

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment. Our focus today ought to be on jobs. And as some of my colleagues have already said, funding the arts creates jobs. For negligible investments, we create lots of jobs, because not only are the arts supported, but when you have artistic programs, restaurants and other activities generate jobs all over the community.

And our focus ought to be on education. Those children, for example, who are involved in of the arts, do better in school.

Now we're trying to cut funding for the arts in this amendment, and we cannot ignore why all these cuts are necessary. Last December we passed a tax cut of \$800 billion, \$400 billion a year. Now, we're looking to make cuts. Most of the projections are that we need \$4 trillion over the next 10 years in deficit reduction, \$400 billion a year. I hope we don't ignore the fact that that's the same number, \$400 billion tax cuts a year, and now we're looking for \$400 billion spending cuts a year.

So when we talk about cutting the arts, when we talk about cutting Social Security and Medicare and education and everything else, we cannot ignore the fact that all of these cuts are designed to preserve the tax cuts that we passed last December. And so to preserve those tax cuts--many are going to millionaires, multimillionaires, and oil companies--we find ourselves having to deal with this amendment to cut the arts.

Mr. Chairman, we should not be lulled into accepting caps. Caps just delay the inevitable because caps don't cut anything today. But when you start appropriating under the caps, in a few weeks or a few months, we'll find that there's not enough money for the arts, there's not enough money for Head Start, there's not enough money for education or Social Security or Medicare. So when you accept the caps, you're ultimately going to make these cuts.

We don't have any crisis today, Mr. Chairman, because some don't want to increase the debt ceiling. The debt ceiling is a perfunctory responsibility of this Congress. We've already spent the money. The debt ceiling just acknowledges what we've already done. We need to just pass the debt ceiling and get back to the regular order where we make choices.

Do we want to cut Social Security and Medicare and the arts in order to preserve tax cuts, many going to the oil companies and multimillionaires? I hope not, and we should begin by defeating this amendment.