you cannot have your cake and eat it too.

As we approach a $10 trillion debt limit, it is essential to look forward for solutions. Where do we go from here?

We start with responsible spending. While I support targeted tax cuts to help working families, it is time to allow the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans to expire.

It would be unfair and irresponsible to not do so.

We need solutions to shore up our strained entitlement programs, such as Social Security and Medicare, as the retirement of baby boomers looms.

We need to adequately fund children's health and education programs and invest in the future of our young people.

We need to focus on foreign diplomacy to repair our reputation as a global leader.

We need to invest in homeland security and other domestic programs that will keep America safe and increase productivity.

Most importantly, we need to start planning for the future today.

Every day that we wait, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent, the debt increases, vital programs are under funded, and the cycle continues. We must do better.

I understand the political realities of this vote.

However, it is important to recognize the consequences of this measure failing. Not increasing the debt limit could result in the government defaulting on its obligations, exacerbating already shaky credit markets across the globe.

So while I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the measure to once again raise the debt limit, it is also my hope that my colleagues will join me in seeking real and permanent solutions to our Nation's fiscal problems.

Tax cuts, ''staying the course,'' and not addressing the future of our most critical entitlement programs are sometimes politically appealing policies, but they are also not responsible.

Responsible policies come from making the difficult choices that put America's future first.

This Congress must exhibit leadership in breaking with the traditions of the last few years to put our Nation's fiscal house in order.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today we are again forced to consider legislation to raise the Nation's debt limit. It is obvious to anyone that we are here because of the grossly reckless fiscal policies that have been advanced by the administration and Congress for nearly 6 years.

Over those 6 years we have seen a dramatic deterioration in the Government's ability to perform one of its most fundamental jobs—balancing the Nation's fiscal books. In January of 2001, the Congressional Budget Office projected that in the 10 years thereafter, the Government would run a unified budget surplus of more than $5 trillion. Nearly 6 years later, we are staring at almost a mirror image of that 10-year, $5 trillion surplus, except that instead of healthy surpluses, under any reasonable set of assumptions, we are now facing immense deficits and mounting debt.

We absolutely cannot afford to continue to run up these massive deficits. Doing so causes the Government to use the surpluses of the Social Security trust fund for other Government purposes rather than to pay down the debt and help our Nation prepare for the coming retirement of the baby boom generation. Every dollar we add to the Federal debt is another dollar that we are forcing our children to pay back in higher taxes or fewer Government benefits.

But inside this dark cloud of dismal fiscal news there is a silver lining; namely, the restoration of the so-called ''pay-as-you-go'' budget rule, known as pay-go, as part of the budget resolution we adopted this year. That rule was central to the ability of the Congress to balance the Federal budget in the 1990s, and the return of that commonsense discipline gives us a better chance to clean up the fiscal disaster the current administration created. Unlike the last time Congress had to raise the debt limit for this administration, we now have pay-go back in place.

In some ways, today's vote to raise the debt limit ratifies the actions taken by the administration and Congress to stick future generations with an immense credit card bill. Had we not restored the pay-go rule recently, I may well have decided not to support this measure.

Fortunately, pay-go has been reinstated, and we will be better able to return to the path of fiscal responsibility we abandoned a few years ago. And because of that, I will support this measure, made necessary by the profligate policies of President Bush, and egregiously aided and abetted by the last three Congresses.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, all time for debate on the debt limit has been utilized. In the interest of giving Senators some notice to get here in time for a vote, I alert all Senators that we will probably begin the vote first on the children's health insurance bill and, following that, the debt limit. That will begin sometime between 7:20 and 7:25. So within about 5 minutes we will begin voting on the children's health insurance plan.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1585

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon disposition of H.J. Res. 52, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 1585 and resume amendment No. 2999; that the amendment be modified with the changes at the desk, that there be 2 minutes of debate divided in the usual form; that upon the use of the time, the amendment be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that the Senate then resume Coburn amendment No. 2196, and there be 10 minutes of debate prior to a vote in relation to the amendment; that no amendment be in order to the amendments in this agreement; that the time be equally divided and controlled between Senators Levin and Coburn or their designee; and upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the amendment; that immediately after disposition of the Coburn amendment, the Senate proceed to Menendez amendment No. 2972, and that after the amendment is reported by number, there be 6 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled between Senators LEVIN and MENENDEZ, or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, without further action, the Senate proceed to vote with respect to the amendment; that upon disposition of the amendment, that the managers' package which has been cleared by the managers, be considered and agreed to; that the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on amendment No. 2011, the substitute amendment; that Members have until 8:15 p.m. tonight to file any germane second-degree amendments; that if cloture is invoked on the substitute, then all time postcloture be considered expired at 5:30 p.m. this coming Monday, October 1; that upon adoption of the substitute, the bill be read a third time, and without further action, the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that the cloture motion on the bill be withdrawn; that upon passage, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I will not be objecting, I just wanted to ask the majority leader if I am correct in that if this is entered into, there will be no votes tomorrow, and the next vote will be late Monday afternoon?

Mr. REID. Yes. The first vote will be Monday at approximately 5:30.

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

The question is on third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the joint resolution is set aside.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume consideration of the motion to concur in the House amendments to the Senate amendments to H.R. 976, the Children's Health Insurance Act of 2007.

