

After avoiding a shutdown of the government last week, this week the focus was on finalizing the 2011 federal budget and moving on to the 2012 budget. While we did not get a perfect conclusion to the 2011 budget, the legislation brought up for a vote on Thursday included \$38 billion in cuts over the next six months. I voted to support this bill that will cut spending and remove barriers to job creation, and hope to support even more legislation to do the same. I also supported this effort in order to prevent a government shutdown and ensure that our troops and their families would not have to worry about receiving their paychecks. Denying pay to our troops and their families because of political wrangling is unconscionable. These men and women risk their lives to defend our freedom here and overseas. Their families make sacrifices each day; we cannot deny them safety and security here at home, too. I heard from many of you concerned about our men and women in uniform losing pay with a government shutdown. I am glad that troops and their families did not go without a paycheck, but I am eager to move forward in the budget debate and working aggressively to reduce our deficits and debt. We must work toward solutions that significantly reduce our federal debt and lead us to eliminating deficits.

Only in Washington, DC, do they often speak of numbers in the billions and trillions, but Friday we moved towards cutting trillions from the federal budget. House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan put forward a budget blueprint to keep taxes low, eliminate tax increases and to allow our economy to grow. While this budget is not perfect, I voted for it because we must begin the dialogue about the critical issues facing our nation. I supported this budget blueprint which proposes to cut \$6.2 trillion in government spending over the next ten years. It also eliminates roughly \$800 billion in new tax increases imposed by the health care overhaul signed into law last year, and defunds the health overhaul bill while proposing more patient-centered reforms that are truly needed. It also prevents the tax increases proposed in the Administration's 2012 budget proposal. The resolution also saves Medicare and Social Security programs for future generations, while not changing Medicare benefits for those 55 and older. I firmly believe that we must not change benefits for those who depend on them most.

We have heard much this week about two distinct paths for federal budgeting . We must chart the course to grow our economy not grow the government. These are tough decisions to be made, but we must take the path of responsibility to ensure we are leaving this world a better place for our children and grandchildren. Congress must do its job – no excuses.