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# MATSUI CITES IRRESPONSIBILITY, OPPOSES MISGUIDED FEDERAL BUDGET

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April 28, 2005

Thursday, April 28, 2005

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(Washington, DC) &ndash; Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) made the following floor statement in opposition to H. Con. Res. 95, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2006, a secretly negotiated agreement, which irresponsibly cuts funding for critical programs like health care, veterans health benefits and reduction of the federal debt.

&ldquo;Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and the underlying budget conference agreement.

&ldquo;More than a month ago, the House passed a concurrent budget resolution that left average Americans out in the cold. The budget slashed domestic programs for education, health care and veterans health benefits, in order to make room for more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. I voted against it because I felt it left out the needs of the middle class and working families and would hurt my constituents in my hometown of Sacramento.

&ldquo;Today we are considering the conference agreement to that budget, which has been negotiated in secret over the past several weeks and rushed to the floor without time for Members to read through it. But it appears that these several weeks have not yielded many improvements. The cuts to Community Development Block Grants are still there; the Medicaid cuts that 44 Republican Members don&rsquo;t support are still there; the cuts to education are still there; and it still favors big oil companies at the expense of our natural treasures by allowing drilling in ANWR.

&ldquo;More fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, this is a budget agreement without courage. During President Clinton&rsquo;s

Administration, Congress took up the hard work involved in weighing our nation's competing priorities. And it meant that we were able to create a Social Security surplus for future generations in a very responsible manner. But it's been just the opposite under this Republican Majority: they are spending every dollar of the Social Security surplus in order to finance their deficits and their tax breaks for the wealthiest of Americans.

“Just as irresponsibly, this budget is trying to hide the President's plan to privatize Social Security. The President wants to divert Social Security payroll taxes out of the Social Security system and into private accounts. Replacing a guaranteed benefit with the risks of Wall Street is bad public policy. It would mean an average benefit reduction of \$152,000. It's not surprising that the American people have rejected it. We should be strengthening Social Security's fundamental commitment made from one generation to another instead of weakening it.

“Conveniently, the budget agreement before us ducks responsibility for this reckless plan. We know that privatizing Social Security would require borrowing \$2 trillion over the next ten years, debt borrowed against our children and our grandchildren. Not surprisingly, this inconvenient reality is left out of the conference report.

“Mr. Speaker, the budget is our federal government's statement of priorities; crafting it involves tough choices among many competing and worthwhile programs. Nonetheless, Democratic priorities are clear — making health care more affordable, strengthening Social Security, investing in our local communities. I do not believe this budget has these priorities in mind, and I urge my colleagues to vote against this misguided agreement.”

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