

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.

Through the nineties, these men and women were working the factory 24/7 in three shifts, putting out over 2 million picture tubes a year. They used to say: They will never close us down. We make this company too much money.

And then it came, May of 2001. Management called everybody into the plant and gave them the news. The plant was closing in August, 3 months from then, because they were moving to Mexico.

People were shocked. Nobody saw this coming. They tried to negotiate with the company, and Matty and Chuck remember the answer. It was: Are you willing to take a \$13-an-hour pay cut and work for \$3.25 an hour?

Matty remembers the pride that these people had at the plant working the last few months, the pride that they did their jobs with. There was no vandalism. There were no work stoppages, no slowdowns. They finished out their jobs showing the pride in the work that they had had for a generation. He remembers the tears on that last day and how people passed out lists of names and phone numbers so they could all stay in touch.

Chuck remembers on the last day how that trophy for the best 27-inch TV tube was still in the company lobby.

All three of them remember the aftermath. They remember the divorces. They remember the suicides.

Matty still had two daughters in public school. He went through his family savings, and he had to cash in some of his retirement money, take the penalty. Now he works as a security guard making \$10 an hour. He is 66, and he can't afford to retire.

Chuck was out of work for years, and eventually he found a job making half the money. He is also 66, and he can't retire.

John can't forget having to tell his daughter, Lindsey, in May 2001 he was losing his job. She was in tears. She was graduating high school the next month. She wanted to go to college.

When Chuck found out the current Republican tax plan is to drop corporate tax to 20 percent for companies doing business in America but to 10 percent for American companies doing business overseas, this is what he said: Haven't we lost enough already under NAFTA? Now you are going to reward companies for shipping more jobs overseas?

Mr. Speaker, this tax bill will ship more jobs overseas. This bill stinks, and I won't vote for it.

LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, today we recognize an individual who embodies the American Dream and the grit and determination that defines the people of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Pasquale Palino was born in Naples, Italy, in 1963. A resilient worker and a

passionate chef, he worked in the restaurant industry in Italy before marrying his wife, Anna Scotto.

Having two children, Carmela and Gennaro, Pasquale decided to leave Italy with his young family and come to the United States. He settled in Bensalem, Pennsylvania, and opened a restaurant, Pasta al Dente.

Soon after, he welcomed his third child, Nunzia. After spending a short while back in Italy, Pasquale returned to the United States. A family man, Pasquale had two more sons, Giovanni and Aniello. Pasquale opened Vecchia Osteria in 2009, where his incredible talent led to great success and allowed him to open Acqua e Farina, an authentic Neapolitan pizzeria, in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, Pasquale crossed oceans to pursue his dreams. He works tirelessly to put a smile on people's faces through the food that he makes.

Mr. Speaker, our communities and our Nation are better because of people like Pasquale Palino.

□ 1030

HONORING BUCKS COUNTY FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the first responders of Bucks County. Recently I was privileged to speak to nearly 300 first responders at the 45th Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce's Emergency Services Award Dinner and to offer them our heartfelt thanks.

As an EMT myself, I understand the love that these individuals have for their neighbors and for their community. Mr. Speaker, I was honored to recognize these 20 individuals pictured here.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD each of their names.

Robert Dondo
William Fluck IV
Eoghan Lowry
Karen Gibbons
Lisa Aron
Steven Vance
Michael Nyari
Keller Taylor
Zuri Kalix
Darren Carroll
Christopher A Horner
John Thomas
Jim Snock
Mark Potent
Scott Martin
Jessica Leal
Kevin Murphy
Michael Ray
Nancy Mayers
Pat Mattes

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, we honor and we thank each of these brave heroes in our community for putting themselves in harm's way to protect us in Bucks County. They are living their lives serving a cause bigger than themselves. What a noble way to spend their life.

TAX BILL IS HARMFUL TO VETERANS

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

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, as the co-chair of the National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus, as the co-chair of the Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus, and probably more importantly, as a retired enlisted soldier to bring to your attention a number of provisions in the GOP tax bill that will negatively impact the men and women currently serving and transitioning from the United States military.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear. Tax reform is a laudable goal. It would have been nice had we actually done it, had we actually had debates, had we actually had witnesses. Zero, zero, zero. What we have is a closed-door bill brought forward and forced upon the House. In my opinion, trying to think that the American people would not watch what happens here is pretty risky.

These are folks in the military who risked everything to give us the right to debate things here. We should at least probably debate their future in an open manner. I hope we will strongly consider, Mr. Speaker, each of these following provisions in this bill that will put the prosperity of America's heroes at risk.

As the legislation is written, this tax plan includes provisions that will specifically harm members and veterans to help pay for tax cuts for corporations and the ultrawealthy.

How can you justify giving a tax cut for carrying interest, but not for carrying a rucksack?

That is what that vote will be today. Be very clear about this. When you cast your "yes" vote, you are being very clear.

The first thing it does is it repeals tax credits proven to help veterans find employment when they come home, such as the repeal of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which includes the Help Hire Our Heroes Act. This credit is available to employers who hire veterans who have a service-connected disability, or are unemployed, or receive SNAP benefits.

Between 2013 and 2015, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit helped nearly 300,000 veterans find employment. But, again, don't take my word for it. The people who are telling you not to do this are the Air Force Sergeants Association, the United States Air Force Association, AMVETS, Army Aviation Association of America, Association of the United States Army, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, Gold Star Wives of America, Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, Marine Corps League, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. They are telling you, if you vote "yes," you are hurting the opportunities of America's veterans.

The GOP tax bill also repeals the disabled access tax credit. This simply allows small businesses to claim a tax