

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 29, 2012

CONTACT: ALANA JUTEAU

(202) 225-7163

Matsui Opposes Republican Budget Plan That Would Hurt Seniors, Students, Middle Class, and Jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-Sacramento) voted against the Ryan Republican Budget plan for Fiscal Year 2013 that would privatize Medicare, gut Medicaid, slash education spending and student loans, significantly reduce investments in clean energy and infrastructure, and eliminate millions of jobs. The plan also takes over twenty years to even balance the budget.

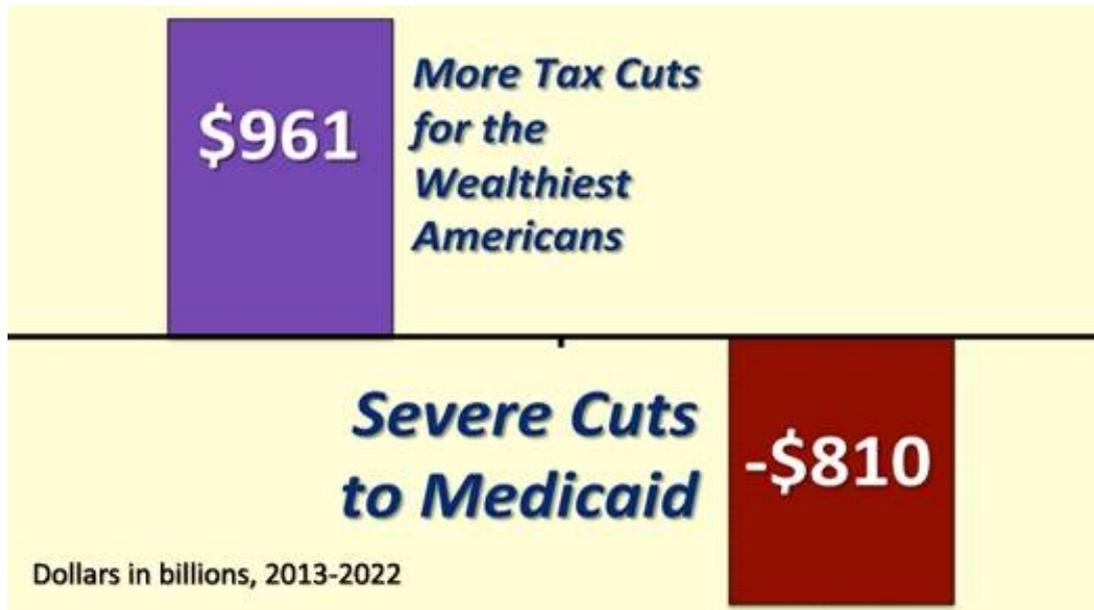
“Quite simply, the Ryan Republican Budget makes the wrong choices for our country by favoring the wealthiest and Big Oil over America’s seniors, middle class, students and jobs,” said Congresswoman Matsui.

Like the Ryan budget proposed for Fiscal Year 2012, this year’s budget again proposes to end the Medicare guarantee of specific benefits at an affordable price. Instead, seniors in Medicare would be handed a voucher, which they could use to buy a private insurance plan or traditional Medicare. However, the cost of the voucher would be capped, and each year, it would cover a smaller portion of the premium. Private insurers would be allowed to vary the benefits they provide, and could, for example, offer gym memberships, but not the most effective diabetes drugs, thus encouraging healthier and younger seniors to join their plans and significantly drive up the costs for those who stay in traditional Medicare. The plan also proposes raising the age of Medicare eligibility to 67.

Matsui said, “Under the Ryan plan, seniors’ out-of-pocket costs could double. Between ending the Medicare guarantee, capping and cutting Medicaid dollars, and repealing the Affordable Care Act, which has already saved our seniors billions of dollars, the Republican budget

completely disregards the needs of America’s seniors. While this is not surprising, it is still unacceptable, and Democrats will not stand for it.”

In fact, in California’s Fifth Congressional District, 94 percent of seniors use Medicare to see their doctors and to get the care they need. 17 percent of Sacramento seniors receive Medicaid; and 15 percent receive both Medicare and Medicaid. The sweeping changes included in the Republican plan would pull the rug out from under them.



Graph Prepared by House Budget Committee Democrats

The Republican budget also cuts college aid for more than 9 million students, and allows the interest rates on loans for nearly 7.5 million students to double in July. It slashes education funding – particularly for K through 12 – by \$115 billion over ten years, and cuts extra reading and math assistance for low-income children. Additionally, the Republican plan would remove 200,000 children and their families from Head Start in one year alone.

The [Economic Policy Institute](#) estimates that the Ryan budget will destroy more than 4 million American jobs in the next two years. Between cutting renewable energy programs and moving our country’s growing clean energy sector backwards, gutting spending on transportation and infrastructure projects, and cutting funding for research and development, the Republican budget ignores the power of American innovation to stimulate our economy. Additionally, the budget completely eliminates the Corporation for National and Community Service, meaning an end to AmeriCorps programs.

“To remain competitive in the global economy, we simply must make real investments in our country’s education, clean energy, research and development, and infrastructure,” said Matsui. “It is important that, in our efforts to reduce the deficit, we don’t lose sight of our future.”

Matsui added, “Worst of all, the Republican budget cuts funding for essential services and programs and raises taxes on middle-income Americans while giving, on average, an extra \$150,000 tax cut to millionaires and billionaires, and maintaining tax breaks for Big Oil companies. It’s time the American people asked, whose side are Republicans really on?”

Congresswoman Matsui did vote to support the Democratic budget alternative, which protects and preserves Medicare and makes critical investments that will help strengthen our economy today and keep America competitive in the future. The Democratic alternative also reduces the deficit in a balanced and credible way, both by making difficult choices and asking the wealthiest and special interests to share responsibility for reducing the deficit.

To view a video Congresswoman Matsui recorded about the negative effect these proposals would have on America’s seniors, please [click here](#) .

#