

2002 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FURTHER RECOVERY FROM AND RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2002

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4775) making supplemental appropriations for further recovery from and response to terrorist attacks on the United States for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the appalling strategy the Majority Party is using to raise our nation's debt limit and raid the Social Security Trust Fund. Our nation's families must make hard decisions to balance their budgets. We, in Congress, must do the same.

It is shameful that the Republican Majority seeks to raise our nation's debt limit by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a trillion dollars by sneaking it through without a debate and without a vote. Especially when the bill before us addresses critical emergency needs.

Some may ask how the average American is affected by this Republican trick. They may ask why we as Democrats are fighting against this so hard and with such passion. It is because, by raising the debt limit, the Republicans are clearing the way to dip into the Social Security Trust Fund.

I've been listening carefully as my Democratic colleagues have spoken about the impact of this shameful move on our nation's senior citizens and the baby boom generation as it's members approach their retirement years. I want to address the way in which this affects our nation's younger adults and our nation's children.

Many of our nation's younger adults are in what has been called the "sandwich" generation . . . balancing the care of their parents (or grandparents) with a new career or a new family of their own. Until she passed away last year at age 94, I was the primary caregiver for my grandmother. I helped her in a variety of ways and one was helping her with her budget, paying her bills and balancing her checkbook. I know how much of a difference her Social Security income made for her. But the independence that Social Security helped my grandmother maintain, didn't only help her, it helped me too.

Protecting Social Security is a commitment we made to our seniors, but it is ALSO a commitment we made to families. Who among us would turn our backs on our parents or grandparents? It is just as important to YOUNG PEOPLE that we have Social Security and Medicare as it is to our seniors because it keeps our families and communities strong!

We talk so much about protecting Social Security in the near-term. But what about the youngest generation?

I have two young cousins, Jennifer and David. Jennifer is five years old and David is three. Jennifer will retire in the year 2062 and

David will retire in 2064. What will the world look like then? None of us know. But I do know that in Congress, I want to leave a legacy for Jennifer and David, and all the boys and girls of their generation. In addition to wanting Jennifer and David to have the best education, great health care, and a good job, I want them to have a secure retirement that includes Social Security.

The back-handed actions the Majority takes today to raise the debt limit hurts this nation's young children and young adults in yet another way. You've heard the Majority throw around the phrase "tax and spend," often aiming their words at the Minority. Well what we are seeing today is "borrow and spend." Borrow from Social Security and Medicare so you can give big tax breaks to American millionaires and wealthy corporations and don't sweat it . . . because when you borrow, you can leave it to the next generation to pay. It is not fair to young Americans that they will have to suffer and struggle with the consequences of today's actions.

I believe that together we can achieve the goal of preserving the integrity of Social Security for future generations. But we cannot do it together if the Republican party insists on using surreptitious ways to increase the debt limit by \$750 billion without any public debate and without even a straight-forward vote.

We need to work out a bipartisan plan to protect Social Security and responsibly address the debt limit. We need to keep our commitment to all hard-working families to safeguard Social Security. We owe it to our grandparents to protect Social Security. We owe it to our parents to be fiscally responsible. We owe it to our own generation to keep within our means. And we owe it to our children to fulfill the legacy of a secure retirement. If we accept this language on our country's debt limit today without a fair debate and vote, we will owe more than money to future generations—we will owe them an apology for having broken their trust and broken our promises.

I yield back.

2002 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FURTHER RECOVERY FROM AND RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2002

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4775) making supplemental appropriations for further recovery from and response to terrorist attacks on the United States for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Chairman, time and time again I have heard my colleagues on the minority side assure us of their patriotism. Let me begin by saying that neither I, nor any of my colleagues on the majority side, have called anyone's patriotism into question.

Are Democrats really opposed to raising the debt limit? I submit the answer to that is "of

course not." In fact, it was raised a number of times during the 40 years of Democrat leadership in this House. I am quite sure that all, or nearly all of the Members in this body realize we have to raise the debt limit and we have to raise it now. And yet we're told that to do so would be fiscally irresponsible.

Now, during a time in which we face the after effects of an economic slowdown; during a time in which we must spend many billions of dollars fighting a war in Afghanistan, securing our homeland, and rebuilding Manhattan; and during a time in which it is clear to everybody that the debt limit must be raised, our friends cry foul. Fiscally irresponsible, they say.

Never mind that the Republican-controlled Congress spent down the public debt by some \$450 billion between Fiscal Year 1997 and Fiscal Year 2001. Never mind that the need to raise the debt limit is mostly attributable to growth, as designed and desired, in debt held by government accounts. Never mind that over the 40 years of Democrat majority we had to raise the debt limit multiple times because the government needed to finance deficits due to out-of-control spending. And never mind that the crisis resulting from the events of 11 September has undoubtedly pushed us right up against the \$5.95 trillion debt ceiling allowed under current law. Never mind any of that. We're fiscally irresponsible.

We do seek to increase the debt limit. We do so against a backdrop whereby we have one, a history of fiscal discipline where the minority does not, and two a responsible wartime budget resolution where the minority does not; and three, a plan to save social security where the minority has none.

I bring up social security for a reason, Mr. Chairman. I am saddened that the minority has spent today in the same manner as they usually choose to spend every other October: scaring our senior citizens. They imply that a vote for this legislation, which devotes nearly \$16 billion to the Department of Defense, \$5.8 billion to homeland security, and \$5.5 billion to assist New York, somehow puts the solvency of the social security trust fund in jeopardy. That is, of course, preposterous.

It is easy for the minority to sit back and cry foul, but I would ask all of my colleagues the following questions: has the minority done anything but attempt to obstruct? Have they come to the table over the last months with any serious budget ideas? The answer to these questions, regrettably, is "no."

That, Mr. Chairman, is unfortunate, because I have worked so often in the past with my Democrat colleagues, who usually have so much to offer in the way of constructive ideas.

If my Democrat colleagues are going to obstruct proceedings because they say raising the debt limit is fiscally irresponsible, well, I will let that excuse speak for itself. The American people know better than that. They know that during this time in our nation's history, a little flexibility is needed. And they know that we will continue passing responsible budgets. In the future, I truly hope we will do so with the support of my Democrat friends.