

You win if you bring this debate into every district in America in the 2012 election.

When you go home, people will thank you for being able to focus America's attention on these fiscal issues, but you may be surprised to learn that the American people did not want us to burn down the house in an argument over the height of the ceiling.

DEBT CONTRIBUTION ACT

(Mr. STIVERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STIVERS. It has been said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a small step."

Today, with a looming national debt of over \$14.2 trillion, we need to take dramatic steps to decrease spending, but we can make a difference by taking small steps as well. Throughout our Nation's economic crisis, I've heard from constituents who have said they want to do more to pay off the national debt.

I voluntarily give back \$700 from every paycheck to help pay down the national debt, and I wanted to make it easier for like-minded citizens to do the same. That's why I've sponsored the Debt Contribution Act, which creates a checkoff box on the tax return for individuals who want to donate money to pay down the national debt. It ensures 100 percent of those proceeds are used to pay down the national debt, and it makes sure that it's still a tax deductible contribution, which it has been since 1964.

So with a national debt of over \$14.2 trillion, we won't be running a surplus anytime soon, but we can allow patriotic Americans who want to volunteer and give money to pay down the national debt to do that, and I hope my colleagues will help me support and pass the Debt Contribution Act.

RECOGNIZING KIDS FIRST, WINNER OF JOHN H. CHAFEE CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. I rise to recognize Kids First of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, an exemplary community organization for environmental and conservation outreach.

Kids First is the recipient of the John H. Chafee Conservation Leadership Award for its Rhode Island Farm Produce to School Lunch Program, which brings healthy and sustainable nutrition and wellness programs to every school district in Rhode Island. Their strong partnerships with nutritionists, dietitians, chefs, and school administrators have brought important nutrition education programs into schools, and have benefited local produce growers since 1999.

Kids First is a win-win for farmers and students, providing local farmers

with a reliable market and school-children with 200,000 pounds of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables for healthy meals.

I commend and congratulate Kids First for promoting community sustainability through environmental conservation and for growing Rhode Island's local economy.

OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE IS IN PERIL

(Mr. McKEON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McKEON. As Congress continues to debate proposals to raise the debt limit and rein in Federal spending, I wish to remind my colleagues of the perils of Senator REID's proposal, specifically as it relates to national defense. The Reid plan would cut defense, including funds to maintain the reliability of our nuclear weapons and triad of strategic delivery vehicles that represent our deterrent for both ourselves and our allies.

Because the Obama administration has reduced our strategic forces to the lowest level in decades, the health of our deterrent must be a top national security priority. Prior to the ratification of the New START Treaty, the President committed to fund a host of nuclear modernization efforts that were supported on a bipartisan and bicameral basis. The House also passed language in the fiscal year 2012 Defense authorization bill to ensure the President makes good on these commitments.

We cannot allow a proposal like Senator REID's to jeopardize the reliability and security of our strategic deterrent. We must continue to maintain our investment in our security, stability, and peace.

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WAKE UP

(Ms. HANABUSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, we must not forget we're here to represent the people of this great Nation. In a recent poll, 2-1 people said that the reason why we are in this crisis is because of the policies of President Bush. So let's look at those policies because that's the best way to understand why we're in this crisis.

You cannot wage two wars and give tax cuts at the same time. Let's not also forget that President Clinton, by many reports, left a \$5 trillion surplus and President Bush left a \$5 trillion deficit—\$10 trillion.

I ask you, if you believe that these tax cuts are so necessary for the economic growth of this Nation, then what happened for these 10 years? Why aren't we facing a booming economy versus just avoiding another Great Depression?

Mr. Speaker, it seems like you're dreaming while the rest of us are living one of the worst nightmares we can possibly imagine.

Mr. Speaker, wake up. Please, wake up.

PREVENT A DEFAULT

(Mr. POLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, the Speaker of this Chamber has a choice to make with 3½ days remaining until we risk default on our debt. And what does that mean to American families? It means higher interest rates on your variable home mortgage. It means higher interest rates on your credit card debt. For our own Federal Government, as well as local and State governments, it means more of our taxpayer money will have to go to interest to service these existing debts.

At this point, the Speaker of this body has a choice. To be sure, he has a negotiation ahead of him. He has compromise ahead of him. He can choose to negotiate and compromise with only those in his own party further to the right than he is within this very body, or to compromise and come to a deal with those who matter and can actually pass something into law that prevents a default.

Namely, I call upon the Speaker to continue negotiations with the President of the United States and the Senate of the United States to resolve this self-caused crisis within 3½ days and avert a fate that will cost middle class families and taxpayers trillions of dollars.

TIME TO COMPROMISE

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, nearly 8 months ago we stood on the floor of this House led by the Republican majority, swore the oath of office to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and even read the Constitution here on the floor of the House.

We read in the 14th amendment, Section 4: "The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned."

We read that, and here we are on the brink of default because the Republican majority has failed to compromise. The Republican majority said we won't do what we've done for every other President, which is give him a clean debt ceiling vote on this floor so that he can pay the debts and obligations of the United States.

So seniors are waiting on Wednesday next week to know whether they're going to get their Social Security benefits. Military servicemembers are