

their home. It limits the mortgage interest deduction used by homeowners, and this is eminently unfair. Californians just experienced the worst wildfires in our State's history, with over 14,000 homes lost. What does this bill do? It removes the deductibility for property losses due to natural disasters. I find this to be especially cruel.

What the bill does do is take special care of the wealthiest 5,500 estates in this country by doubling the estate tax exemption to \$22 million and then repealing it, removing the whole thing, by 2024.

Finally, the bill has terrible implications for the future of Medicare and the guarantee it has provided for Americans for over 50 years. Without budget changes to offset the \$1.5 trillion increase to deficits over 10 years, the bill will trigger automatic spending cuts under the statutory pay-as-you-go.

The Republican majority and the administration claim that this tax plan will "pay for itself." It is bad math, because we were promised in the early 2000s that jobs would be created, that the economy would grow, and the outcome was \$1.8 trillion of debt.

The investments that pay off the most are the investments we make in the American people, in education, in job creation, in infrastructure. These are critical areas that always expand our economy.

This House should reject this unfair, unbalanced, fiscally irresponsible plan that dims the future of our country by attacking the middle class.

#### APPRENTICESHIPS PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE PATH TO HIGH-PAYING JOBS

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this is a pretty incredible week here in Washington, D.C., an incredible week for the American people. When you look at the things that we accomplished this week, we have had historic tax reform—long overdue. This is a break for hardworking middle class American families. I encourage folks to check out the facts for themselves on exactly what happens.

But it is not the only thing we have done. Already this week we have passed a conference report on the national defense authorization, the largest raise for our military in over 10 years, providing them the resources they need to be safe, to be effective, yes, to be lethal, and to be able to return home at the end of the day and to have their needs met.

We did something that was very important for a State like Pennsylvania, where we have almost 90,000 miles of streams. We did historic flood insurance reform, where we really separated and looked inland, the needs there, versus mixing things together, allowing local municipalities, as long as

they comply with the FEMA processes, to be able to really determine where the actual flood risk is. We haven't had that. In the past, it has all been done from Washington. It has been done rather poorly.

But there is more than that. This week is also National Apprenticeship Week, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to highlight apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are a part of career and technological education as a pathway to family-sustaining careers and wages. Apprenticeships provide an alternative path to a high-paying job by providing opportunities to gain real-world skills while earning a paycheck.

Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, I know that a huge skills gap exists in communities nationwide. There are good-paying jobs out there, but the unemployed are either ill prepared or lack the appropriate education to fill these vacancies.

That is why I am proud the House did pass my legislation, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, earlier this year. It passed unanimously out of this body. The bill aims to close the skills gap by modernizing Federal investments in career and technical education programs by connecting educators with industry stakeholders. Career and technical education apprenticeship programs open the door for so many Americans.

Proudly, President Trump signed an executive order earlier this year to expand apprenticeships and skills-based education programs that put more Americans back to work in the trades.

We have seen too many students pushed down the college-for-all pathway that just doesn't work for some people. Obtaining an apprenticeship or career and technical education is a viable path that many high-achieving students can choose in pursuit of industry certifications and hands-on skills that they use right out of high school, in skills-based education programs, or should they choose, in college.

Mr. Speaker, we have all met young people who haven't been inspired in a traditional classroom setting. We all know people who have lost jobs who are underemployed, working multiple part-time jobs, and they are looking desperately for good-paying, family-sustaining jobs. We all know people who are aspiring for a promotion but keep falling short year after year.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all know families that have been trapped in poverty for generations. An apprenticeship can change that. A career and technical education can change that. Mr. Speaker, by the year 2020, it is estimated that more than 6 million jobs will go unfilled because of that skills gap of not having individuals who are qualified and trained to fill those positions.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that will be passed off this floor tomorrow—and I speak of that optimistically, with

confidence—is estimated to lead to creating a confidence that will result, it has been estimated, in a million jobs being created.

Through measures with career and technical education and measures such as apprenticeships, we can help Americans to be able to enter the workforce, to find that on-ramp to opportunity, to give everyone the opportunity to earn a good family-sustaining wage and have that security.

Mr. Speaker, Americans deserve no less.

#### A TRUE STORY FROM SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to tell you a true story from Scranton, Pennsylvania.

When Matty Loftus got out of the Army in 1970, he went to work for the TV tube plant in Dunmore, Pennsylvania, just north of Scranton. At the time, it was owned by RCA and later became Thompson Consumer Electronics.

Matty Loftus was 19 years old, and this was a great job, manufacturing picture tubes where a lot of great people worked, as many as 1,600 men and women. The pay was good; the benefits were excellent. They were union jobs, and the picture tubes they put together were so good, this company was able to sell them to Sony in Japan.

The people working at this plant were a community. They had wonderful company picnics. They had a softball league. They organized holiday parties for the kids and fishing derbies. Matty Loftus worked there for 30 years. He was able to raise four children on his salary alone.

Chuck Lampman is the same age as Matty Loftus, and they are friends. Chuck went to work for the RCA plant in 1972 when he was 21. He started in production, and he loved that job, too. He says: We were making the Cadillac of American televisions. By the year 2000, we were already starting to make the first generation of flat screen TV panels.

Around that time, Thompson won a worldwide award for making the best 27-inch TVs in the world, and everybody at the plant was so proud. Chuck says: That wasn't just a job; that was a way of life.

John O'Hearn got out of high school in 1975. He got a job at the TV plant right away. He worked production at first, but then he got bumped up into the machine shop. He made lifelong friends at that factory.

In 1994, NAFTA went into effect. Matty, Chuck, and John, they knew about it, but they didn't think too much about it. John remembers people in the machine shop who were interested in politics arguing over the effects of NAFTA.