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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

With the deadline approaching for the government default, House lawmakers voted Monday to raise the nation’s borrowing authority in exchange for cutting more than $2 trillion over the next decade, capping the growth of federal programs, and forcing a vote on a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

All Ohio Democrats voted against it for various reasons. Democrats: Marcia Fudge of Warrensville Heights, Marcy Kaptur of Toledo, Dennis Kucinich of Cleveland, Tim Ryan of Niles and Betty Sutton of Copley Township all said no.

“I voted no because this is a job killing bill that puts our nation’s economy at risk. I can’t in good faith tell my constituents that Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security are safe under this plan because we don’t know what will happen. We don’t know what cuts the Committee will come up

with, but it is a safe bet that the largest mandatory spending programs (Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid) will be at the top of the list. Above all, the deficit is not the biggest obstacle to the nation’s prosperity; the lack of jobs is,” said Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge (D-OH).

“Under this legislation we know there will be cuts, but there are no guarantees of revenue increases. The plan fails to address some of the most common sense reforms, including closing tax loop holes for corporations making billions in profit every year and revising the tax code to make sure the top 2 percent of the highest income Americans are paying their fair share,” added Fudge.

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Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) Monday released the following statement after voting against S. 365, the Budget Control Act of 2011.

“S. 365, the Budget Control Act of 2011, is a landmark in American history, but for the wrong reasons. It is a fake solution to a phony crisis. It provides for a radical transformation of the structure of government. It is an attack on the principle of government of the people. All this in the name of fiscal accountability.”

“The choice we have today, default or dismantling of the social compact through draconian spending cuts, is a false choice. The President could have simply told Congressional leaders back in December of last year that the debt ceiling was not negotiable, and invoked the 14th Amendment as a backstop.”

Many economists and government officials warned that defaulting on those obligations would roil global financial markets and lead to a downgrading of the country’s stellar bond rating, a move that would increase interest payments the government must make.

Toledo Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur made this statement: "It will not create jobs and in fact will be a further downdraft on recovery."

Niles Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan states, "I am deeply disappointed this deal was brokered purely under the Tea Party-led threat of default, and I refuse to endorse these cuts, or the manner in which the American economy was threatened in order to achieve them. This plan kicks the can down the road while virtually guaranteeing that the middle class will get hit again."

The legislation also would establish a 12-member committee of three Republicans and three Democrats from both the House and Senate to recommend at least $1.5 trillion in additional deficit cuts over 10 years. These could include tax increases and entitlement programs. If the reductions are approved, the debt ceiling would be increased by the same amount.

The deal also calls for a vote on a balanced budget amendment. Tea party conservatives had wanted a debt ceiling increase to be contingent on passage of the amendment in Congress, which requires two-thirds approval from lawmakers in both the House and the Senate before it could be sent to the states for their approval.

Randi Winegarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers says, "We understand that, given the timing, this deal was necessary to avoid default and stabilize the financial markets; nevertheless, we are disappointed that it appears our most vulnerable citizens will bear the brunt of this solution. The deal does not create jobs or further invest in our infrastructure or our children. In fact, it will likely lead to huge cuts in programs for children, seniors and those who can least afford it, yet it doesn't ask 1 cent of shared sacrifice from the wealthiest or from corporations. Finally, we are concerned this deal will have long-term negative consequences to state and city budgets, including school budgets – budgets that already have been affected by the deep recession."

"The debt deal is a temporary fix to a problem caused by the worst recession since the Great Depression, years of tax cuts and giveaways, two wars and the unfunded 2003 prescription drug program. Going forward, we need a thoughtful, constructive discussion focused on meeting the priorities necessary for a better future, including sensible spending and investments in programs that will create jobs, provide for those who need help the most, increase revenues from those who can afford it, and stimulate the growth of our economy for years to come."

The White House promises President Obama will sign the measure into law.

The US Senate approved a sweeping package that will cut trillions from the deficit and raise the debt limit just hours before the government faced a default on its obligations. The bill passed the senate, 74-to-26.

After the Senate approved the bill, President Barrack Obama spoke from the rose garden, making brief remarks following the vote.

He said the piece of legislation was an "important first step to ensure as a nation we live without our means."

The president emphasized that this was "only a first step," and then went on to echo what Sen. Harry Reid said on the floor of the Senate, saying that during the negotiations of the super committee, the lawmakers had to "work together" toward a "balanced approach where everything is on the table."

He said that means Medicare and Medicaid reform but also a reform of the tax code to get rid of loop holes and so the "wealthiest Americans pay their fair share."

"Everyone is going to have to chip in," Obama said. "It's only fair."

The president also urged the Senate to end the impasse that has hobbled the Federal Aviation Administration and put a stop to all airport construction projects in the country.