



April 8, 2011

Democratic Amendments to the Republican 2012 Budget Resolution

This week the House Budget Committee marked up the Republican budget resolution for fiscal year 2012, which was approved on a strict party line vote with no Democratic votes in support.

Democrats know we need to reduce the deficit, but reject the way the Republican budget resolution goes about doing so. The President's bipartisan Fiscal Commission showed that any responsible effort requires a balanced approach that addresses both spending and revenue. The Republican budget fails this simple test, slashing vital government services to the most vulnerable – Medicare for seniors, Medicaid for low-income families and disabled individuals, and food assistance for those in need – while providing more tax breaks to millionaires and big corporate special interests.

Committee Democrats offered 20 amendments seeking to reorient the budget's priorities – to prevent immediate jobs losses, to reduce the deficit in a balanced manner that addresses both spending and revenue, and to stop cuts to vital services such as health care, education, public safety, health research, food safety.

None of the Democratic amendments would have increased the deficit, and in fact, several would have reduced the deficit significantly. All of the amendments offset any new spending proposed for key priorities by reducing unproductive tax breaks, including subsidies for big oil companies, egregious tax earmarks such as tax deductions for corporate jets, loopholes in our international corporate tax system that encourage the shipping of American jobs and capital overseas, and additional tax cuts for millionaires.

Republicans rejected all of the amendments that would have increased the budget's funding level, choosing to protect special interest tax breaks instead.

Following is a description of the Democratic amendments.

Amendment to Reduce the Deficit by Ending Tax Cuts for Millionaires (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Yarmuth)

This amendment reduces the deficit by canceling tax cuts for millionaires after 2012. At a time of record deficits when many Americans are struggling to find jobs to support their families and meet their commitments, the budget's priorities must be to pay down the deficit and ensure that the very wealthiest Americans pay their fair share. A Yes vote means rejecting Republican proposals to slash taxes for millionaires, and applying the savings to deficit reduction. A No

vote means supporting the Republican proposals to slash taxes for millionaires – paid for by cutting health care coverage for millions of individuals by ending the Medicare guarantee for seniors and cutting Medicaid support for low-income families, and by raising taxes on working Americans with incomes below \$250,000.

This amendment was rejected, 23 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Stop Cuts to Seniors in Nursing Homes (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Schwartz)

This deficit-neutral amendment opposes the Republicans' plan to dismantle Medicaid and change it into a block grant that will not keep up with rising health costs, putting seniors and other vulnerable groups at risk of losing long-term care and other critical health benefits. The amendment provides \$771 billion to reject the resolution's Medicaid cuts, and offsets that cost by reducing wasteful tax breaks such as subsidies to big oil companies and egregious tax earmarks. A YES vote on this amendment means opposing Medicaid cuts that put seniors and other vulnerable groups at risk of losing long-term care and other critical health benefits. A NO vote means favoring tax cuts for the wealthiest members of our society at the expense of protecting access to long-term care and other critical health care services for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, low-income children and their families, and other vulnerable groups of people who rely on the health care safety net provided by Medicaid.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 14 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Protect Working Americans (Lead Sponsor: Rep. T. Ryan)

This amendment rejects Republican proposals that would raise taxes on working Americans with incomes under \$250,000. The amendment would not allow income taxes to be raised on any individual with adjusted gross income below \$200,000 or any married couple with adjusted gross income below \$250,000. A Yes vote means rejecting Republican proposals that would raise taxes on working Americans with incomes under \$250,000. A No vote means supporting proposals to fund tax cuts for millionaires by raising taxes on working Americans.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 15 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Protect Health Care for Seniors, Military Servicemembers and their Families, and Veterans (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Tonko)

This amendment opposes any proposals that would eliminate federal healthcare programs for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, military servicemembers and their families, and veterans, and that would replace these programs with vouchers or premium support for the purchase of private insurance. The Republican budget calls for transforming Medicare into a

premium support or voucher program, where seniors would purchase insurance through private markets with vouchers that would not keep pace with health care costs, forcing seniors to face higher premiums, eroding coverage, or both. A YES vote would protect health care coverage for senior citizens and persons with disabilities who rely on Medicare, for military servicemembers and their families who rely on TRICARE, and for veterans who rely on the VA health care system. A NO vote puts health care coverage for these populations at risk by refusing to disallow proposals that shift health care costs from the federal government to seniors and persons with disabilities, veterans, and military servicemembers and their families by transforming Medicare, TRICARE, and the VA health care system into a voucher or premium support for the purchase of private insurance.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 16 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to End Off-Shoring of U.S. Jobs with a “Make it in America” Agenda that Creates Jobs and Lifts Living Standards (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Doggett)

This amendment ends tax incentives for corporations that ship American jobs overseas and instead promotes a “Make it in America” agenda that invests in education, scientific research, and infrastructure while reducing the deficit. A Yes vote means protecting American jobs, investing for a stronger future, and reducing the deficit. A No vote means support for Republican tax proposals that will send American jobs and corporate profits overseas.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 16 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Stop Cuts to Elementary and Secondary Education and to Head Start (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Honda)

