

money for defense spending, we say, let's just charge that and we will have tax cuts, too. One way or another this has to be reconciled.

I am in favor of some tax cuts. I would like to see some tax cuts. I think the American people would like tax cuts. But when someone says let's have the American people keep more of their own money, the answer to that on the reverse side of the same coin is let's charge more to the American people because they are going to have to pay for it. One can argue trade deficits are going to have to be paid by a lower standard of living in this country, but our kids and grandkids are going to pay for a fiscal policy deficit. It is a selfish fiscal policy, in my judgment, and one we ought to reverse.

We ought to try to call on the best of what both parties have to offer this country, not the worst of each. In my judgment, the best both parties have to offer this country is some basic conservative values of saying let's do what is right to invest in what makes this a good country and at the same time let's pay for that which we want to consume. Let's have a fiscal policy that says to every American, this adds up. Let's say to our kids we are not going to have them shoulder the burden of what we are doing today. That is what our fiscal policy ought to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I will speak to the pending business, which is the nomination of Priscilla Owen to the circuit court of appeals. She is a highly qualified person who really needs to be recognized. We need to move through this rapidly.

The last 2 years, I was honored to be able to serve on the Judiciary Committee. We held extensive hearings on Priscilla Owen to be a circuit court judge. She went through those hearings in an extraordinary fashion. It was a learning experience. It was as if a professor was there teaching and going through with us, here is how I decided this case, here is hornbook law on this, here is how this should be decided, here is how I viewed the issue. She really has a fine-tuned legal mind. I was impressed by the legal mind she has.

I was impressed by the common sense she had with it as well. It was as if this was a highly trained legal mind well adapted to being able to judge, but also with a sense of values of the people, which is as one would expect because she was elected to the Texas Supreme Court. She has been around the public. She knows how people think.

When a lot of people look at the judiciary in the United States, they do not feel like they get a sensible approach to judging a fair amount of time. She is an extraordinary person to have both that depth of mental training and ability and a sensible touch that the people really desire and want to have in somebody on the judiciary.

What I am most distressed about is it appears as if now we are going to get

our second filibuster of a circuit court judge from the Democratic Party. In the past, we have not had filibusters of judges. We have had them at a Supreme Court level but not the circuit or district court level. Now it appears as if we are going to get our second filibuster of a judge in a matter of a couple of months. This, of course, is to raise the vote standard so she does not have to get 51 votes, she has to get 60 votes to be able to go on the circuit court of appeals.

This is not advice and consent of the Senate, which is what our standard is held to. We are to give advice and consent on judges. They should be appointed by the administration and then there should be advice and consent. That should be a 51-vote margin. It should not be a 60-vote margin that now the other side is attempting to establish. This is a very distressing situation we are getting into.

How many more judges are we going to see like that who are nominated for the circuit court? Are we going to continue to put them forward and the other side will say we are going to filibuster for whatever reason? How many of these is it to be?

I recognize what the strategy is. It is to keep the circuit court reduced of judges, not to allow this President to appoint his judges, not to allow him to put his print upon the judiciary. I recognize that is what is happening on the other side of the aisle, but when they do that, one needs to recognize the long-term policy implications of so doing. Now they are saying a President cannot appoint his or her judges to the bench; that when they were elected and selected by the people of the United States, now they cannot appoint people to the court; that the other party, if they can control 51 votes, can block the President. This is not about advice and consent. It is about blocking a President from appointing his judges to the Federal bench.

We have not seen this strategy before. It was always the President puts forward his nominees, we hold hearings, and then if they can be blocked with 51 votes, they are blocked, but not filibustering of circuit court judges. This is a dangerous area.

On the other hand, we could say the other party is looking at this saying this represents a two-fer for us: We cannot only block the President from getting his judges on the bench, we can block the Senate from doing other business.

We do not normally take weeks on end to do a Federal circuit court nominee, but that is what we are ending up doing with Miguel Estrada and now with Priscilla Owen. We are spending weeks on end of Senate floor time on a circuit court judge. That is not how the system is set up.

