

costs the Federal Government just over \$5 billion per year—a very small price to pay in a huge Federal budget with all the return you get from that investment for our children. Remember what this program is: It is a program that covers the children of working families, those families whose incomes are too high to be covered by Medicaid and whose incomes are too low to have the coverage that is provided in the private market. That is what we are talking about. We are talking about families who are squeezed in between and who cannot afford coverage in the private market but also don't qualify for Medicaid.

In Pennsylvania, my home State, I am honored and proud to say that my father, Governor Casey, when he was the Governor of Pennsylvania, signed into law one of the first children's health insurance programs in the Nation in 1992. Since that time, not only in Pennsylvania but especially in our State, we have had broad bipartisan support for this program from Republican Governors and Democratic Governors. Currently, Governor Rendell is trying to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program in Pennsylvania. That is a good thing because even though it covers as many as 150,000 Pennsylvania children, there are still over 130,000 children in the State of Pennsylvania who have no coverage. The Governor wants to attack that problem and reduce that number. Unfortunately, this Governor of Pennsylvania, Governor Rendell, as well as Governors across the country, in both parties, are unable to expand their programs if the budget proposal set forth by the President becomes the law.

Here is what the Bush budget does when it comes to the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and I am quoting from a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: "The Bush budget provides less than half"—less than half—"of the funding needed for States to maintain existing caseloads." What we are talking about there is, going forward in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, in those budget years, the President's budget provides less than half the money to maintain the coverage for those approximately 6 million children who have coverage. This doesn't even address the problem I started with this morning, the 9 million children who don't have any health care coverage at all.

We have to do two things. We have to make sure we maintain the coverage for the 6 million children who have it in America across the country in almost every State in the country. They are not divided by Democrat and Republican; they are children and their families, and they are part of the family of America. We have to make sure we maintain their coverage. At the same time, we have to expand coverage to begin to cover the 9 million who have no health insurance coverage at all.

What is the effect of this budget on these families? The Bush budget has a

funding shortfall over 5 years of \$7 billion. That is a big number, but let us talk about that in terms of children. That is the most important thing here. That \$7 billion shortfall equates, by 2012, to 1.4 million children losing their coverage. We are still on problem No. 1, those who have coverage who will lose it—1.4 million of them—if this budget goes through. That is what we are talking about when we talk about this budget and this important program. But we have to make sure we do more than just maintain coverage; we have to make sure we expand it for the millions of children who don't have health insurance.

I wish to conclude this morning with a couple of basic questions for the President, for the Senate, and for the House. This is what every elected official in Washington has to answer when they vote on this budget and when they vote on the question of the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Question No. 1 for the President and for the Congress: Does the administration and the Congress want 1.4 million children to lose their health insurance coverage? You can't have it both ways. If you vote for the President's proposal, you are voting to cut 1.4 million kids from the insurance rolls. That is question No. 1, and it is a "yes" or "no" answer. There is no dodging that question.

Question No. 2: Are tax breaks for millionaires and multimillionaires and billionaires more important than the State Children's Health Insurance Program? Do they have a higher priority? Do their needs come ahead of the children of working parents?

That is another question we have to answer because there will be people in this town who will talk about the cost of expanding health insurance coverage or even maintaining the coverage that is there. They will say: Oh, that is going to cost lots of money. Well, I have to ask them a basic question: Are the millionaires and billionaires who have benefited year after year to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars—is their tax cut more important than children? It is a "yes" or "no" answer, and that is what the Congress and the President have to answer.

Finally, No. 3, the basic question for today, tomorrow, but especially for many years from now: Do you want the gross domestic product to grow? Do you want the American economy to grow? Because if you answer that question "yes," you cannot oppose the expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. You cannot. We know the benefits of providing health insurance to children. We know they will go to school ready to learn. We know they will be healthier in school, they will get higher test scores, and they will have the benefit of higher education, hopefully, for many of them, and they will go on to achieve their full potential in the job market and help grow the American economy. So if you care about the economy

today, tomorrow, and into the future, and you care about growing jobs, you must vote, in my judgment, to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Finally, it is about coverage. It is about maintaining that coverage, and it is about making sure 9 million kids have health insurance in the future. It is also making sure we do everything possible to reach every child and make sure that child's family is utilizing the great services of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. If we meet this obligation to cover the kids who are covered now, to make sure their coverage is maintained, and to cover the 9 million children, we will have gone a long way toward meeting Hubert H. Humphrey's moral test of government: to make sure we are taking care and helping children in the dawn of their lives.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, how much time do we have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority controls 22 minutes in morning business.

Mr. PRYOR. I thank the Chair.

