

decisions. We are at a crossroads in this country and in the world.

You know, we are trying to make bold moves. President Obama has proposed a very bold agenda in the area of health care reform, energy and education, and we have taken up that cause in this Congress, and we are moving very decisively to make significant changes in this country.

From the other side, we hear reasonable questions: How much is this going to cost? What about the deficits we will be incurring? What about fiscal responsibility? Well, you know, there are two aspects to fiscal responsibility. One is living within your means. There's no question about that. We need to be able to do that. The other question is: How do you prepare for the future? If we are living within our means and are not willing to make the investments that we need to make, then the future is going to be very bleak, indeed.

You heard just a few minutes ago my colleague from California, Mr. COSTA, talking about the need to promote infrastructure, to invest in infrastructure and in the water supply in California. Well, this is just one microcosm of the challenge we will face across the country with bridges, roads, airports, air traffic controls, water systems, sewers. We need to make significant investments in all of those areas in order to provide the foundation, the infrastructure, for future growth, and we're going to have to borrow money to do that. Similarly, if we don't make the changes in our health care system and in our energy system and in our education, we will not have the human infrastructure that we need to move into the future.

You know, I've heard the minority leader on the other side say: How much is it going to cost to do health care reform? Well, I'm not sure, but we know how much it's going to cost not to do health care reform. We've seen the projections. Tens of trillions of dollars over the next 70 years in additional deficit are forecasted for Medicare. That's if we don't act. So we know what the cost of not acting is. It is time to act. It is the fiscally responsible thing to do to adopt the agenda of the Obama administration, and I look forward to being a part of that historic effort.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) for 2 minutes. Mr. CASSIDY. I thank you.

Today is World Hepatitis Day. This has special meaning for me because I'm a liver doctor, and I've spent 20 years treating hepatitis patients. Three to four million Americans have hepatitis, and about two-thirds of those folks are baby boomers. Maybe it has special meaning for me because I'm a baby boomer, but it also includes firemen, those affected at birth, Vietnam veterans, and many others who are affected by this disease. Indeed, almost

every person, almost every family is touched by someone who has liver diseases.

Every year in this country, thousands die from liver disease. We spend, roughly, \$30 billion a year treating liver disease, and many more are frightened, even though they shouldn't be, because they know the terrible statistics I just cited. Hepatitis doesn't affect people at the end of life, but rather, it can affect people in the primes of their lives. When it does so, it potentially leaves behind orphans, widows and widowers.

The best of the American spirit is compassion. Public policy should reflect this compassion, and in this case, it will be for our friends, our families and, in my case, my patients touched by hepatitis. Today, on World Hepatitis Day, I ask that we, through public policy, pledge our compassion to those so affected.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. PERRIELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERRIELLO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today as one of the younger Members of this body to speak out about the importance of fiscal responsibility. As one of those young enough who will take on much of the burden of the deficits created today, I speak out of the urgency of our considering future generations in the decades ahead as we look at this. It's certainly true that both political parties have much to answer for in terms of the deficits that have been run up, but it's also important that we do not embark on revisionist history and suggest moral equivalence between the sides.

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We must remember that the last administration walked into a situation where they had a \$5.6 trillion surplus—a \$5.6 trillion surplus—that they turned into a \$4.5 trillion deficit. That turnaround, you could hear future generations crying as that great opportunity to restore fiscal sanity was passed up and our national debt was doubled.

The Clinton administration and this body in the early 1990s took bold steps to get us on the path towards fiscal responsibility. We saw the same kind of bold leadership from the Democrats in my state, the Commonwealth of Virginia, when MARK WARNER came in as Governor, inheriting a huge deficit, and turning it into a surplus and making Virginia the best-managed State in the country. Governor Kaine moved in and continued that tradition, even under much more difficult economic times, of fiscal responsibility and sanity. So we know that this can be done because we have seen Democrats do it at the national level, and we have seen Democrats do it at the State level.

We have taken steps in this body to move in the right direction. I think the

budget should have gone further which is why I didn't support it. But let there be no doubt that we turned this ship around from unending deficits to cutting those deficits in more than half in the next 5 years. This is the decent thing to do. It is the right thing to do.

But in addition to the budget deficits that were run up in recent years, there was also a running up of a jobs deficit. We hear people talking now, worried suddenly about the jobs we could lose by getting in front of the energy economy. What about the jobs we have already lost? My colleague, Mr. CONNOLLY, has already spoken to how many millions of jobs have already gone overseas, good paying, advanced manufacturing jobs, engineering jobs, that could have been here if this body had the courage and the leadership to look forwards and not backwards.

Again, both parties have been part of trade deals that I think have been a bad bargain for the American worker. But let us have no doubt that there are those in this body now ready to have the courage to be ahead of the next big jobs boom and make sure that those next generation of jobs will be created here in the United States as we move towards a balanced budget, the kind of business climate where people want to locate and where we dare the American consumer and American business leaders to lead, to innovate, to create, to be at the forefront of that new energy economy.

This jobs deficit that has been created hand in hand with our budget deficit is one we can conquer. I believe we have taken great steps already in this Congress to put ourselves at the forefront of science, of research, of green energy. I come from an area of the country that has a great deal of pain right now. We have more than 20 percent unemployment in some of the towns in our districts as factories have gone overseas.

As we look at the possibility for alternative energies, energy efficiency technology, smart grid technology, advanced battery manufacturing, I believe our side has the courage to say America can do that better than anybody else. I believe southside Virginia can do that better than anyone else. But we will not get it by continuing the moral deficit we have had in our politics in recent years that puts the easy ahead of what is right. That puts partisan gains of right and left ahead of right and wrong.

The Democrats have a strong track record of fiscal responsibility in my State of Virginia and here in this body. We have begun a path that I hope we will continue to march down toward fiscal responsibility that will generate the jobs and the economic competitiveness that this country needs.

So I rise today hopeful and happy that we are part of that new change here to bring back and close in this time, to close the moral deficit, close the jobs deficit, and close the budget deficit and restore the kind of responsibility that future generations deserve.