

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) spoke on the House Floor today in opposition to paying for part of the payroll conference report by targeting federal workers with increased retirement contributions made by new employees:

Click [here](#) to watch the video.

“I do not rise to necessarily defeat this bill. I'm going to vote against this bill. I am for almost all of this bill. What we are funding this bill with was unnecessary, unfair, and ought to be rejected. I want to say at the outset that my friend, Mr. Camp, and I had a very positive discussion. I believe that Mr. Camp and I could have reached an agreement which would have put me in support of this legislation. We didn't get there. We tried late in the game and we didn't get there. I regret that. I think Mr. Camp tried.

“I know that everybody on my side would have supported the agreement that Mr. Van Hollen and I put forward. That agreement would, as the current agreement would say, that the only individuals paying for this bill out of 315 million Americans are the two million civilian workers who work for us, who work for all of us, who day after day, week after week, month after month make sure we give the services to the people of the United States, protect the United states, ensure that our food is safe, ensure that we have FBI agents on the job, make sure at the Defense Intelligence Agency we know what other people are doing, these are all civilian employees. Highly skilled, highly trained, highly educated and, yes, highly motivated. And every day they give outstanding service to the people of the United States. We talk here and we pass laws here but none of that talk and none of those laws make a difference unless somebody implements what we say and the policies that we set. This Congress is on the path to be the most anti-federal worker Congress that I have served in.

“And I'm going to place that in context for you which is why I wanted the time. First of all, what is the context we find ourselves in? First of all, we have a very struggling economy.

“The good news is the economy is coming back but not fast enough. We need to create more

jobs, expand opportunities and make sure that the American Dream is alive for all working Americans. Working Americans like our federal employees, working Americans like the folks at G.M., who have done just very well, working Americans who work in the hardware store, the grocery store, the gasoline station, hardworking Americans. And we don't have enough jobs for them. As a result we have high unemployment, and I congratulate my friend, Mr. Levin, for his leadership in making sure that the unemployment provision in this bill is sufficient to try to reach those folks and make sure they don't fall off the ledge. We walked away from them in December. I'm glad we are not walking away from them today.

“Now, we also have, as all of us know, a struggling economy and therefore we put into effect giving \$1,000 more to each and every worker. Now, many of your [Republican] leaders did not support this 2% reduction, and I understand that. I won't go into their names. Some are in the chamber, but the fact of the matter is it puts \$1,000 of additional money into the pockets of average working Americans. People paying FICA. That is people making less than \$6,000. That is an important thing to do for us to try to keep this economy growing. I'm for that. I was for it in December. I'm for it in February. I'm glad we are going to have consensus on that today.

“In addition to that, we are playing a silly little game with the doctors and with Medicare patients, and this silly little game pretends we are going to extend SGR for 10 months. That's baloney and everybody knows it. We are going to extend SGR over and over and over again. We should have done it permanently in this bill. We should have done it permanently last year in the Congress which I was the Majority Leader. We should have done that. So with respect to SGR, ladies and gentlemen, we are playing a game, and the doctors all over this country and the Medicare recipients all over this country know we're playing a game. We're giving them no certainty, no confidence that come this September, October, November, we won't have another one of these silly little debates.

“Now, in context, we also have a deep deficit and debt that confronts this nation that we have to deal with, and we had two commissions that said we had to deal with it. One was Bowles-Simpson. My friend, Mr. Becerra, sat on that – my friend who sits in the chamber here with me. The other was Domenici and Rivlin, and we had others, including the Gang of Six in the United States Senate. All of them had a premise that we needed to deal with the fiscal problem that confronts us, and the other premise was all of us need to contribute to that solution. All of us.

“Now, what do we see that's being proposed in this Congress, partially in this bill but only partially? We are about to cut or propose to cut \$134 billion out of our federal employees over the next 10 years. Nobody else in this bill, not a millionaire, not a billionaire, not a carried

interest beneficiary, not an oil company, nobody in this bill other than federal employees is asked to pay.

“I understand we have hospital cuts. By the way, we have \$5 billion to that because we just increased by one year the cut that they know they got. The same for some other things. No individual other than a federal employee is asked to take a cut in this bill.

“Now, you will say to me, no, it's future federal employees, so it doesn't matter. That's \$15 billion of the \$134 billion that's been proposed. They've already paid \$60 billion, and by the way, your side of the aisle is not going to give them that half percent the President asked for, so that will be an additional \$30 billion. So in three years, Mr. and Mrs. American, Madam Speaker, will give \$90 billion in contribution to help bring this deficit down – that's what federal employees are paying. And by the way, federal employees as a percentage of our population are down by a third over the last 20 years. It's not that the bureaucracy is growing. Yes, our population is growing. We're trying to serve them. Down by a third in numbers.

“Now, I know something about federal employee pay. I represent about 60,000 federal employees. You say Hoyer is up there defending his people. You'd be right. You'd be very right. But most of the federal employees don't live in the Washington metropolitan area. They live in your districts, all over this country, serving your farmers. Serving your drug stores. Serving everything that you do.

“Do I think it's the private sector that makes this country great? Absolutely. Do I believe they need an energized, high-morale, highly educated federal workforce as their partner? I do. And you will not have that, ladies and gentlemen, if we keep along this path of every time we come to a bill that's a little bit of trouble the pay for is to reach in the federal employees' pockets. They pretty much are going to say I'm not with you any longer. I want to tell you, in terms of recruiting and retaining, you will not do it. Forty percent of the federal work force, ladies and gentlemen, can retire in the next five years. You are going to be able to recruit those folks only if you have a competitive work force.

“Let me give you a figure that you might find interesting. There are 33,000 employees at Goldman Sachs. Their average salary, ladies and gentlemen, is \$367,057. The average salary of 33,300 people. You won't be able to compete. You won't be able to get NSA employees as opposed to Siemens or Microsoft or some of those other corporations – many of whom are in Ms. Eshoo's district – you won't be able to recruit them and you won't retain them to have the

best and brightest defending Americans and making America the strongest and greatest country on Earth. You want America to be an exceptional country? You better best have the best civil service on earth. As well as the best private sector.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know whether most of you know this, I saw a gentleman from Florida who has been here for a couple months pontificate that I didn't know anything outside the beltway. I was the sponsor of the Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act, and the first George Bush signed that into law. We worked with his OMB to get it. What does it say? Federal employees cannot get a raise unless the private sector gets a raise. We are precluded from getting a raise unless the private sector gets a raise. What does it further say? That the private sector, which is the economic cost index, by the way, in case you want to know exactly what the statistic is, says we are going to take a half a point less.

“So what have you done? You are going to freeze their salary for the third year in a row. And Bowles-Simpson said do it for three, but they said everybody ought to share. They get \$1 trillion in revenues, \$1 trillion in cuts. Everybody. Nobody but federal employees is targeted in this bill.

“You can tell I'm angry about that, because that's not fair, and that's not how you want to treat our employees – America's employees, America's public servants. We ought to stop dissing them. We ought to stop demagoguing them. We ought to stop using ‘bureaucrat’ as an epithet. America needs them.

“I'll have some other things to say in a few minutes, Madam Speaker. But we ought not walk away from our federal employees any more than we ought to walk away from those 160 million people who need this tax cut or walk away from those 2.4 million who need that unemployment insurance. Or walk away as we have from the doctors who need certainty, long-term, not for 10 months, but long term.”

###