U.S. ATTORNEYS

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I have come here today to talk about the political firings of U.S. attorneys, which I believe raises serious concerns over the administration's encroachment on the Senate's constitutional responsibilities but now I also believe raises serious concerns over the Attorney General's ability to serve. That is why I come here today to call for Attorney General Alberto Gonzales's resignation.

There has been a lot of attention focused on U.S. attorneys over the last couple of weeks, but this is an issue I have been involved with for the last 9 months. I first realized a problem existed in July of 2006. On February 6, 2007, I testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I won't repeat that testimony here, but I will focus on five facts today, and these are undisputed facts. First, based on the e-mails produced by the Department of Justice, this administration set out to fire or replace U.S. attorneys, some without cause and in some cases for suspicious reasons.

Second, this is different from anything done in previous administrations and includes putting a provision in the PATRIOT Act to carry out their scheme.

Third, it started with the White House.

Fourth, it was carried out by the Attorney General.

Fifth, the Attorney General crossed a line by putting politics above the pursuit of justice and has seriously damaged his stature and legacy in the process.

The first of these points is proven by e-mails from the Attorney General's Office and the White House. The fifth

point is evidenced by the Attorney General's statements to me, the Senate Judiciary Committee, and his public statements.

Immediately after the 2004 elections, the White House began a scheme to replace all U.S. attorneys. The Attorney General joined in that plan in early 2005 but recommended to limit the number of U.S. attorneys who would be replaced. During this process, the Attorney General identified U.S. attorneys to sacrifice to the White House demands.

In January 2006, the Attorney General sent a memorandum to the White House detailing obstacles that must be overcome before going forward with the plan. One such obstacle was the Senate. So in March 2006 the Attorney General hatched another scheme to get around Senate confirmation. During the PATRIOT Act reauthorization, the Attorney General, with the apparent purpose of replacing U.S. attorneys, had a provision slipped in during the Senate and House conference to allow the Attorney General indefinite appointment authority.

After this plan came to light, the Attorney General responded by misleading the American people. For example, in press interviews he said the Clinton administration had done something similar. That is not true. In an Attorney General memorandum dated January 9, 2006, it clearly says:

In recent memory, during the Reagan and Clinton Administrations, Presidents Reagan and Clinton did not—

And that is underlined, did not— seek to remove and replace U.S. Attorneys they had appointed whose four-year terms had expired, but instead permitted such U.S. Attorneys to serve indefinitely under the holdover provision.

His own chief of staff has contradicted his public justification. Once the decision became apparent that they were going to push out U.S. attorneys—which, by the way, is the term the Attorney General's Office uses in the September 17, 2006, memo to the White House, that they are going to “push out” U.S. attorneys—there began a clear and precise method to obfuscate and delay the confirmation process by lying to home State Senators, including me. I know this because I have e-mails that lay out the game plan on how to get around Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN from Arkansas and myself.

I have in my hand a plan to replace certain U.S. attorneys, dated November 15, 2006. This memo gives a five-step plan on how to do this and also how to talk about it.

Step No. 1 has specific talking points. Step No. 2 says to call and to contact Republican Senators. This is an important point. Step No. 2 says the U.S. attorney—on step No. 2—should make these calls. The U.S. attorney says, on December 7: very important U.S. calls and Attorney General calls happen simultaneously. Mike Battle contact the following U.S. attorneys.

So they do that, and I'm sorry, in step No. 1 they contact JON KYL, JOHN ENSIGN, PETE DOMENICI. And then it says, “the California political lead, the Michigan political lead, and the Washington political lead.”

Please notice, there are no Democrats who were contacted about this; not even a courtesy call from the White House or the Justice Department. Only calls made to Republicans. If there is not a Democratic Senator in that State it just says “to the State's political lead.”

Clearly, this was a partisan effort on the part of Justice.

I believe the Attorney General crossed a line when they chose to go the partisan route on U.S. attorneys. Now the Attorney General states that he was unaware of all the details of their plans that were hatched by his chief of staff. I do not believe this for a minute. I know that an e-mail written on December 19, 2006, on how to get around Senator LINCOLN and myself is exactly what Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said to me in a telephone conversation.

In fact, by way of background, I had called the White House and the Attorney General to ask them to please nominate a suitable nominee for U.S. attorney in Arkansas. They had canned or pushed out Bud Cummins. They were going to, or were about to, do an interim appointment for Tim Griffin. I asked them to please not do that and please send someone through the confirmation process. If it was Tim Griffin, send him through. I couldn't say I was going to vote for him, but please send him through.

The December 19, 2006, memo is very enlightening. It is from Kyle Sampson, chief of staff to Alberto Gonzales. It is to Christopher G. Oprison, apparently at the White House. Again, this is from the chief of staff of the Attorney General.

