

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot about the Members on the other side of the aisle trying to take credit for the fiscal responsibility in the 1990s. I think we need to review what actually happened during those years.

I came into Congress in 1993, and the first tough votes we had to cast were on the budget. We passed a tough budget. It passed by one vote in the House and a tie-breaking vote by the Vice President in the Senate. Not a single Republican voted for that tough budget. In fact, it's that budget that we are talking about that laid the groundwork for the fiscal responsibility for the 1990s.

And on that vote, when the last vote was cast by Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky from Pennsylvania, the Members on the other side of the aisle did not congratulate her for casting the tie-breaking vote to pass the bill. They started chanting "Bye-bye, Marjorie," and she was defeated with that vote in her next election. In fact, she was defeated along with almost 50 Members of the Democratic Party who voted for that budget.

In 1995, when the Republicans came in with a majority, they tried to dismantle the budget. And in fact, President Clinton vetoed all of those budgets that they had offered; and we shut down the government, rather than dismantle that plan. Finally, when the deficit had gone from \$290 billion down to less than \$25 billion, then the Members on the other side of the aisle joined on as we crossed the finish line.

Well, that's like showing up for the ribbon-cutting after you have voted against the stimulus bill. All of the tough votes had been cast. All of the hard work, all of the political damage had been suffered. And now all of a sudden, they want to come in and take credit. What they can take credit for is President Clinton vetoing their bills.

If you want to know what would have happened if they had been signed, we found out in 2001. Because as Chairman Greenspan had to answer questions as to what's going to happen if we pay off the national debt too quickly--we were on chart to paying off the national debt after the first tax cut--that was the last time you heard anybody talking about paying off the national debt.

Two tax cuts not paid for, two wars not paid for, prescription drugs not paid for, and now we find ourselves in the ditch.

Balancing the budget is arithmetic. You've got to pass some unpopular votes. You've got to raise taxes and/or cut spending, and you're going to make some political enemies doing either one.

This legislation doesn't help us make those tough choices. In fact, it makes it even more difficult. People say we need a constitutional amendment to force us to balance the budget. This legislation doesn't force us to do anything. It makes it more difficult. Read the bill. If we want to

pass something--we had a hearing on it a couple of days ago when the former Governor of Pennsylvania said that the balanced budget provision in the Pennsylvania State Constitution was a good idea, and I asked him what provision in this legislation can be found in the Pennsylvania Constitution; none of them. None of the provisions of H.J. Res. 2 can be found in any State constitution other than the title. And so here we are talking about the title but not the provisions of the bill.

The major provision in this bill is a three-fifths requirement to pass a budget that's not in balance; which, incidentally, would cover every budget that we considered this year.

Now, I think it is fair to say that the most fiscally conservative budget on the table was the Republican Study Group that got a few votes, not anywhere close to a majority. And if that's your goal, why would raising the threshold from a simple majority that you couldn't even get up to three-fifths make it more likely that you could pass that tough kind of budget?

Once you have ascertained that even the Republican Study Group budget would require three-fifths, any budget, responsible or irresponsible, could pass with the same three-fifths. In fact, you could cut taxes with three-fifths. You could raise spending. You could have a totally irresponsible budget with three-fifths. So why is it more likely that you're going to be fiscally responsible with three-fifths when you've never been able to get even a simple majority, when three-fifths--last December we passed an \$800 billion tax cut, putting us \$800 billion further in the ditch. We got three-fifths for that, but try to get three-fifths for a meaningful deficit reduction plan.

This legislation will make it more difficult to balance the budget. All of this debate has been about the title, how nice it would be to balance the budget. But we ought to read the bill and point out that the provisions of this bill will actually make it more difficult, probably impossible, to ever balance the budget, and we will end up trying to get three-fifths vote, ending up with worse budgets than we would have under the present system.