

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Continuing Resolution (H.J. Res. 117) to fund the federal government through March 2013.

This bipartisan spending bill staves off the devastating costs recommended by my Republicans colleagues and instead continues the funding levels for the operations of federal agencies at last year's levels. I am pleased that this measure extends the services on which New Jersey families rely such as Small Business Administration, SBA, loan guarantees, Veterans Administration, VA, disability claims, and natural disaster relief. It preserves the necessary funding for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP.

This compromise is by no means perfect, however. I am disappointed that this measure does not take any steps to invest in innovation, improve math and science education, make college more affordable, or help grow industries such as biotechnology and clean energy. I regret that this bill freezes the pay of hardworking federal employees who have already had years of pay freeze. Under this spending bill, no new programs will be funded. Unfortunately, this means that none of the important new programs--such as anti-distracted driving campaigns--authorized in the recently passed MAP-21 transportation bill can begin.