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Washington, DC - Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) issued the following statement on today's budget legislation vote:

"Mr. Speaker: This is the third time the House has voted on this budget package and there is good reason this legislation is having such a difficult time receiving final approval from Congress. While we all agree that this nation cannot continue to spend beyond its means at the expense of future generations, this budget package will do nothing to right our precarious fiscal situation. If you take even a cursory glance at this legislation, it is readily apparent that the Republican method of deficit reduction is to disproportionately pass the burden on to hard-working Americans and the poorest among us. It ignores the idea of shared sacrifice the American people expect and deserve.

"My constituents in Sacramento are outraged – I have received hundreds of phone calls and I have stacks of letters; they are astounded that this bill would cut funding for Medicaid, student loans and child support enforcement in order to finance up to \$70 billion in tax cuts. Clearly, they have good reason to be outraged. In fact, I completely agree with them.

"For instance, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the budget package will cut Medicaid funding by \$28 billion over the next decade and impose new co-payments on participants. The result will be that 65,000 individuals will stop participating in Medicaid over the next decade, 60% of whom will be children. In total, 13 million Medicaid participants – over a quarter of whom are children – will face higher financial barriers to health care coverage.

"Yet, at the same time Congressional Republicans went ahead with their plans to worsen the health care crisis in this country, they modified one provision in this bill to save the health insurance industry \$22 billion over ten years, according to the Washington Post. As their profits show, this industry is not suffering from falling profits, particularly when you factor in the lavish benefits they received from the President's disastrous prescription drug plan.

"Congress needs to get back to common sense budgeting that fairly distributes the burden of deficit reduction. And we need to reinstitute the pay-go budget rules that brought us fiscal surpluses during the 1990s. Congress should be protecting the vital programs that our community depends on and the safety net that protects the weakest among us, while still ensuring long-term fiscal responsibility. I urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation so we can start reducing the deficit in a way that is in the best interest of the vast majority of the American people."

The legislation, H. Res. 653 narrowly passed the House by a vote of 216 to 214, which allows the budget package to proceed to the President for his signature.

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