My thoughts: 1. I think we should gum this to death: ask the Senators—

And they are talking about Senator LINCOLN and myself—ask the Senators to give Tim a chance, meet with him, give him some time in office to see how he performs, etc. If they ultimately say “no, never” (and the longer we can forestall that the better), then we can tell them we'll look for other candidates, ask them for recommendations, evaluate the recommendations, interview their candidates, and otherwise run out the clock.

This is an e-mail from the Attorney General's chief of staff to the White House.

All of this should be done in “good faith” of course.

When they put “good faith” in quotes, that tells me they are going in bad faith. They are not going in good faith, but they are giving the appearance of good faith in order to run out the clock.

No. 2 says:

Officially, Tim is the U.S. Attorney and will identify himself as such on pleadings and other official documents. I think it's fine

for us to refer to him as an “interim U.S. Attorney” in talking points, with the understanding that by “interim U.S. Attorney” we mean [Attorney General] appointed, (as opposed to Presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed) U.S. Attorney.

No. 3:

Overall, I think we should take the temperature way down—our guy is in there so the status quo is good for us. Ask for them to consider him; note that he is qualified and doing a good job whenever asked . . .

Here, again, they are telling him to tell us that he is doing a good job whenever asked. He hadn't been in office but 1 day when this thing was written. So, again, they are setting up a deception on the front end.

. . . pledge to desire a Senate-confirmed U.S. attorney; and otherwise hunker down.

No. 4:

The only thing really at risk here is a repeal of the AG's appointment authority.

You bet your life that is what is at risk because we are going to have that vote later today or tomorrow or Monday or Tuesday or at some point, and absolutely that is what is at risk because I think the Senate should change that law and should take that provision out of the PATRIOT Act, that they snuck in in the dark hours in a conference.

We intend to have DOJ legislative affairs people on notice to work hard to preserve this (House members won't care about this; all we really need is for one Senator to object to language being added to legislative vehicles that are moving through). There is some risk that we'll lose the authority, but if we don't ever exercise it then what's the point of having it? (I'm not 100 percent sure that Tim was the guy on which to test drive this authority, but know that getting him appointed was important to Harriet, Karl, etc.

I could spend all day talking about this memo. But, basically, in here they say that the Attorney General is going to tell us, Senator LINCOLN and me, about six or seven things, and they did every single one of them. This is the playbook. They say ask the Senators to give him a chance. Attorney General Gonzales did ask me that. Meet with him. He asked me to, and I did. Give him some time in office. He asked for that, even though usually people don't get a little test drive before they get appointed. He asked me—they wanted to delay, just run out the clock.

At one point he said if I am not happy they will interview other candidates that I am interested in. They also mentioned for me to consider him and to look at him in a way that he is doing a good job.

Here, again, every single thing in this memo was done. Again, this is the playbook. This is why I feel lied to. The truth is, I was lied to because I was told that the Attorney General—and he not only said it to me, he said it to the Senate Judiciary Committee and he said it to the world—the Attorney General wanted a Senate-confirmed U.S. attorney in every slot. That is absolutely not true in Arkansas based on this e-mail from the Justice Department.

I assure you when they put “good faith” in quotes that means they are not proceeding in good faith. They didn’t proceed in good faith with me, and that is one of the reasons I think Attorney General Gonzales should resign immediately. I do not think he has the credibility to run that department anymore.

Let me tell you this. I was one of six Democratic Senators who supported Attorney General Gonzales’ nomination and confirmation. I supported the PATRIOT Act. Not all Democrats did. I have worked closely with this Attorney General. I have always tried to deal with them and reach out to them and have a constructive, positive relationship. I believe that is what the people in Arkansas want me to do, and that is exactly what I have done.

But on this issue, Attorney General Gonzales has broken faith with me, he has broken faith with the Senate, and he has broken faith with the people of Arkansas. When an Attorney General of this country, who I believe should be held to a higher standard—not a political standard but a high standard of integrity because he should be all about justice, not politics; he should be all about justice—when the Attorney General lies to a United States Senator, I think it is time for that Attorney General to go.

Again, he not only lied to me as a person, but when he lied to me, he lied to the Senate, and he lied to the people I represent. For that reason I am asking him and demanding that he resign today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak on a different matter, but I want to compliment my colleague from Arkansas, who is not only a colleague and a true Arkansan but a great leader. I appreciate the passion that he feels and the issue that he deals with and feel very blessed to have him as my colleague from the State of Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. I thank the Senator.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Many of us believe that the events at the U.S. Attorney’s Office and how they have been handled by the administration have been a real disservice to the people of this country and to the processes that provide the transparency so that our great democracy can work, so that the wheels of this great democracy can turn and the people feel confident and trusting in their Government because these processes have worked and provided that transparency. To have eliminated the processes, or to circumvent the process that provided that transparency, the administration has presented a real disservice to the people of this country and to the justice system and what it represents. So I applaud my colleague for so many of his comments today on that very issue.