This deficit-neutral amendment stops the Republican budget from cutting elementary and secondary education and Head Start below the 2010 level by adding \$4.3 billion – the amount of the cut to these programs in H.R. 1 – to support key education services that bolster student achievement and support tens of thousands of teaching jobs. The amendment is fully paid for by ending unnecessary tax breaks for special interests, subsidies for big oil companies, egregious tax earmarks, or tax cuts for millionaires. A YES vote would block the Republican cuts to education, preserving hundreds of thousands of teaching jobs, helping to educate millions of elementary and secondary students, and maintaining Head Start services that help low-income children enter school ready to learn. A NO vote means choosing to protect tax breaks for special interests while laying off teachers and denying education services that America’s school children need to be ready to compete in today’s global workforce.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 16 Yes votes, with only minority support.

**Amendment to Stop Cuts to Research for Cures for Cancer, Stroke, Diabetes, Heart Disease, and other Illnesses at the National Institutes for Health
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Wasserman Schultz)**

The deficit-neutral amendment blocks all cuts to the life-saving research into the cures for cancer, stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and other illnesses that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is sponsoring. NIH research prolongs life, reduces disability, and strengthens the economy. It is the largest single source of biomedical research, not only in the United States but in the world. The amendment is fully paid for by ending unnecessary tax breaks for special interests, subsidies for big oil companies, egregious tax earmarks, or tax cuts for millionaires. A YES vote on this amendment means support for a sufficient level of funding to prevent cuts in research into cures for cancer, stroke, heart disease, and other illnesses. A NO vote puts this life-saving research in jeopardy so that millionaires and big oil companies get tax breaks.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 15 Yes votes, with only minority support.

**Amendment to Stop Cuts that Jeopardize Safety of Our Food Supply
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. McCollum)**

The deficit-neutral amendment ensures sufficient funding is available for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be able to carry out its responsibility to protect the safety of the nation's food supply. With this amendment, the resolution would assume a total of \$1.4 billion for food safety activities, consistent with the President's 2012 budget, providing the resources necessary to fulfill the mission of improving the safety of the American food supply. The funding is fully paid for by ending unnecessary special interest tax breaks that send jobs overseas, subsidize big oil companies, or provide tax cuts for millionaires. A YES vote means support for an appropriate funding level that will allow the FDA to carry out its mission of keeping the nation's food supply safe. A NO vote jeopardizes the public's safety from food-borne illnesses in favor of tax breaks for special interests and millionaires.

This amendment was rejected, 23 No votes to 13 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Stop Cuts to Police and Firefighters (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Pascrell)

The deficit-neutral amendment assumes funding no lower than \$298 million for the Community Oriented Policing Services hiring program and \$810 million for Firefighter Assistance Grants so that communities keep these vital first responders at the ready. The funding is offset by cutting special interest tax breaks, and so does not affect the deficit. A YES vote on this amendment will stop harmful cuts to police and firefighters. A NO vote means layoffs for thousands of our communities' first responders so that millionaires and big oil companies get tax breaks.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 15 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Stop Harmful Cuts to Veterans (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Bass)

This deficit-neutral amendment reverses the harmful cuts that Republicans are making in their budget to veterans. First, it adds \$75 million to restore funding that the Republican budget eliminates for supportive housing for homeless veterans. During 2009, some 136,000 veterans spent at least one night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. This amendment would help another 10,000 veterans to rent housing and obtain case management and clinical services. Second, this amendment adds \$18.8 billion to the budget for veterans' health care and other services over the next decade to match the President's budget. This amendment would ensure that no veterans are denied access to high-quality health care by providing funds that are fully offset by ending unnecessary special interest tax breaks. A YES vote would reverse the Republicans' harmful cuts to funding for supportive housing for homeless veterans and veterans' health care. A NO vote means continuing special interest tax breaks instead of providing an estimated 10,000 homeless veterans with access to supportive housing and ensuring VA's ability to meet veterans' future need for high-quality health care.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 15 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Reject Cuts to Medicare Benefits for Seniors such as Help with Prescription Drug Costs (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Van Hollen)

This amendment expresses the Sense of the House on the need to retain the important new health benefits for seniors and disabled individuals provided in the Affordable Care Act – benefits that will be eliminated as a result of the resolution's repeal of the Affordable Care Act. If the Act is repealed, seniors who exceed the initial coverage limit this year will have to pay completely out-of-pocket for the next \$1,710 of their prescription drug costs. The Affordable Care Act gradually closes this "donut hole" in coverage by 2020, saving seniors with high drug costs, on average, more than \$500 in 2011 and more than \$3,000 in 2020. A YES vote supports the important new benefits for seniors and disabled individuals provided in the Affordable Care Act, including prescription drug cost relief. A NO vote supports repeal of the Affordable Care Act, risking seniors' health coverage and forcing seniors with high drug costs back in the donut hole where they must pay all their prescription costs.

