

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) released the following statement in opposition to the Fiscal Year 2006 Republican Budget, which contains harmful cuts to federal investments in Maryland that the state would be forced to absorb. The House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2006 conference report last night.

“This Republican Administration, and the Congressional Republican leadership have proven that their policies cannot be trusted when it comes to managing our nation’s fiscal house. Their actions have undermined the strength of our economy and will heavily burden future generations of Marylanders and citizens across the country.

“In just four short years, the Republican Party has turned a projected ten-year budget surplus of \$5.6 trillion into a projected deficit of nearly \$4 trillion. This year, the Office of Management and Budget projects a record budget deficit of \$427 billion – the third record deficit in a row. Since 2001, this Republican Party has added more than \$2.2 trillion to the national debt – now \$8.2 trillion – and that Republicans will increase the debt ceiling by another \$780 billion this year.

“At a time of exploding deficits and debt, this conference report calls for another \$70 billion in tax cuts, with nearly 75 percent of those breaks going to the wealthiest three percent of Americans. At the very same time, it calls for \$10 billion in cuts to Medicaid – which finances health care for more than 58 million low-income or disabled Americans and more than 600,000 people in Maryland. It also calls for cuts to student loans, food stamps, pension benefits, and other national priorities.

“Furthermore, this conference report not only fails to arrest our exploding deficit, it makes it worse – increasing the deficit by some \$168 billion over the next five years.

“And, while the Republican Party tries to convince the American people that Social Security faces an imminent crisis, this Republican conference report would spend every last nickel in the Social Security trust fund.

“Seven different times between 1999 and 2001, House Republicans voted to protect our Social Security surplus. But over the last four years, they have shattered the so-called Social Security ‘lockbox.’

“The Chairman of the Budget Committee (Mr. Nussle) boldly proclaimed in 2001: ‘This Congress will protect 100 percent of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds. Period. No speculation. No supposition. No projections.’

“But what this nation has seen over the last four years is nothing short of a full-scale retreat from fiscal responsibility, and the imposition of Republican policies that will immorally force our children to pay our bills. This conference report is the latest example of that and it represents the wrong choices and wrong priorities for the people of Maryland.”

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