

of gun violence, yet it's predicted that about 373,000 adults and children who need mental health services won't find them available.

Military readiness will be affected. We got some data on every State. In my State of Illinois, approximately 14,000 civil Department of Defense employees are going to be furloughed under the sequester; and that means reducing the gross pay that comes to them, citizens of Illinois, by \$83.5 million. That's money that they won't be able to spend in our economy. Base operation funding for Army bases will be cut about \$19 million in Illinois, and funding for Air Force operations will be cut by about \$7 million. These are real cuts in military readiness.

Vaccines for children. Does anybody really think that the way to save on our budget is to cut the availability of vaccines for little children? And does anybody really think that the burden of cutting the deficit should be on the backs of senior citizens? The median income for people over 65 years old is \$22,000 a year. The average Social Security benefit is \$15,000 a year and provides most of the income for most of the seniors in this country.

Does anybody think there isn't one tax loophole that can be closed, not one more penny that can come from huge and profitable corporations that often pay no taxes? We have some of those huge corporations paying no taxes, outsourcing jobs, setting up their corporate headquarters in post office boxes in the Cayman Islands. Some of them are getting, actually, tax breaks, refunds from the government.

Multimillionaires and billionaires can't pay a penny more, but we can cut the National Institutes of Health and research for finding cancer cures; that new drug approvals ought to be cut; that we ought to cut veterans services; that people ought to just wait longer at airports. We should even shut down some airports because we're going to have to furlough the air traffic controllers; that we should cut Meals on Wheels for senior citizens, that that's really the preferable way to go.

I have to tell you this is just a crazy way to do business in the United States Congress, particularly since we have sensible alternatives. We have not seen one bill from the Republican side of the aisle that says, Here's our idea instead of these meat-ax cuts that are going to hurt people, and the Democrats have several bills we should be hearing on this floor.

#### SEQUESTER CUTS

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, before I speak about the sequester, I want to salute my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for his earlier remarks about Afghanistan. I agree with him that we need to stop trying to rebuild

the world and start putting our own country and our own people first once again. We have spent several trillion dollars over the past decade on very unnecessary wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we should have brought our troops home many years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak about the sequester. WMAL radio reported this morning that the administration had put out in a list of cuts which the sequestration would require that the National Drug Intelligence Center in Pennsylvania would be cut by \$2 million. The only problem is that this center no longer even exists. It was closed in June of last year.

The scare tactics about the sequester seem to grow more ridiculous, more exaggerated every day. The Washington Examiner wrote, in its lead editorial yesterday, that:

It is known as the Washington Monument Strategy. Turf-protecting government executives and bureaucrats go out of their way to make spending cuts as painful as possible for as many people as possible. By applying any cuts to the very things the public benefits from most, bureaucratic infighters believe they can convince the public that every penny that goes into government is necessary.

In other words, the administration has apparently told all the Departments and Agencies to say that their most popular programs will be drastically cut, instead of reducing spending on their least popular, least necessary, most wasteful programs.

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The sequester has already been reduced from \$109 billion to \$85 billion. This sequester is a cut of slightly over 2 percent from our almost \$4 trillion budget. Many people seem to have already forgotten that the fiscal cliff deal raised taxes by \$620 billion over the next 10 years on upper-income people. Then there is also the \$93 billion in higher payroll taxes on all workers this year. That hike is already in effect. Then there are the taxes already coming in to pay for ObamaCare.

Columnist Mark Tapscott wrote yesterday:

The sequestration scares are the ultimate example of Washington wink-wink. Politicos from both parties warn of imminent disaster if the Federal budget is "cut," even though they know government spending will be higher in 2013 even if the sequestration "cuts" are implemented. Put another way, the sequestration scares are lies, pure and simple. Not just bunk, not just distortions or misstatements, but lies. And every professional politician in town—Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Socialist, Independent—knows it.

Our national debt is now at a mind-boggling \$16.5 trillion. It will go to over \$25 trillion in the next 10 years under optimistic scenarios. The Congressional Budget Office a few days ago put out a report that said the interest on our national debt—just the interest—was going to go from \$224 billion this fiscal year to an astounding \$857 billion in 10 years. If we allow that to happen, Mr. Speaker, we will then not be able

to pay for anything other than Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and interest on the debt.

The sequester we are talking about now is minuscule when compared to our present debt and our future pension liabilities. Our choice is simple: we can cut now or crash in the very near future.

#### SEQUESTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. The gentleman from Tennessee who just spoke said that sequestration is a game of scare tactics. Apparently, he hasn't looked at the statistics from his district in Tennessee. Let me tell you, sequestration is not only going to affect the people of my district, but it's going to affect the people of his district and his State as well.

Sequestration is very troubling, Mr. Speaker. Sensible people all across America are beginning to see the impact that sequestration will have on their families. We are hearing from Governors every day, both Democrat and Republican. We cannot wait any longer. We have delayed this for far too long. The consequences of an unbalanced budget are very, very clear.

My home State of North Carolina already has one of the highest rates of unemployment at 9 percent; and these cuts, Mr. Speaker, to education, health care, low-income families, and military readiness around my State and country will be disastrous to so many.

Our children are our most valuable asset, and ensuring they earn a quality education is the best investment we can make in our future. Unfortunately, the sequester threatens many children's chances at obtaining a quality education.

The impacts of sequester in my State of North Carolina are huge. Teachers and schools in North Carolina will lose more than \$25 million in funding for primary and secondary education, putting 350 teachers and teacher aide jobs at risk, resulting in 40,000 fewer students receiving services they need to help them do well in school. Programs like Head Start and Early Head Start—services that residents in my district so desperately need—will be eliminated for 1,500 children, reducing access to critical early education programs that teach the skills necessary to enter kindergarten on an equal footing.

If America, Mr. Speaker, is to continue to be a global leader, we must out-compete other nations in the classroom by improving the caliber of teachers, promoting school grants, increasing education standards, and utilizing up-to-date technology to prepare students for the higher education and jobs of the future. However, educational advances will only result if our schools are properly funded. Don't cut education.