This amendment was rejected, 21 No votes to 16 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Protect Workers and Retirees from the Risks of Privatization (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Castor)

This amendment adds language to the budget resolution stating that any Social Security reform must reject privatization proposals because the diversion of payroll contributions and reliance on the financial markets jeopardizes retirement security for seniors, undermines the federal budget, and weakens the social safety net. A YES vote for the amendment ensures that Social Security is

preserved as a source of reliable, predictable retirement income for contributing workers once they retire. A NO vote supports a policy that shifts risk to seniors who rely on Social Security as a major source of their retirement income, and increases deficits and debt from the diversion of payroll taxes to fund private accounts.

This amendment was rejected, 20 No votes to 16 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Stop Cuts to Clean Transportation (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Blumenauer)

This deficit-neutral amendment rejects \$1 billion in harmful cuts to clean, innovative transportation projects approved by House Republicans in H.R. 1. That \$1 billion creates jobs through the material purchases, construction and repair of transit and bus systems. Federal funds support transportation alternatives that reduce costs to working families and businesses, reduce wear on roads, reduce congestion, and limit our dependency on foreign oil. A YES vote provides funding for clean light rail and bus transportation alternatives and creates construction jobs as gas prices continue to rise. A NO vote cuts construction jobs and increases fuel costs and traffic congestion as the resolution divests in needed transportation infrastructure expansions.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 15 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Stop Cuts to Wall Street Watchdogs and Consumer Protection (Lead Sponsor: Rep. G. Moore)

This deficit-neutral amendment rejects cuts to the financial regulatory agencies responsible for protecting the public from financial market malfeasance. It stops the funding cuts in H.R. 1 to the Securities Exchange Commission, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau because those cuts would undermine and defund the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. The amendment is fully paid for by ending unnecessary special interest tax breaks that send jobs overseas, subsidize big oil companies, or provide tax cuts for millionaires. A YES vote ensures that these Wall Street and consumer protection watchdogs have sufficient funds to make sure that big banks and financial institutions play by the rules. A NO vote protects tax cuts for millionaires while allowing Wall Street to return to the pre-crisis days of lax regulation, and increasing the probability that taxpayers will have to intervene again.

This amendment was rejected, 23 No votes to 15 Yes votes, with only minority support.

**Amendment to Prioritize the Investigation and Prosecution of Financial Crimes
(Lead Sponsor: Rep. Kaptur)**

This deficit-neutral amendment ensures that the Federal Bureau of Investigation will have adequate resources to hire and maintain adequate personnel, including agents and forensic experts, to investigate corporate, securities, and mortgage fraud, and associated violations of law relating to the United States financial markets. The amendment is fully paid for by ending unnecessary special interest tax breaks that send jobs overseas, subsidize big oil companies, or provide tax cuts for millionaires. A YES vote on this amendment means more FBI agents to address corporate, securities, and mortgage fraud so that we don't experience a repeat of the current financial crisis. A NO vote on this amendment means Wall Street will continue to operate unchecked.

This amendment was rejected, 23 No votes to 15 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment to Achieve Fiscal Sustainability (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Shuler)

This amendment expresses the Sense of the House that all budget resolutions should achieve specific deficit and debt targets according to the timetable outlined in the amendment, and should do so with a mix of spending and revenue changes. A YES vote endorses the exact timetable and target deficit reduction numbers without consideration of the policies that achieve those targets. A NO vote takes options off of the table and instead attempts to balance the budget solely through spending cuts.

This amendment was rejected with 23 No votes and 2 Yes votes. 13 members voted Present.

Amendment to Add a Point of Order against Consideration of a Budget without CBO Certification that It Will Not Cost American Jobs (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Van Hollen)

This amendment would create a point of order against House consideration of a budget resolution until the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office certifies that the spending and revenue levels it contains will not result in a loss of American jobs in the current year or the budget year. A YES vote ensures that Congress will be informed if the policies in a budget resolution will cost American jobs in the short run. A NO vote leaves Members without crucial information about the budget's effect on jobs.

This amendment was rejected, 22 No votes to 16 Yes votes, with only minority support.

Amendment in Support of Responsible Deficit Reduction Should Address Spending for National Security Agencies (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Van Hollen)

This amendment expresses the Sense of the House that any responsible deficit reduction plan must consider spending cuts in all programs, including those at the Pentagon and the other security agencies.

This amendment was adopted with 33 Yes votes and 5 No votes.

Amendment in Support of Child Support Enforcement (Lead Sponsor: Rep. G. Moore)

This bipartisan amendment, cosponsored by Chairman Ryan, adds language to the resolution expressing the sense of the House regarding the importance of child support enforcement. It cites the need for additional legislative action to ensure that states have the necessary resources to collect all child support that is owed to families and to allow them to pass 100 percent of support on to families without financial penalty. It also notes that when 100 percent of child support payments are passed to the child, rather than administrative expenses, program integrity is improved and child support participation increases.

This amendment was adopted by voice vote.

Amendment to Match the President's Budget for Veterans Discretionary Funding (Lead Sponsor: Rep. Bass)

This amendment increases funding for veterans' health care and other services by a total of \$18.8 billion over the next decade so that the Republican budget will match the President's budget for veterans for each year of the next decade. The funding was offset with an equal amount of unspecified spending cuts in Function 920 (Allowances).

This amendment was adopted by voice vote.