

is the “unoffset” AMT patch passed only because Senate Republicans and the administration insisted that they would not use the AMT problem as a money machine for current and future spending. If the Democratic caucus had prevailed, the AMT patch would have been offset.

Likewise, on the stimulus bill, there was bipartisan consensus that economic stimulus should not be a tax increase.

When you step back from the differences across the aisle on this budget, you probably will not be surprised to find some differences among Presidential candidates. Generally, the candidates on the other side have proposed to take heavily from the taxpayers under the guise of fiscal responsibility. This is true when they are talking about ending the bipartisan tax relief plans of 2001 and 2003. It is true when they are talking about the same loophole closers for a myriad number of expansions of existing entitlements and creating new ones. Nowhere is there discussion of reining in spending.

So the tax side of the Federal ledger is the only route to fiscal responsibility from the perspective of Presidential candidates on the other side of the aisle.

I wanted to give you one telling example. One Democratic candidate has proposed to repeal the bipartisan tax relief plans for taxpayers earning above \$250,000. This proposal raises \$226 billion over 5 years and 10 years. A key fact is that the source of that revenue peters out over the next few years because under current tax law, the tax relief sunsets at the end of 2010.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 4 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. I say to the Senator through the Chair that we would be happy to accede to the request if the Senator could say something nice about the chairman of the committee.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Besides the work of Senator HARKIN, we have an outstanding farm bill because of the hard work of the Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. What a kind and gracious thing to say. We would be happy to agree to the request. The Senator would like 4 additional minutes.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I think that is it.

Mr. CONRAD. Why don't we give the Senator 5. You can give back any time.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Sure.

Mr. CONRAD. May I interrupt the Senator and ask unanimous consent when the Senator has concluded, we go to Senator WYDEN?

How much time would the Senator speak?

Mr. WYDEN. I think it would range up to 10 minutes.

Mr. CONRAD. Are we confident that 10 is sufficient?

Mr. WYDEN. Yes.

Mr. CONRAD. Then I ask unanimous consent to go to Senator WYDEN for 10 minutes after Senator GRASSLEY.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Well, I was talking about Presidential candidates and what their budget plans might do.

Like the Democratic leadership's budget, the candidates on the other side oversubscribe the revenue sources from proposals that are popular with the Democratic base. The deficiency can only be made up in three ways: One, other undefined sources of revenue would need to be tapped. The taxpayers should rightly be worried about that avenue. Two, the proposed spending plan would need to be abandoned or curtailed. There is not much history on the Democratic side of this avenue being taken. Three, add to the deficit for the cost of the new programs. Unfortunately, this avenue has been taken too many times.

We will hear a lot of criticism of the Republican candidate, Senator McCain, from those on the other side. They will argue, like the President's budget, a continuation of current-law levels of taxation somehow costs the Federal Government too much revenue, just like all the money every worker makes belongs to the Government and we let the taxpayers keep a little bit of it. They will argue that the spending increases they propose are more important than the restrained levels of the President's budget, and they will argue that despite the record tax hikes in their budget, entitlement reform is a matter for another day. In fact, Senator McCain's plan intends to keep the revenue take where it is as a share of the economy. You see revenue averages of about 18.3 percent of the economy. That is 18.3 of the GDP.

The state of the economy affects revenues more than anything else. There are dips when we have been in recession and peaks when growth is high. Our side cares about keeping the revenue line at a reasonable level, about 18 to 19 percent.

We do not see the merits of an imperative behind a growing role for Government in the economy. The other side disagrees. That is their philosophy, they are entitled to it. I think they are wrong.

They impliedly or explicitly reject our premise that the size of Government needs to be kept in check. That view has been best expressed in an editorial of October 22, 2007, in the New York Times. The lead paragraph says it best:

President Bush considers himself a champion tax cutter, but all the leading Republican presidential candidates are eager to outdo him. Their zeal is misguided. This country's meager tax take puts its economic prospects at risk and leaves the Government ill equipped to face the challenges from globalization.