These nominations should be taking a couple of hours, at most, for debate and voting, and then we should be moving on and debating fiscal stimulus, how do we get this economy growing,

how do we create more jobs. We have a number of issues in regard to rural development. How do we get more people to move out into rural areas of Kansas. We have plenty of issues on foreign policy to debate. What about the new Iraqi leadership? What about the relationship of the United States to the U.N.? There is a whole litany of issues we could be taking floor time up with, but instead we are on circuit court judges that should be debated in an hour or two, voted up or down by advice and consent of the Senate, as it says in the Constitution, and moving forward. We are taking up valuable time instead, weeks on end, with circuit court judges that should have a clear vote up or down.

This hurts the country on two fronts. It hurts on the judiciary, on not having the people appointed to the bench that we need to have, and it hurts us by not being able to do other business we should be focused on in the Senate. That is not a useful way for us to conduct business in the Senate.

I urge the other side of the aisle to please step forward and stop the filibuster of circuit court judges. That is not the way we need to operate to be able to get the business done.

On top of that, we have circuit courts around the country that in some cases have only half of the judges that are necessary. The other half have resigned or left office and so we have enormous vacancies. Some people would say they like it that way because then two circuit court judges can pick a third one—maybe it is two liberal circuit court judges can pick a district court judge, bring them up to a three-judge panel to have a liberal-leaning panel and we can set policy and set law that way. But that is not the way the system is set to operate, even though it does operate that way. We really need to move forward in this area.

I do not normally come to the floor to harangue about what is taking place in the judiciary, but in this case this is beyond the pale. This is not what should be taking place. It is hurting us and it is hurting the country.

#### GROWING THE ECONOMY

I will take a minute or two to address some of the topics that came up about the economy. We need to get this economy growing and going. I will make a couple of brief observations.

At the Federal level, we have two major tools to grow the economy. We have monetary policy and we have fiscal policy. Monetary policy is set by the Fed, not by the Congress but by the Fed. The Fed can set interest rates high or low, control the supply of money. The Fed is doing the exact right thing to grow the economy today with low interest rates. That is as it should be.

On the other side of that is fiscal policy, and that is what the Congress does. We have tools at our disposal to try to grow the economy. One of the major tools is tax policy. Do we increase taxes, do we decrease taxes, in a way to stimulate the economy?

The most stimulative tool that is available to us is to lower tax rates. That grows the economy. It grew the economy when President Reagan cut taxes. It grew the economy when President Kennedy cut taxes. That is the way the economy grows.

Some people would say, look at the deficit we are in now; we cannot afford to reduce the taxes at this point in time. I would answer, we cannot afford not to reduce taxes to stimulate the economy. In the last 2 years, we have seen a reduction in Federal receipts of 9 percent, and an increase of Federal expenditures of around 12 percent. Quick math tells us we are going to be in a real problem when we have those two trend lines.

The Federal receipts have gone down 9 percent. That is not as a result of changes of tax policy. That is a result of the economy being soft and not producing the economic lift and push we need. And, frankly, the rest of the world needs a strong and robust U.S. economy as well.

How do we get the economy going again? We need to stimulate growth with tax cuts. I will give one quick fact. Last year we saw a reduction in capital gains tax receipts of about \$80 billion. There has been \$80 billion in loss in capital gains tax receipts. That is not the result of a tax policy shift. That is primarily the result of the stock market falling dramatically the last couple of years, the tech boom going bust, problems and fears of what has taken place around the world, 9/11, a series of things where people pulled funds out of the market; instead of having capital gains, they had capital losses.

Some say the stock market does not affect most people. Yet half of Americans have some investment or retirement tied into the stock market. What can we do there? We can do away with that double taxation of corporate dividends as a way to stimulate investment and stimulate growth in the stock market. Plus, it is just good tax policy to not tax something twice.

What about balancing the budget? I have been a part of a Congress that has balanced the budget. I came to the House of Representatives in 1994. One of our major pushes was to balance the budget, which had not been done since 1969, and then it was actually an accounting move that allowed us to balance the budget in 1969. It had not been done for 20 years prior to that, but from 1969 until we balanced it about 5 years ago, the budget had not been balanced.

