

**Ryan Prepared Opening Statement
HBC Budget Markup – March 25, 2009**

- I want to start by noting that there has been more interest in the Federal budget over the past few weeks than I've *ever* seen.
- And people are right to be interested. This is no ordinary time, and the budget President Obama submitted to this Congress is no ordinary budget.
- With this budget, the President and the Democratic Majority are attempting – very quickly, and rather openly – nothing less than the third and final great wave of government expansion: building on the New Deal and the Great Society.
- While most Americans – and many of us here – have accepted and even appreciate some of these programs, they already present an enormous unfunded fiscal liability for our nation.
- This budget is not the “progressive” enterprise its proponents would suggest.
- In fact, its driving philosophy is to look *backward* – and attempt to solve this century's challenges with last century's strategies. Foremost among these is the notion that the answer to America's every problem, and every challenge, can only be found here in Washington.
- Now to many, the promises of this budget sound appealing – who wouldn't be attracted to the promise of free health care...guaranteed college for everyone...and no need so great – or so small – that the Federal Government can't fulfill it for you?
- But there is a price to be paid for this kind of paternalism. The budget helps illustrate that price, showing the huge expansion in spending, taxes, and debt.

- This budget is essentially the Obama budget. The Chairman's mark only covers five years, and there is a proliferation of items in so-called "reserve funds."
- But pull that away, and this is still the Obama budget – with trillions in higher spending, tax increases, deficits and debt...and those are just the budget's *fiscal* consequences.
- What is most troubling about this plan is what it will do to the unique character of America and Americans.
- Our country is based on the principles of individual freedoms, self-reliance, and personal responsibility.
- We work to ensure individuals have equal opportunities to advance themselves, and that our government provides a safety net for those who cannot take care of themselves.
- In America, however, we set our own destinies, and we make our own choices – for ourselves, for our families, and with the paychecks we work so hard to bring home every month.
- *Americans* don't rely on health bureaucrats, industrial policy bureaucrats, education bureaucrats, housing bureaucrats, or energy bureaucrats to tell us what to do.
- But if we follow the path of this budget before us today, we are making a clear -- perhaps *irreversible* choice – and that is to trade much of our freedom in exchange for Washington taking over much of our lives.
- Because all the "benefits" of progressive government come *at the expense of* personal initiative, the vitality of local communities, and the creativity of the business sector.

- Now, let's take a look at some of the specific steps this budget proposes to move us down that path:
 - This budget puts us on a path of government-controlled health care, which represents about 17% of our economy.
 - This budget paves the way for a cap-and-trade system that gives greater control of the energy sector to the government.
 - This budget expands Federal control of education.
- Today, America is at a critical juncture in our history – brought about by a financial crisis and a deep recession that are hurting the American people.
- But instead of focusing on solving the problem, this budget exploits it to justify a huge expansion in government.
- Instead of addressing the looming insolvency of our entitlement programs, it simply adds to the explosion of red ink.
- In short, instead of simply righting the ship, this budget steers it in a radically different direction – straight into the tidal wave of spending and debt that is already building.
- As I noted at the start, if we accept this path, and this agenda comes to pass, it will mark this period in history as the moment we begin to give up on Jefferson's great American experiment, and the transition to the European model will begin in earnest.
- We can do better. We must do better. And I will do everything I can to ensure we will do better.