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Dear Friends:

This week, I announced the formation of the bipartisan **Congressional Global Health Caucus**. The caucus will provide a forum for Members of Congress, staff and the global health community to share information and better prepare U.S. leadership to meet its critical responsibilities in global health surveillance, research, prevention and treatment. **Dr. Michael Osterholm**, a professor at the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota, and one of our nation's premier epidemiologists, addressed the first meeting of the caucus about the possibility of an avian flu pandemic.



Looking ahead to next week, Republican leaders in the U.S. House are scheduling a vote on their amendment to the Fiscal Year 2006 budget resolution, purportedly to offset spending for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Sadly, Republicans are again generations of Americans to pay for \$106 billion in additional tax cut giveaways to their special interest. Their plan would have devastating consequences on those who need our help most - hurricane survivors, seniors, and working Americans, because it makes deep cuts to vital services including Medicaid, student food stamps, yet still adds \$100 billion to the deficit.

Americans deserve an honest budget that shares collective benefits as well as the sacrifice. I am working Democratic colleagues to put the priorities of middle class families first and return to fiscal sanity by balancing the budget and returning fiscal responsibility to Congress.

Please also read about my work to defeat **efforts by House Republican leaders to gag affordable housing nonprofits**.

Sincerely,

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

Serving Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District

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