

Tue Nov 16, 2010 at 02:18 PM EST

[Rep. Jan Schakowsky releases deficit reduction plan](#)

by [Chris Bowers](#) for [Daily Kos](#)

Representative Jan Schakowsky (D, IL-09) is a member of the Progressive caucus and holds a seat on the catfood commission. Today, she released [her proposal to reduce the deficit](#) . It is good, sensible policy, focusing on:

- Ending various corporate tax breaks (132.2 billion in annual savings)
- Reducing defense spending (110.7 billion in annual savings)
- Taxing Capital Gains and dividends as ordinary income (88.1 billion)
- Passing cap and trade (52 billion)
- Passing a robust public option (10 billion)
- Reducing agricultural subsidies (7.5 billion)

And several other, smaller changes that would cut tens of billions from the federal budget deficit. Schakowsky's plan also focuses on \$200 billion in investment spending that would get people back to work, thus saving the federal government in unemployment benefits and raising tax revenues. For Social Security, she proposes raising the cap.

As strong and sensible as Schakowsky's plan is, it faces twin political problems of being popular, and not cutting benefits to the working and middle class.

How can you ever expect to be "serious" about the deficit unless you are cutting public services in order to pay for tax cuts on the wealthy? As long as you are making popular proposals like raising [the Social Security cap](#) , targeting [government spending to create jobs](#) , increasing [taxes on the wealthy and corporations](#) , passing [cap and trade](#) , and enacting [a robust public option](#) , you are just not "serious." The entire point of this exercise is to cut popular programs that actually help Americans so that a bunch of rich elites in the media, DC, and Wall Street can pat

themselves on the back for making the difficult decisions of supporting stuff that makes them even richer.

As Schakowsky's plan shows, it actually isn't that hard in terms of policy to make steep deficit reductions without cutting benefits or services. The real problem is political, in that doing so would require the rich elites who own our political system to call off their class warfare against everyone else.

Most of the legislative fights we face over the next two years take that same form: defending programs for the middle and working class from a wealthy, establishment elite who consider government handouts to the rich sacrosanct. Take the first step to join in this fight by [signing the pledge to never support cutting or privatizing Social Security](#).

The American public can defeat this elite, but it has to stick together to do so.

Originally posted to [Daily Kos](#) on Tue Nov 16, 2010 at 02:18 PM EST.