

Labrador explains anti-PILT vote:

Dear Friends,

I was on the short end of a 392-37 vote last week on a budget-busting Medicare bill that adds at least \$141 billion to our deficit. Casting my “no” vote on H.R. 2 should have been easy. It’s consistent with one of the most important promises I’ve made to Idahoans: to fight at every turn to reduce our \$18.1 trillion federal debt.

But tucked into this massive Medicare spending bill is an unrelated provision extending funding for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. Passed as a stop-gap to replace lost revenue from declining timber harvests on federal lands, SRS provides support to local government and schools in 35 Idaho counties. Rural counties are especially dependent on these funds.

I have long advocated a lasting replacement for SRS. We must reopen our federal forests to job-creating private-sector investment and empower rural communities to generate revenue from underutilized lands. In fact, I would have supported extending SRS funding in a stand-alone bill, or as part of relevant natural resources legislation. But attaching two years of SRS funding to a completely unrelated Medicare spending bill was unacceptable to me.

Why? Because I still believe the debt is the greatest threat to our national security and the future of our nation. As Republicans, we promised the American people that we would do everything in our power to battle this debt crisis.

The timing of the March 26 vote to add more debt is unsettling. On March 25, a GOP budget passed with promises to balance the budget in 10 years. Republican fiscal restraint lasted a single day.

The [Congressional Budget Office estimates](#) that H.R. 2 will increase federal deficits by \$141 billion from 2015-2025. CBO says a “precise estimate is not feasible” for 2025-2035, but says the bill “would raise federal costs” over current law. In addition, the bipartisan [Committee for a Responsible Budget did issue an estimate](#) for 2015-2035, saying the bill would add \$500 billion to the debt.

Maya MacGuineas, president of CRFB, spoke in Idaho in 2012. She warned of the “fiscal cliff” facing America and called for bipartisan solutions that threaten future generations.

In announcing her group’s opposition to H.R. 2 last week, MacGuineas said, “When we call for bipartisanship, this isn’t what we mean. It’s easy to be bipartisan when adding to the debt. The parties need to come together to improve our unsustainable fiscal situation, not to worsen it.”

I won’t forget my promise to restore fiscal sanity. Continuing to kick the can down the road is irresponsible, wrong-headed and immoral. I simply won’t do it.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul R. Labrador". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.