

Subject: ENews from Congressman Mike Thompson

From: "Congressman Mike Thompson" <RepMikeThompson@mail.house.gov>

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To: info@californiaskywatch.com

February 28, 2011

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Dear Friend,

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a spending bill that would cut tens of billions of dollars in federal spending. Some of these cuts were targeted at wasteful or inefficient programs. But many more were misdirected at crucial transportation and infrastructure projects, education programs, health care initiatives, water projects, and other services that our community needs. While I support the bill's underlying goals (to decrease spending, balance the budget, and tackle our nation's debt), I voted against this legislation because it would ultimately hurt more families than it helps.

Make no mistake: our nation is on an unsustainable fiscal path. Spending is rising and revenues are falling short, meaning the government must borrow huge sums each year to make up the difference. In 2010, federal spending was nearly 24 percent of Gross Domestic Product (or, the value of all goods and services produced in the economy). If we continue on our current course, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates our debt will reach 90 percent of GDP in 2020.

However, thoughtless spending cuts are not the solution to our debt crisis. As written, the House spending bill would strip \$1.7 billion from the Social Security Administration, slash \$1.3 billion in funding for community health centers (including those serving Northern California), and defund the federal salmon protections that some experts say are almost single-handedly sustaining our state's commercial fishing industry. A responsible spending bill would recognize the need for these and other investments, including education, infrastructure, research and development, and other sectors that will help our economy grow and create jobs.

What our spending bill *should* address is funding for the Department of Defense. Our military is responsible for the biggest piece of discretionary spending in our annual budget, yet the House spending bill actually *increased* the defense budget from \$526 billion to \$533 billion – a number that doesn't even include the money spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan! U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates himself has called for significant cuts to wasteful and inefficient defense spending. I support that sentiment, which is why I voted to cut hundreds of billions of dollars for the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle program, the V-22 Osprey aircraft program, the F-35 alternative jet engine program, and other wasteful initiatives – all of which the Pentagon has repeatedly said it does not want and does not need.

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Last week, I held a series of community forums in the district to discuss America's debt crisis and find out what folks in our district want to do to tackle the problem. I heard a whole range of suggestions, but the common thread was that we need to restore fiscal responsibility to government. Like you, I'm not afraid to cut spending where it's deserved, but I won't support a budget that decreases smart investments, increases bad ones, and threatens our country's fragile economic recovery. It's time to get down to work and develop a viable alternative that puts America on a path toward long-term financial success.

Sincerely,

Mike Thompson

Member of Congress

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