One of our key pushes was to balance the budget. So I have been a part of a Congress that has actually balanced the budget. It is the Congress that balances the budget. We are the ones who write the checks. The administration, the Presidency, spends the money. They can spend less if they choose in some situations, but we are the ones who actually authorize and appropriate.

How do we balance the budget? I think we have found the formula for doing it. We grow the economy and we restrain your growth in Federal spending until the lines intersect and you get the economy growing strong, and then you restrain your growth in Federal spending until those intersect. That is how we balance the budget. We had a growing economy, but instead of spending this increase in Federal receipts, we restrained the growth of Federal spending and those intersected and we got 3 years of significantly balanced budgets, done by a Republican Congress. That is how you get it done.

What is our key now? Our key now is to get the economy growing, cut taxes to stimulate the growth, and restrain the growth of Federal spending. I put forward a bill with several people as one way of restraining Federal spending, to create a domestic program equivalent to the Base Closure Commission. We have a Base Closure Commission that has been very successful saying we have too many military bases; we need to eliminate some of those, consolidate them in fewer areas. To remove one or two at a time is an impossible task. So we have a commission that recommends 50 closures taking place and gives Congress one vote up or down whether to eliminate the bases altogether. It has been very successful in consolidating resources.

What about doing that in domestic discretionary programs where we have thousands of domestic discretionary programs? Have a commission to say these 100 were good when they started, but the reason for their creation has gone. They are effective but not yielding as much as they should. These 100 should be eliminated. The commission reports to Congress and requires Congress to vote up or down whether they agree or disagree, eliminate all 100 or keep all 100. It is a domestic Base Closure Commission equivalent type of program, so we can try to restrain some of the growth in Federal spending, consolidate it in fewer areas. Those are the sorts of things we need to do to balance the budget and get our spending under control.

We also need trade agreements to take place. I point out that Presidents of both parties have requested trade promotion authority and trade agreements. You cannot negotiate with another country and say, OK, give us your best offer and then do that; and then say, OK, we have to take it to the Congress, which may agree or disagree, and they will amend it and we will come back to you again. That sort of trade agreement does not work. The other country says: We want to wait and see your final offer. That is why the trade promotion authority is in place.

Trade has been good for this country and has expanded jobs and economic opportunities in the United States. It has been the right thing for us to do.

#### WAR IN IRAQ

I end with a personal comment about how the Bush administration has con-

ducted the war in Iraq and the followon. I think one has to compliment this administration and the soldiers in the field for the way they have conducted this activity. Agree or disagree with going to Iraq, in the first place, we have liberated the people, the face of liberty of Baghdad looks the same as the face of liberty in Berlin when they see liberty. It has a beautiful face, to see liberty and see them kissing and hugging our soldiers developing liberty and finding a treasure trove of information of terroristic activities to make the world a freer place.

We have to compliment and say God bless the soldiers who have been over there, and we say thank you to them and to this administration for taking so bold a step forward for liberty in a tough region of the world, in Iraq.

I hope they continue to press for liberty in places such as North Korea against Kim Jong Il and his regime—this is the 50th year of the armistice we signed with North Korea—which has oppressed its own people. In North Korea you have a regime that exports missiles, technology around the world, that has a third of its people living on international food donations, many of them starving, walking out of the country. We think somewhere between 20,000 and 300,000 have walked from North Korea into China. We have a regime that operates a gulag system in North Korea, continues to operate a Soviet-style gulag. We have a regime there that imports millions of dollars a year in luxury cars and alcohol and tobacco. So while their own people by the millions starve, the regime that sits on top drives around in a Mercedes Benz, drinks fine wines, and smokes fine tobaccos.

When you turn the rock over in North Korea you will see the same, if not worse, type of deplorable living conditions for the people, and extraordinary situations of high-life living for the elite. I have no doubt from what we know already what has taken place in that regime. We will see a level of depravity from liberty and from the basics of human life from the North Korean people that would rival any on the planet. I hope the administration keeps the pressure on Kim Jong Il and his decrepit Stalinist regime so that the 22 million people of North Korea can one day be free.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF EDWARD C. PRADO

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I begin by thanking the Democratic leader and assistant Democratic leader for going to bat for Judge Edward Prado. They