THANKING STEVE PATTERSON

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor this morning with a little bit of sadness but, more importantly, a tremendous amount of joy in my heart to salute an individual who has meant so much to me and to pay tribute and to say thanks to a very dear friend and longtime chief of staff of mine, Steve Patterson. For the better part of 12 years, Steve Patterson, or as we call him in our office, “Patterson,” as he is known to me and to my staff, has faithfully served the people of Arkansas, as well as me.

He has been my most trusted adviser in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate. Words cannot fully describe the meaningful impact Steve Patterson has had on both my personal and professional life. When I first decided to run for the Senate, my husband said: We are in, but only if Steve Patterson is in. He has meant so much to our entire family. I know the comfort and counsel he provided my mother.

In so many ways, he has been one of those people who you know from your professional side of life is so critically important, but from your personal side of life now is an unbelievable individual in all he has done and accomplished.

When I think of Steve Patterson, there are a few words that stand out: integrity, solid conviction, justice, fairness. All of the words each and every one of us strives for in our everyday life I see in this individual, who has meant and continues to mean so much to me.

For the past 25 years Steve has been one of the most loyal and hard-working servants in Government. He has been a team player as far as a congressional team is concerned. He is big on team sports. But more importantly, he is incredibly devoted to the team spirit the country has and needs to be the success it is. I consider him a true confidant and will most assuredly miss him in that position.

Steve was born in Oklahoma City in 1950 but grew up in Alva, OK, where he graduated high school. He attended the University of Oklahoma in Norman but eventually transferred to Oklahoma State University where he graduated with a degree in journalism, and I have to say, unfortunately for my colleagues in Oklahoma who have adopted him, he has moved to Arkansas and he is one of our own now.

According to his wife Jean, Steve was always very interested in politics. One of her first memories was when she and Steve were friends at Oklahoma State waiting to vote for the first time in the 1972 Presidential election. To give you an idea of how far we have come in the issue of election reform in the last 35 years, Jean told me they waited in line for what seemed like an eternity to cast their very first ever vote in, of all places, the laundry room of someone’s home on the top of a washer and dryer. Before they could even get to the bal-

lot box, they learned their candidate, George McGovern, was in the process of being defeated by Richard Nixon in a landslide. But you know what, they continued to wait in line. They voted despite the outcome they knew was probable because of their true convictions.

The experience of that election crushed a lot of young people and it caused them to turn away from the political process but not Steve Patterson. He has always wanted to make a difference and he has never cowered from any of the challenges that are faced when you have a conviction. He has got that conviction for many reasons, not because he loved this great country, not because he loves his family, not because he loves his fellow man, but for all of those reasons.

Shortly before he moved to Washington, Steve served as political reporter for various newspapers in Oklahoma and was working for the Lawton Constitution when newly elected Congressman Dave McCurdy asked Steve to become his press secretary. They had gone to college together, and there was a group of them, when Dave McCurdy was running for Congress, who all worked together to reach a common dream. The decision was not an easy one, however. When Steve moved to Washington, he was a single father, a very devoted single father. Money was tight in those days and the hours were long. He and my long-time systems administrator, who is still with me, Thirise Brown, were both young single parents and would on occasion have to bring their children to work. It is hard to imagine, or is it? Actually we see a lot of that these days.

Steve’s daughter Paige and Thirise’s daughter Tiki would often be oblivious to the major hard work that was being accomplished around them, and would have a great time getting into all sorts of trouble, watching as their two single parents worked desperately hard, not only in their conviction to provide for their children but also to make this country great.

Although Steve began as a press secretary, he quickly worked his way up to Chief of Staff. He was the Chief of Staff to my good friend Congressman Dave McCurdy and continued in that capacity until 1994. Shortly after, Steve became my Chief of Staff, joined me in my House times when I was in the House of Representatives. We were there together for 2 short years until I retired from the House to be with my newborn twins. Steve went to work for then Representative Jim Turner as his Chief of Staff. But it was not long until I was back on my feet and decided I was going to run for the Senate.

I begged Steve Patterson to move to Arkansas and to run my Senate campaign. The rest, as they say, is history. During our time together, Steve taught me so much and helped me gain the necessary skills to survive and navigate the tough political environment.