

an environment to give people the opportunity to create jobs, small entrepreneurs and business people across this country. And our fiscal problems in this country, our financial problems with the government, isn't that the government taxes too little. It is that we spend entirely too much. And I know the coming weeks, I know especially the new Members of Congress are going to be put to the test to stand up and be accounted for, because there are many people who say that America voted for a change in November, and they did.

But I know there is nobody in the Ninth Congressional District and nobody that I have come across as I travel this country that wanted to change from a lower tax system to higher taxes. Nobody wants to do that. And our goal is, in the Countdown Crew, to make the American people aware that the Democrats don't have to do anything; they can run out the clock, and on January 1, 2011, they will have the largest tax increase in American history, over \$200 billion. And I believe it is our duty to make sure that we are talking about it so that the American people know what the majority intends to do by changing the rules on their first couple of days of Congress from a three-fifths majority to a simple majority to raise taxes, they have made it a lot easier to raise taxes.

They put PAYGO into place which only deals with new spending, and it really does nothing to address the deficits we have today. So PAYGO really should be TAXGO, because that is what the American people are going to see.

So, again, we urge you to e-mail us at countdowncrew@mail.house.gov, because we want to hear your stories about how you have put those tax cuts into use to create jobs and make America a more prosperous place.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise their remarks on the subject of my Special Order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome my colleagues from Oregon who are in the Chamber with me tonight. Congressman DEFAZIO and Congresswoman DARLENE HOOLEY are here with me, and I know we will be joined by other members of

the Northwest delegation to talk about a very, very important issue, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, H.R. 17, also known as County Payments, that in both this Congress and the last has been a strongly bipartisan issue. The DeFazio-Walden legislation, H.R. 17, a bill to reauthorize and fund the County Payments Program for 7 years to date enjoys the support of 114 cosponsors in this Congress. The exact same bill last Congress had 139 cosponsors.

As I have said in 13 of 18 one-minute floor speeches: the failure of Congress, either the last one or this one, to reauthorize the County Payments Program amounts to a breach of faith to more than 600 forested counties all across America and 4,400 school districts all across this country.

I would like to take a moment to highlight a few of the impacts of the rural forested counties and school districts in America without these funds: severe cuts in funding for jail beds; sheriffs' patrols are being cut sometimes in half; criminal prosecutions and the pursuit of meth cooks, all of that being reduced; rural school districts foregoing overdue repairs; may not be able to buy textbooks, or face significant challenges busing kids to schools. It also means libraries will close in places like Jackson County, Oregon.

I would like to draw your attention to this poster here to my left. It is from a young lady, a fifth grader named Alice from Ashland, Oregon, who utilizes one of the 15 Jackson County libraries where she lives, and they are all scheduled to close in just a couple of months, in April, if we don't reauthorize and fund the Secure County Schools legislation.

Alice has resolved to read all the "Hank the Cowdog" books, but she needs these libraries to stay open. She says: "Representative WALDEN, I live in Ashland and I go to Bellview School. I am in the fifth grade. I use our library a lot. We always use books on tape for car trips. My New Year's resolution is to read all the "Hank the Cowdog" books, and the library has them all. I need the library to stay open so I can finish my resolution. I also use a lot of books here for school reports. Please help to keep our library system open. Sincerely, Alice."

Alice is a fifth grader in Ashland, Oregon. She gets it. If Alice can get it, this Congress ought to be able to get it, and we ought to be able to keep the libraries open in Jackson County.

Many of you in this Chamber and Americans all across the land will remember the heart-wrenching service for the Kim family in southern Oregon this winter, lost in the national forest, and the mountain climbers who perished on Mount Hood just 45 minutes from my home in Hood River. Both of these counties, both of the search and rescue operations that took place used funds out of the program that Congressman DEFAZIO and others and I are

trying to reauthorize to help pay for the equipment and for the search and rescue operations, to go on Federal land using county resources to look for these people who were lost, some of whom perished.

These vital county services and rural school programs were once funded by timber receipts, but because of virtual elimination of the timber harvest on our Federal forests, Congress approved the county payments to develop forest health improvement projects on public lands and simultaneously stimulate job development in some of our rural communities.

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This law has been a primary funding mechanism to provide rural schools with educational opportunities comparable to suburban and urban students. It has also restored programs for students in rural schools and prevented the closure of numerous isolated rural schools. It has allowed over 600 rural counties to address the severe road maintenance backlog.

Before I get into that, though, I would like to show you total Pacific Northwest timber receipts. As you can see here, it has fluctuated over the years, but it has never been as low as it is today. There were big years of timber harvest, this one up, very large; but generally it has been in this framework, and you can see, really, since the 1990s it has just gone way down.

The Federal Government has had a compact with these counties dating back to when Teddy Roosevelt was President and created the great forest reserves, setting aside huge swaths of land. Upwards to half of my district is under Federal management and control, and many of my colleagues and some of my counties it is upwards to 70, 75 percent.

The Federal Government believed in 1908 and again in 1938 that it had a responsibility to help these communities surrounded by Federal lands because these lands were not going to be on their tax base. That is what started this whole program. They used to share timber receipts. As you can see, timber harvests went down, the receipts went down.

You say, what happened to our wood products system? Well, here is what happened. See what happened on Federal forest lands. This is 1980 here, top level, about 11 billion board feet sold. Then it drops way down in the red. Where did we get the lumber? Imports. Soft wood lumber imports right there, the blue and the yellow.

So this came along, we said timber receipts are down, so we are going to replace it, 6 years ago, now almost 7. We authorized this Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

The country has 7,500 national forests and grasslands covering 192 million acres. That is the size of Texas, by the way. Our State of Oregon has 15 national forests. We are proud of them.