But the bottom line is the New York Times directly states the view behind this budget and the position of the Democratic candidates. From this perspective, the historical level of taxation is not somehow appropriate as a measure for the next decade.

The New York Times implies that the Federal Government must grow as

a percentage of our economy by at least 5 to 8 points. That is more than ever in the history of the country. If we were to follow the path suggested by the Times, the Government's share of our economy would grow by one-third. One-third. One-third is a great big increase in Government. The Democratic leadership budget takes some big steps on that path. So do the campaign proposals of the Democratic candidates. They go in the same direction.

Our Republican conference takes a different view. America is a leading market economy. American prosperity and economic strength, in our view, is derived from a vigorous private sector that affords all Americans the opportunity to work hard, to save, and to invest more of their money.

A growing economy is the best policy objective. It makes fiscal sense as well. Fiscal history shows that despite criticism to the contrary, the bipartisan tax relief plan drove revenues back up after the economic shocks we suffered earlier this decade. I am referring to the stock market bubble, corporate scandals, and the 9/11 terror attacks. Revenues bounced back when the economy bounced back. The revenue outperformed CBO's projections by a significant extent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). Under the previous order, the Senator from Oregon is to be recognized for 10 minutes.

SENATOR KENNEDY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the television news folks spent much of yesterday looking at brain scans and pretty much counting out our friend TED KENNEDY. But I will tell you today, I think the TV crowd is missing a much bigger story; that is, TED is the most determined person I have met, and anybody who counts TED KENNEDY out needs to have their head examined.

Now, earlier today, Senator KENNEDY's son, Ted junior, gave me a call. Ted junior is a wonderful guy. We talked about all of the instances where his family has tackled illness, defeated cancer. Ted junior told me earlier today that his dad is mobilizing, he is building a battle plan against cancer, he is talking to the experts, he is digging out the facts the way we know TED KENNEDY does unlike anybody else here in the Senate. And certainly Senator KENNEDY is not sugarcoating anything.

But I think it is also important to note that he sure is looking ahead. Senator KENNEDY is especially looking forward to the passion of his life in public service, fixing health care and universal health coverage, coverage for all of our people.

TED has always been America's go-to guy on health care. He has always been our conscience, our leader on the premier domestic issue of our time. TED is always telling me—he is telling a lot of

the Senators—that this time Democrats and Republicans here in the Senate can get it done, that after 60 years of bickering and quarreling partisanship, at this time, it can get done. TED says there is no reason the richest and strongest country on Earth cannot figure this out and cannot figure out a way to get good health care to all of our people. I especially like the way TED points out that we have thousands and thousands of wonderful doctors and hospitals and health care providers. They are ready and waiting for the political leadership to step up and tackle this issue.

Now, nobody has stepped up on health care the way TED KENNEDY has. Nobody has put the effort into looking ahead and what is it going to take to fix the system, to build the coalitions—business, labor, seniors, doctors, health care providers—all the people who are going to be necessary to fix health care.

We should be very grateful that TED KENNEDY has always stepped up on fixing American health care, particularly the challenge of our time, universal coverage. And I for one am very glad this afternoon that Senator KENNEDY is looking forward to being back at his post, as we go forward, Democrats and Republicans, and tackle this issue, this issue so important to our people and our families. That is what Senator KENNEDY and his public service is all about. I want to report this afternoon, he is sure looking ahead to the big challenges we face. And we want him back here with us as soon as he can.

I yield the floor, and 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. ALLARD. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, my understanding is we are in morning business, talking about the budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. Senators are allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

THE BUDGET

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, last year we were obligated to accept the assurances from the majority that under this new regime, pay-go would be respected, spending would be curbed, the entitlement crisis would be addressed, and the debt would be attacked. Undoubtedly, that was an ambitious agenda. Obviously, it didn't happen. We now have results, not predictions. When all was said and done last year, there was an \$83 billion increase in discretionary spending. There was \$143 billion in pay-go violations. Pay-go violations are provisions we put in the budget that help assure we get moving toward deficit reduction and

eventually balancing the budget and reducing debt. We didn't close the tax gap. We added to the national debt. The budget was used to add spending, not reduce it.

