

MARCH 17, 2005

**SCHAKOWSKY VOTES FOR DEMOCRATIC BUDGETS THAT VALUES
NATION'S PRIORITIES -
OPPOSES REPUBLICAN
"BUDGET OF MASS DESTRUCTION"**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today voted for the Democratic and Congressional Black Caucus alternative budgets "which recognize the true needs and values of our Nation," and opposed the "Republican budget of mass destruction."

Schakowsky said that in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy, "the Republicans are literally proposing to take away food and health care from low-income families, kill 48 education programs by eliminating the \$4.3 billion that funds them, slash veterans' health care - including cutting \$9 million from medical and prosthetic research, and undermine community development in struggling neighborhoods by cutting \$1.5 billion in grant programs."

Under the House Republican budget, in Illinois, the Earned Income Tax Credit is cut by \$164.2 million, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and child care grants lose \$84.3 million, and Supplemental Security Income - which helps poor seniors and people with disabilities - slashed by \$174 million.

Schakowsky warned that the \$20 billion Medicaid cuts proposed in the budget would result in "millions of Americans no longer able to get the physical health, mental health, and long term care services they need to remain healthy and productive. Guaranteed support for pregnant women and children, persons with disabilities, persons living with AIDS or mental illnesses, and senior citizens needing medical care or long term care services would be cut."

"In my state of Illinois, Medicaid covers 40 percent of all births, 30 percent of all children, and 65 percent of all nursing home residents. But, if the Republican budget cuts are enacted, it may no longer be there for the millions of Americans who have no other source of care - other than bankrupting their families or mortgaging their futures to pay for their parents' long term care needs or their children's medical services," Schakowsky

said.

"Democrats understand that budgets are not just about numbers, they are about values and priorities. It is time to reverse course so that we do not continue to mortgage our country's future and our children's prosperity in order to pay for tax cuts for the rich that we cannot afford and that they do not need," Schakowsky concluded.

The full text of Schakowsky's statement is below:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the Republican budget of mass destruction and in support of the Democratic and Congressional Black Caucus alternative budgets which recognize the true needs and values of our Nation.

We do not need to call in weapons inspectors to find the threat to the majority of Americans in this budget, nor do we need a warning system. We know exactly what, when, and where the damage will be because the Republican budget, once again, puts the tax cuts of the few above the needs of the many.

Under the Republican budget, the vast majority of Americans are asked to sacrifice, with one exception: the wealthy who can most afford to give something up. Their tax cuts - the same tax cuts that brought us unprecedented deficits - are protected and even extended under this proposal. They will cost our country an additional \$106 billion, of which 75 percent will go to people making over \$200,000 a year.

In order to pay for those tax cuts, the Republicans are literally proposing to take away food and health care from low-income families, kill 48 education programs by eliminating the \$4.3 billion that funds them, slash veterans' health care - including cutting \$9 million from medical and prosthetic research, and undermine community development in struggling neighborhoods by cutting \$1.5 billion in grant programs. Despite Republican claims, these cuts will do nothing to help our country's bottom line, but they will be devastating for the children, working families, veterans and seniors who will be asked to go without. This is not only irresponsible, but immoral.

In the state of Illinois, we could see the Earned Income Tax Credit - the most effective anti-poverty program - cut by \$164.2 million, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and child care grants lose \$84.3 million, and Supplemental Security Income - which helps poor seniors and people with disabilities - slashed by \$174 million. Thousands of vulnerable peoples' lives will be destroyed if this budget passes.

The House Republican budget is even worse than the President's proposal. For instance, they propose even greater cuts to Medicaid than under his plan. The \$20 billion in Medicaid cuts included in this budget resolution are unwise, unjustifiable and almost certainly lethal. As health care costs continue to rise, the number of uninsured Americans exceeds 45 million, and employers continue to cut back on coverage, Medicaid has provided a guarantee of support for pregnant women and children, persons with disabilities, persons living with AIDS or mental illnesses, and senior citizens

needing medical care or long term care services. Without those services, millions of Americans will no longer be able to get the physical health, mental health, and long term care services they need to remain healthy and productive.

In my state of Illinois, Medicaid covers 40 percent of all births, 30 percent of all children, and 65 percent of all nursing home residents. In Illinois, under the leadership of our governor, we are working to expand Medicaid to cover more children and more families in face of a growing crisis in health care. This is not just the right thing to do; it is the cost-effective course to take. Medicaid costs less than private health insurance and its per capita costs are growing more slowly than private insurance premiums. But, if the Republican budget cuts are enacted, it may no longer be there for the millions of Americans who have no other source of care - other than bankrupting their families or mortgaging their futures to pay for their parents' long term care needs or their children's medical services.

Budgets are not just about numbers, they are about values and priorities. Based on the Republicans' proposal, maintaining and making permanent tax cuts for millionaires has been and continues to be a higher priority than meeting the needs of the majority of Americans. And, they are shifting the responsibility of their fiscal mess onto the backs of our children who will see decreased services and will be asked to deal with deficits for years to come.

The Democratic and CBC budgets recognize that this is the wrong thing to do and a great threat to our nation's future well-being and prosperity. It is time to reverse course so that we do not continue to mortgage our country's future and our children's prosperity in order to pay for tax cuts for the rich that we cannot afford and that they do not need. I urge my colleagues to vote against the Republican WMD and for the Democratic and CBC budgets. Thank you.