

Eshoo Statement Opposing Medicare Budget Cuts

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, voted today for an amendment by Rep. Edward J. Markey, D-Mass., to eliminate the Medicare budget cuts and made the following statement during a meeting of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

"This debate on Mr. Markey's amendment I think is a classic debate. The reason the members of this committee on this side of the aisle support this amendment is very, very basic. It is because the cuts that are being made are cutting into the most vulnerable people in our country. And the reason they are being made is not to reform anything. If you look up the word reform in the dictionary, it does not say cut. It means to change for the better. It means to reshape. The basic premise, the basic principle and it is why it is in reconciliation is you need something to cover the holes in the budget for the tax cuts. That is what this debate is about. You should take that debate and run with it. Be up front about it. That is what you are doing. That is why we do not support it. That is why we do not support it.

"And when we talk about cuts, it is more than programs, Mr. Chairman, who is my friend. This cuts into the moral fiber of our country. This cuts into our national character. This cuts into the best of who we are. The framers did not have a vision of where we would pursue and hunt down the most vulnerable in our society. That is not who we are. This is not anything to be proud of.

"As a Catholic when we talk about reconciliation in the church, it is about a bringing together. It is in a spiritual sense about healing. This is not reconciliation in the best of what that word represents.

"Now you can talk all you want about the governors. Governors are always, they always have and always will come to Congress and say we do not have enough money for the program that we share with you. I think it twists the absolute intent of any governor, Republican or Democrat, that they came here and said protect the tax cuts at the altar of our country.

"I mean, come on, I may be elected but I am not a fool. This is a dark moment for our country and I am an optimist because I see day in and day out the decency of the American people. We have seen the character of the American people in the most hard-hit areas of our country. And what is this distinguished committee doing? In the name of Katrina,

we are going to worship at the altar of tax cuts and say guess what, we are saving you. We are doing something for you, Mr. and Mrs. America. Where is the faith that people talk about in this institution? Whatever happened to the beatitudes? That is how deep this goes. It is not a theory. It is not just a formula. We have to live it out. We did not come here, none of our constituents sent us here to hurt people and that is what this debate is about. It is so basic. It really cuts to the bone marrow of who and what we are.

"You are darn right we support, I support Mr. Markey's amendment. This thing should be wiped right off the bench today. You want to go to reforms? We will work with you on real reforms but we are not going to worship tax cuts and see them implemented and hurt people and then call that a reform. That is not what this is. In the names of all of our ancestors that helped build this country, not one member on this committee should be supporting this thing. This is a bad thing. This is a bad thing and we should hearken back to our conscience on this, our national character, the decency of our people should be matched by the decency of Members of Congress.

"So you are darn tooting we support Mr. Markey because it is in act of conscience. That is what the amendment should be called. Not one of us is going to stand for this. It is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong."

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