The federal budget is a reflection of our fundamental values and priorities as a nation. Determining which investments our government makes, and deciding how to pay for those investments, are perhaps the most important decisions Congress faces each year. They are also at the heart of Congress' Constitutional responsibilities: Article 1 of the Constitution envisions the "power of the purse" as the most important way for the Legislative Branch to hold the Executive accountable and ensure that the will of the people is reflected in the government's decisions.

As a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee and a former member of the House Budget Committee, I have fought consistently for robust investments in education, innovation, infrastructure, and the other things that make our nation strong, while also working to promote fairness and fiscal responsibility in the federal budget process. In the current Congress, I serve as the senior Democratic member of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, which develops the annual budget for the Department of Homeland Security and its component agencies. I also serve on the Appropriations subcommittees for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and for military construction and veterans affairs.

My role as the only Appropriations Committee member from North Carolina has also allowed me to ensure that our state gets its fair share of federal resources by fighting for programs and projects on which it depends. I have been a leading advocate for scientific research at the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Departments of Energy and Agriculture, and other agencies, which is a key driver of economic growth in our area. I have also secured funding for a wide range of local projects that directly benefit the Fourth District. The two efforts in which I take greatest pride are the EPA last in RTP, which took nine years of appropriations work, and the new National Guard/Emergency Operations Headquarters in Raleigh, funded as part of the 2009 Recovery Act.

As an active participant in the successful effort to balance the budget during the 1990s—which produced four straight years of budget surpluses and allowed us to pay down our national debt for the first time in a generation—I have been a strong advocate for a return to fiscal responsibility during this time of mounting deficits and debt. The reckless fiscal policies that

characterized the Bush Administration—trillions in unpaid-for tax cuts, two expensive wars, and the abandonment of pay-as-you-go budgeting by Congress—left our country in a deep hole at the time the economic crisis hit, and climbing back out will continue to require tough choices and shared sacrifice.

At the same time, we must remember that the surest route to a balanced budget is a growing economy with low unemployment and high consumer confidence. Many of my colleagues are demanding a "cuts-only" approach to returning to fiscal balance, putting programs that ensure our economic success—education, research, infrastructure, and innovation—on the chopping block. This approach both threatens our fragile economic recovery and undermines our future competitiveness. Any real solution to our fiscal challenges will take a balanced approach to deficit reduction. Common sense tells us that special interest loopholes should be closed, and simple math tells us we will never balance the budget through domestic spending cuts alone.

As your representative, I will continue to fight for a federal budget that protects critical domestic investments while also charting a responsible path back to fiscal balance. I hope you will keep in touch with me as Congress debates these important issues.

Related Information

- Click here to check on the status of the latest appropriations bills.
- For more information on the federal budget, including charts, graphics, and more, please visit the website of the House Budget Committee .
- Learn more about federal budget process from the Congressional Research Service
- Want to know where your taxes go? View your taxpayer receipt here .