

reconciliation and peaceful conflict resolution.

As he left Afghanistan, General Petraeus said, "We should be clear-eyed about the challenges ahead." His successor, General John Allen, said, "There will be tough days ahead, and I have no illusions about the challenges we will face together."

But I say, Mr. Speaker, continuing with the current policy demonstrates that, in fact, we are not being clear-eyed at all, that we are gripped by dangerous illusions about what a military occupation can achieve. This strategy has been given a chance to work—10 years. It hasn't worked. It's time for something new. It's time for SMART Security, and it's time to bring our troops home.

#### FIGHTING FOR THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, this is a sad day in America. There are people who have to choose between paying their bills and eating a decent meal.

All I hear is that we have a spending problem. "We have a spending problem. We have a spending problem."

I want to be sure we do not try to solve our spending problem on the backs of the poor, on the backs of children and on the backs of our senior citizens. We have been cutting services for the poor, children and seniors for years. Go back and look at the record, and you will see that this is a fact. If you add up all of the money we are spending on children and seniors, it would not begin to make a dent in the Federal deficit.

We spend less than 10 percent of the budget on children. That means we are not seriously investing in the future of this Nation. When we cut programs like WIC, we are literally taking the food out of the mouths of babies, so I say our priorities are certainly misguided or upside down. When we cut tens of millions of dollars from juvenile justice delinquency programs, then we'd better get ready to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on more prisons.

When we look to save money by cutting Medicare and Social Security, we really do a disservice to the senior citizens in this country. Senior citizens have worked all of their lives putting a good portion of their paychecks into a system that paid for the well-being of their parents and grandparents.

If the truth is to be told, today's seniors have paid more than \$2.5 trillion extra into Social Security so that it would be safe, and here we are talking about making cuts. When President Ronald Reagan signed the law to increase the payroll tax, it was to make sure Social Security would be there for future generations; but the government spent the money, and now we want to make seniors pay again. That is wrong.

Our senior citizens have paid enormous sums of money into Medicare, and now people are talking about ending it as we know it. Certainly, rising health care costs are causing Medicare problems, but we can fix those problems without making it a voucher program.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take a deep breath and to think clearly about what we're doing. Children and seniors are the most vulnerable citizens in our country. They are depending on us to use sound judgment and not be swayed by the political gamesmanship.

I stand here this morning to tell you that I intend to fight for the well-being of our children and our senior citizens. Of course, we need to uncut, uncap and get some real balance into this discussion, recognizing the fact that our children and our seniors must be protected. Of course, every time I hear one of our Members talking about the fact that we need to cut Medicare, that we need to cut WIC, I think that we need to stop and take a real, real deep breath and recognize that, when we do that, we end up creating other things, and we do not save money.

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#### LET'S ADDRESS CAUSES, NOT SYMPTOMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, too often, Congress and Washington deal with symptoms, not underlying causes. And that's what's going on with this current debate about the debt limit. It's kind of like you have an ill patient that has a fever, and you say, well, they're sick so throw some water on the patient and their fever will go down. But you never deal with the underlying infection, the underlying cause that is tripping the fever in the first place.

Let me put a little map on the table here this morning, to look at the nature of current economic challenge. When you have 14 million Americans out of work, and up to 24 million who are working part-time that want to work full-time or others who have completely dropped out of the workforce, none of them are earning a full check. Money is not being taken out of that check to pay their social insurance for Social Security, and they're not going to pay their regular income taxes either. And so the government falls short on revenues. It's quite clear.

We have a jobs problem. That's the causal problem that underlies the deficit problem that America faces.

Now, if you look just at this year alone, 2011, so far this year the government's taken in over a trillion dollars—\$1.2 trillion in revenue. That's not bad for an economy that's just limping along. But we've spent \$1.8 trillion. So we've spent already this

year over \$600 billion that we didn't have. We've had to borrow that money. That borrowing gets added to the long-term deficit. But why do we have that deficit this year?

We have that deficit because the revenues aren't coming in at the same rate as in prior years because there is a jobs problem. When you have 14 million to 24 million people who want a better job and can't get one, that's the underlying cause which Washington fails to see or address.

Now, the cost of that unemployment with the attendant shortage of revenues, is added to this huge accumulated debt, which now is over \$14 trillion. So where did that come from? Let me outline the reasons. The largest share, not only of this year's deficit but of prior debt that we've accumulated, is due to a lagging economy. Families know this. They can't pay as much in taxes or any taxes when they're out of work. Companies, banks, and real estate firms that go bankrupt can't pay taxes either. Revenues fall short.

If you take a look at the cost of our sluggish economy triggered and caused by Wall Street abuse, that's what threw us into this mess in the first place, right, back in 2008. The increased costs of resulting unemployment are staggering indeed: Add them up. First, we have to pay the unemployment checks, and some people even got 99 weeks of unemployment because jobs are scarce. Add to it the costs of food for those unemployed people. They are enormous.

When an economy isn't fully functioning, the Federal costs of medical care skyrocket because people fall off their own insurance. So many in this country simply can't get good care, and that's all tied in to a very sluggish economy. Yes, the costs of unemployment are huge.

Then let's add the cost of the housing meltdown. All of the bad mortgages, four out of five bad mortgages were dumped on the Federal Government. Did Wall Street take care of its dirty laundry? No. They gave it to you, the American people. At the FHA, the Federal Housing Administration, at Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, the Veterans Administration, guess who's holding all of the mortgages that are under water? Eighty percent of them. Us, the people of the United States, because Wall Street's insurance company or vacant units become the property of Uncle Sam; not Wall Street. Did Wall Street write off any losses? Oh, no, no, no. They gave them to us. That is a huge and growing part of the Federal deficit related to the housing crisis and what it is going to cost to revitalize or demolish that housing inventory.

Then, add to all this a trillion dollars more that's been spent on two wars that have not been paid for. That is a major part of the growing deficit. We can't ignore that. Do we say we should have a war tax? Do we say we should end the wars? Do we say our allies