

at a time when student debt totals more than a trillion dollars. Nearly two-thirds of Illinois college graduates have debt, and their average debt totals more than \$28,000.

Mr. Speaker, I am 100 percent opposed to repealing the elder tax credit, which helps families keep loved ones at home as they age.

I am 100 percent opposed to denying teachers, hardworking men and women who have dedicated their lives to teaching the next generation, a deduction when they dip into their own pockets to purchase school supplies their students need.

I am 100 percent opposed to repealing the work opportunity tax credit that helps businesses hire our brave veterans and young people starting their careers.

I am 100 percent opposed to repealing the orphan drug expense credit that helps find cures for terrible diseases like sickle cell anemia, pancreatic cancer, and cerebral palsy.

I am 100 percent opposed to saddling my children and grandchildren with an additional \$1.5 trillion in national debt just so Republicans can give a tax break to their donor base.

This is a scam. Mr. Speaker, I stand with the National Farmers Union, AARP, the National American Council on Adoptable Children, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, Fix the Debt, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the National Association of Realtors, the Mortgage Bankers Association, the Chicago Sun-Times, and the majority of Americans in opposing your so-called tax reform that is, frankly, nothing more than another attempt by the GOP to steal from the middle class and give to the rich.

Instead of packaging tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, let's work together on a plan for all Americans.

□ 1015

Let's stop allowing one side of the aisle the ability to write legislation affecting more than 300 million people, in secret, behind closed doors, and away from the public eye. I am 100 percent in favor of bringing in some sunlight and letting the American people know exactly what we are doing.

I am 100 percent in favor of doing what we were elected to do: fix problems by working together.

I am 100 percent in favor of real tax reform.

I am 100 percent in favor of giving hardworking moms and dads what they need and deserve: a tax break.

I am 100 percent in favor of growing the earned income tax credit so families get bigger paychecks.

I am 100 percent in favor of creating tax initiatives for businesses that hire and train at-risk young people and underemployed people.

And I am 100 percent in favor of a child care tax credit that actually reflects the true cost of childcare in America.

Let's put the politics aside and give the American people real tax reform that supports working families and our small businesses.

On other note, one more thing I am 100 percent against is more thoughts, prayers, and moments of silence and no action toward gun violence prevention. Shame on us, Mr. Speaker.

THE REAL COST OF WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, approximately 5 weeks ago, we tragically lost four soldiers in Niger: Staff Sergeant Bryan Black, Sergeant La David Johnson, Staff Sergeant Dustin Wright, and Staff Sergeant Jeremy Johnson. As recently as this past week, we lost a soldier in Afghanistan, Sergeant First Class Stephen B. Cribben.

To honor those I have just named, and their families, I would like to close by reading a September 26, 2010, editorial by Bob Schieffer, the host of "Face the Nation." The title of his editorial was: "The Real Cost of War."

"I was in an airport lounge the other day when I saw a woman across the way. Why I kept staring, I don't know. Maybe it was just that she seemed so sad. And then I understood. And I looked away, hoping she had not seen me stare.

"Because in her lap was an American flag, neatly folded into a triangle and placed in a clear plastic case—a flag folded the way it always is when it is given to a soldier's family as the soldier's coffin is lowered into the grave.

"I figured her to be a soldier's mother, and I couldn't help but wonder what memories that flag evoked as she held it there.

"Did it remind her of the first time she had seen her child in the delivery room, or was it the memory of seeing him go off to school that first day, or when he brought home the prize from the science fair, or maybe made the touchdown, or gave her the first Valentine when he wrote out, 'Mommy, I love you.'

"I keep thinking about all the talk in Washington about the high costs of defense and how we have to cut the Pentagon budget before it bankrupts the country.

"But as I watched the woman, budgets seemed to be such a small part of all of it.

"No, the real cost of war is not what we pay in dollars and cents.

"The real cost is what we take from a mother who is left with just a memory—and a neatly-folded flag in a clear plastic case."

Mr. Speaker, I share that with the House because I do not understand why, after 16 years in Afghanistan, we cannot have a debate on the floor of the House by all the Members here, of both parties, of whether we should continue to stay in Afghanistan or not.

After 16 years, we have spent over \$1 trillion, 2,300 Americans have been killed, and over 20,000 wounded, but the House does not have a debate.

I call on Mr. RYAN to please, as Speaker of the House, initiate the committees of jurisdiction to mark up a new AUMF and bring it to the floor and let the 435 Members of the House have a debate, no matter whether they want to stay or come home. But by not debating, we are not meeting our constitutional responsibility.

REPUBLICAN TAX PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to alert the American people to the tax scam that is the Republican tax reform proposal, unveiled last week. It is reported that President Trump wanted to call this bill "cut, cut, cut." That would have been apropos.

The first cut is for him and his family members, the second cut is for his wealthy friends and acquaintances, and the third cut is for large corporations classified as LLCs. It certainly does not cut taxes for middle-income families or most small businesses. In fact, it does just the opposite. It is crystal clear who gets the cuts and who gets to pay more.

First and foremost, the GOP tax plan eliminates inheritance taxes that only apply to two-tenths of 1 percent of families who wish to pass along their wealth, unearned and untaxed.

Why are Republicans doing this? Because it is a huge priority for some of their biggest donors, and the middle-income families will be asked to pay for this \$172 billion giveaway to the superrich.

The GOP pretend not to be cutting taxes for the superrich by maintaining the top rate of 39.6 percent. However, their plan increases the income levels that the 39.6 percent applies to from \$470,000 a year to \$1 million. These proposed rate changes will cost over \$1 trillion.

The GOP tax plan also features a special rate for the owners of passthrough businesses that will cost \$448 billion. These are LLCs and partnerships that pay zero corporate taxes and whose owners' income is treated the same as everybody else's.

LLCs and other types of passthroughs make up 95 percent of all the businesses in the country. Some of the largest businesses, like Koch Industries, Chrysler, and, of course, most of the entities owned by the Trump organization are LLCs.

Passthroughs that are truly small businesses are not currently subject to the highest individual rates and already pay 25 percent or lower. The National Federation of Independent Businesses opposes this provision for this very reason.

Mr. Speaker, most of us, especially those who have worked in State governments, view our States as the best