difference in their lives.

I call attention, as well, to two particularly well-performing schools in my district. Just the other day, I had an opportunity to visit one of them, the Rose Tree Elementary School in Media. The other is the Coebourn Elementary School in Brookhaven. Both of those schools have been recognized because they have been named National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2011.

Yesterday, while visiting the Rose Tree Elementary School and talking with the children and the bright faces, the attention from the kids really riveted me because they were really listening. I spoke with the amazing educators, staff, and students at this Blue Ribbon ceremony.

Now, the Blue Ribbon is one of the most prestigious awards our Nation gives for educational excellence, and Rose Tree Elementary is certainly most deserving. The Rose Tree students have attained 100 percent proficiency in science for 3 consecutive years. I got a chance to visit some of the classrooms and to watch and to see how they engage the children, not just in the science but, once again, develop the creativity so that the kids were using the lessons that they learned in practical ways.

In 2010, the school was also ranked number one in Pennsylvania in writing. I want to focus on that as much too because I was impressed not just by the reading level, but the fact that the students were listening, comprehending, and then re-expressing themselves. The skills developed at that level are going to last a lifetime.

The school is led by Karen Daugherty, one of seven principals in the entire country to receive national recognition for her commitment to educating children by overcoming chal-

lenging circumstances. I commend Ms. Daugherty and all of the 2011 Terrel H. Bell Award recipients.

I encourage the communities of Brookhaven and Media to join me in recognition of their Blue Ribbon schools. And further, Mr. Speaker, I call on all Americans to take some time today to thank a teacher for making a difference in their lives.

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REPUBLICAN RECONCILIATION RUSE

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, America has always been a nation of diverse cultures, but when faced with disasters, we come together in recognition of our shared values. From World War II to 9/11 to Hurricane Katrina, Americans came together when needed.

That's why it's so sad to see House Republicans draft a budget reconciliation bill that carries dangerous implications for millions of Americans and will fundamentally erode our shared values.

Of course, this is nothing more than political theater because authorization for budget reconciliation has to pass both the House and Senate, which it hasn't. But that hasn't stopped the House Republican majority from trying to deem it to be so. Therefore, the Republican majority has directed six House committees to use this reconciliation ruse to find drastic and damaging investment cuts, not to reduce the deficit, mind you, but to prevent any cut in military spending which they originally agreed to and to give the richest 1 percent yet another big tax cut.

Last year, Congress agreed, in a bipartisan fashion, after the majority brought us to the brink of default, to cut \$2.1 trillion from Federal deficits, establishing automatic cuts designed to be universally painful to encourage us to reach an agreement on a long-term deficit reduction proposal that more equitably spreads the burden.

A bipartisan majority of the supercommittee, including every Senate Republican, did come up with just such a plan to put everything on the table—spending cuts, revenue increases, entitlement reform—but it needed a supermajority; and, sadly, every Republican House Member on that committee voted “no,” which leaves us where we are today: facing damaging automatic cuts to defense and nondefense spending.

But Republican reconciliation ruses won't stop the automatic cuts to the Nation's seniors and disadvantaged. It doubles down on the pain.

The Republican reconciliation ruse literally takes food out of the mouths of needy children and senior citizens. It eliminates social services block grants

providing assistance to States and localities across the Nation to serve millions of disadvantaged Americans. It ends the Meals on Wheels program for 1.7 million seniors. It guts the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps, that serves 46 million of our fellow Americans every month. Under their plan, 1.8 million people would lose the most basic of assistance. In addition, 300,000 low-income children lose their free and reduced lunches at school.

This reconciliation ruse once again singles out Federal employees for ever more sacrifices. Federal workers already have contributed \$60 billion to deficit reduction through a 2-year pay freeze. They've contributed another \$15 billion through recent changes to their retirement system. The Ryan budget demands an additional 3-year pay freeze. The new proposal goes further and cuts paychecks by 5 percent to shift more of the burden to employees. This draconian measure would add another \$79.8 billion in the sacrifice put on the backs of Federal workers, more than double the \$75 billion they've already made.

The reconciliation ruse actually will increase health care costs for millions of American families. It eliminates tax credits that help lower-income families maintain affordable health insurance premiums. In fact, 350,000 people will actually lose their health insurance with their plan.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the one glaring omission in the Republican reconciliation ruse is, not surprisingly, revenue. While millions of lower- and middle-income families are being forced to sacrifice, what do Republicans ask of the wealthiest 1 percent? Nothing.

Over the last 4 years, oil and gas companies made a profit of \$290 billion. Private companies should make profits, and it's a good thing. But in that same time frame, they lobbied to keep their \$16 billion in tax breaks, representing less than 6 percent of their profits, but it sure would make sure a lot of hungry kids go to bed with full bellies at night.

The Ryan budget actually seeks to cut the top income tax bracket from 35 percent to 25 percent. Who pays the current top tax bracket? Those making more than \$388,000 each year. Not only are they not asked to join in any of the shared sacrifice, but they're actually offered a new Christmas present early, just for them.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to call the Republican budget plan what it is: an outright attack on American values. How else do you explain shifting the burden from partisan priorities entirely to the middle class and those who are less fortunate? That's never been an American value.

I urge my colleagues to reject this ruse, to reject the reconciliation process, and to work toward a comprehensive and responsible and bipartisan deficit agreement reflective of our Nation's values.