Previous to that year, we had always had strong budget provisions that forced budget discipline that actually held down spending. We did nothing for entitlement reform, and we assumed tax increases.

When we began consideration of the fiscal 2009 budget resolution, I hoped everyone was aware of what was promised last year and what transpired. I hope they will use that knowledge with what we see today to understand that what we have now, with two budgets written, soon to be approved, is a pattern, a distinct pattern. That pattern is fiscally damaging to this country. The Democratic budget assumes a tax hike of at least \$1.2 trillion which will hit 116 million Americans. This is the second year in a row that the majority party is expecting the American public to surrender more of their income to fund big government.

The pay-for assumed in this budget is simply fantasy. The tax gap, for instance, instead of being closed, was actually expanded last year. Middle-class tax relief was not passed last year either. This budget pushes annual spending over the \$1 trillion mark for the first time ever. It increases spending over the President's budget by at least \$210 billion over 5 years. That is without including the \$79 billion we are considering on the floor this week in the supplemental. We have certainly lost control of our budget.

I want to take a moment and comment that our Budget Committee chairman must be having a little fun with us with his chart showing the difference between his budget and the President's budget. His claim that there is little difference between the two lines on his chart must be intended to be humorous, when the Y axis is over a trillion dollars. If he is teasing us, I appreciate his humor; if he is serious, I fear for us.

Another huge problem in this budget is that the biggest fiscal danger in our future, the looming entitlement crisis, is made worse. Actually, "danger" isn't the word. It is not a threat. It is not a danger; it is reality. It is a fact. We need to deal with it. For a second year in a row, nothing is done to address the \$66 trillion entitlement crisis now on our doorstep. The budget allows entitlement spending to grow by at least \$500 billion over 5 years. This is a huge avalanche of debt waiting to bury our future. But we do nothing. We are not even doing something as productive as fiddling. We are just talking year after year and perhaps wishing it will go away. Instead of reducing the debt as they promised, the majority allows gross debt to climb by \$2 trillion by 2013. That debt will have to be paid back by future generations. In fact, every American child will owe an additional \$27,000 or more under this budget.

We didn't see many amendments that tried to reduce the debt. I offered one to try to do that, where we looked at those programs that were rated as ineffective. I asked the Members of this body to vote with me to not have a pay increase to these ineffective programs. I thought at least we will let them maintain their funding levels for the previous year. We won't give them an increase, just as we would do with a poorly performing employee. We were not able to get the votes we needed to even put that simple policy in effect. We face a huge challenge, and we need to have a budget that provides the enforcement mechanisms that bring some fiscal sanity back to the process.

There is so much that is disappointing in this resolution that I hate to call attention to some specific points for fear of ignoring all others. But let me point out that an amendment I added in markup, which called for disclosures on debt, was removed. This shows the American public that there are things being done to their paychecks in this bill that the majority party doesn't want them to know. Now that our economy is trending in the wrong direction and when we need the benefits of a reasonable and pro-growth tax policy, we are going to depress our economic growth by adding to the debt and increasing taxes.

When we consider these tax increases, let's remember, last year we were assured we would see tax relief. The first vote we were presented on the budget last year was to budget for an alleged middle-class tax cut. This never materialized. I believe Congress and especially the Budget Committee should be committed to rigid budget discipline, not politically expedient gamesmanship. I urge a return to a tighter and more credible budget document. I plan to offer several amendments to shore up the fiscal discipline we are seeing erode.

Given that this budget assumes raised taxes, increased spending, increases in the debt, failure to address the entitlement crisis, and continuing the ongoing erosion of fiscal discipline in the Government, I feel compelled to vote against it.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BUNNING. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, in recent polling, close to 80 percent of the American public have told pollsters the Nation is on the wrong track. We have enormous problems to solve. The American people know it, and we should be working together to solve those problems. But this budget, written behind closed doors and in secret by a partisan group of Senators, will do