The motion to concur with the amendments is withdrawn.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 67, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 353 Leg.]

YEAS—67

Akaka	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Alexander	Grassley	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Harkin	Pryor
Bayh	Hatch	Reed
Bingaman	Hutchison	Reid
Bond	Inouye	Roberts
Boxer	Johnson	Rockefeller
Brown	Kennedy	Salazar
Byrd	Kerry	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Kohl	Smith
Carper	Landrieu	Snowe
Casey	Lautenberg	Specter
Clinton	Leahy	Stabenow
Coleman	Levin	Stevens
Collins	Lieberman	Sununu
Conrad	Lincoln	Tester
Corker	Lugar	Warner
Dodd	McCaskill	Webb
Domenici	Menendez	Whitehouse
Dorgan	Mikulski	Wyden
Durbin	Murkowski	
Feingold	Murray	

NAYS—29

Allard	Crapo	Kyl
Barrasso	DeMint	Lott
Bennett	Dole	Martinez
Bunning	Ensign	McConnell
Burr	Enzi	Sessions
Chambliss	Graham	Shelby
Coburn	Gregg	Thune
Cochran	Hagel	Vitter
Cornyn	Inhofe	Voinovich
Craig	Isakson	

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	McCain
Brownback	Obama

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased that this bill has passed with such a substantial vote.

This bill now goes to the President. I hope the President will be persuaded by the strong bipartisan support this bill has and will sign the bill.

As it customary, I want to thank the staff who have worked so hard to produce this bill.

From the House: Bridgett Taylor, Amy Hall and Andy Schneider.

From Senator BAUCUS's staff: Russ Sullivan, Bill Dauster, Michelle Easton, and Alice Weiss, and avid Schwartz.

I would like to thank my staff: Kolan Davis, Mark Prater, Mark Hayes, Becky Shipp, Rodney Whitlock, Steve Robinson, Shaun Freiman, and Sean McGuire.

Thanks as well to Senator HATCH's staff, Pattie DeLoatche, and thanks to Senator ROCKEFELLER's staff: Jocelyn Moore and Ellen Doneski.

Finally, I want to extend deep appreciation to the congressional support agencies on which Members and our staff rely.

From the Office of Legislative Counsel, thanks to Ed Grossman, Jessica Shapiro, and Ruth Ernst.

From the Congressional Research Service, thanks to Richard Rimkunas, Chris Peterson, Elicia Herz, April Grady, and Evelyne Baumrucker.

From the Congressional Budget Office, thanks to Director Peter Orszag, Tom Bradley, Eric Rollins, and Jeanne De Sa.

Again, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

INCREASING THE STATUTORY LIMIT ON THE PUBLIC DEBT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is on passage of H.J. Res. 43, increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 354 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Akaka	Enzi	Murkowski
Barrasso	Feingold	Murray
Baucus	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Grassley	Reid
Bond	Gregg	Roberts
Byrd	Hagel	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Hatch	Schumer
Cardin	Inouye	Shelby
Carper	Johnson	Snowe
Casey	Kennedy	Specter
Cochran	Kyl	Stabenow
Coleman	Landrieu	Stevens
Collins	Levin	Sununu
Conrad	Lieberman	Vitter
Corker	Lott	Warner
Domenici	Lugar	Whitehouse
Dorgan	Martinez	Wyden
Durbin	McConnell	

NAYS—42

Alexander	Dodd	McCaskill
Allard	Dole	Menendez
Bayh	Ensign	Mikulski
Bingaman	Graham	Nelson (NE)
Boxer	Harkin	Pryor
Brown	Hutchison	Reed
Bunning	Inhofe	Salazar
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Chambliss	Kerry	Sessions
Coburn	Klobuchar	Smith
Cornyn	Kohl	Tester
Craig	Lautenberg	Thune
Crapo	Leahy	Voinovich
DeMint	Lincoln	Webb

NOT VOTING—5

Biden	Clinton	Obama
Brownback	McCain	

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 43) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2008

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 52, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 52) making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

EXTENDING THE MEDICARE SECTION 508 PROGRAM

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, Senator CASEY and I, along with our colleagues, Senators STABENOW, CONRAD, LAUTENBERG, SCHUMER and DORGAN, filed an amendment to H.J. RES. 52, the appropriations continuing resolution for fiscal year 2008, to extend the Medicare section 508 program for 2 years. For a considerable period of time, there have been a number of hospitals in Pennsylvania and across the country that have been suffering from low Medicare wage index reimbursement, which has caused them great disadvantage in comparison to surrounding areas. Hospitals in these counties are surrounded by MSAs—metropolitan statistical areas—with higher Medicare reimbursements, and as a result, a flight of critical medical personnel occurs as hospitals are not able to provide employees with competitive wages.

During the consideration of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003, I met with Finance Committee chairman CHARLES GRASSLEY and ranking member MAX BAUCUS about the bill provisions, including the need for a solution to the Medicare area wage index reclassification problem in Pennsylvania. Section 508 was included in the bill, which provided $300 million per year for 3 years to increase funding for hospitals nationally to be reclassified to locations with higher Medicare reimbursement rates. As part of the Tax Relief and Health Care Act, which was signed into law on December 20, 2006, a 6-month extension of the section 508