

House Democrats used a Budget Committee markup meeting on Wednesday to argue that the House GOP 2013 budget is a massive tax increase on the middle-class.

The tax argument is being used prominently by Democrats this year alongside Democratic attacks that Rep. Paul Ryan's (R-Wis.) budget "ends Medicare" by converting it to a premium support subsidy to buy private insurance.

Budget Committee ranking member Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) sought to box in Republicans by offering an amendment to the budget aimed at preventing any tax increases on families making less than \$250,000 per year, in order to pay for tax cuts for millionaires.

That amendment was defeated when 20 Republicans voted against it, while 15 Democrats supported it.

Van Hollen argued that based on previous Joint Tax Committee studies, the GOP budget would have to eliminate popular tax breaks like that for home mortgage interest, employer healthcare, and the child tax credit in order to pay for its tax cuts. Those tax breaks are used disproportionately by the middle-class, according to the JCT, Van Hollen said. Meanwhile, lowering the top tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent would help the wealthiest the most, he said.

The Ryan budget collapses the current six tax brackets into a 10 percent and 25 percent top rate.

"It is not fair to raise taxes on middle-income Americans to pay for big additional tax breaks for Wall Street executives and the very wealthy," Van Hollen said.

Republicans rejected the amendment as a "gotcha" trick and argued that President Obama has already raised taxes on the middle class, in violation of his election pledges, by imposing a health insurance mandate in his healthcare reform bill.

A separate amendment by Rep. John Yarmuth (D-Ky.) would have imposed a "Buffett rule" ensuring millionaires pay at least the same rate as middle class taxpayers.

**Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.)** argued that Democrats were engaging in class warfare that could turn America into an "envy" society. This was defeated on a party-line 15 to 22 vote.

The skirmishes over taxes came during an epic committee meeting on Wednesday in which 30

amendments are on the table.