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Matsui Opposes Republican Budget Reconciliation Bill

Legislation Slashes Vital Services for Middle Class, Seniors, Children

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) voted in opposition to H.R. 5652, the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act. Following the failure of the Super Committee last fall, a scheduled sequester of across-the-board cuts will go into effect in January 2013. Under the sequestration process, the first \$109 billion in automatic cuts is scheduled to occur in January 2013, with approximately \$12 billion to be cut from mandatory programs and almost \$98 billion from discretionary programs, including \$55 billion from defense and \$43 billion from non-defense programs. The bill considered today would replace the scheduled defense cuts with deeper cuts in non-defense programs.

As part of the Ryan budget plan, six House committees were charged with finding billions of dollars in cuts to non-defense programs in order to eliminate the automatic cuts for defense. The Agriculture Committee went beyond their charge of finding \$33 billion to cut, and opted to cut \$36 billion instead – entirely from the SNAP program. As a result, food and nutrition benefits for every household receiving SNAP benefits would be reduced immediately, affecting 20 million children. Nearly 300,000 children would lose school meals on top of that.

“The Republican Reconciliation bill would literally take food off the dinner table in order to fund our massive defense complex,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “Our country’s deficit is due in large part to the two wars we spent over a decade fighting. It’s time for Republicans to come home to the American people, and start considering our domestic priorities.”

The legislation also repeals the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which Congresswoman Matsui worked hard to see included in the Affordable Care Act and which was based on her

own legislation, the Wellness Trust Act. This means that 2.2 million fewer childhood vaccinations would be provided, and 326,000 less women would get breast cancer screenings, among the other critical services that the fund provides for.

Congresswoman Matsui spoke out against those cuts when they were considered by the Energy and Commerce Committee, saying, “Repeal would mark an unfortunate and major step backwards in our commitment to disease prevention, and compromise our ability to make progress on cost containment, public health modernization, and wellness promotion... It is far costlier to treat an individual patient’s symptoms, than it is to prevent the disease itself.”

Seniors, who would be particularly impacted by the elimination of the Prevention and Public Health Fund, would also lose essential services thanks to the elimination of the Social Services Block Grant. This fund provides for home-based services, such as Meals on Wheels, to 1.7 million seniors, and accounts for an estimated 72% of states’ funding for adult day care services.

“Once again, my Republican colleagues are showing where their priorities lie – and it’s not with the middle class, seniors, children, or women,” added Matsui.

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