

there. But let us face it, our side are rank amateurs compared to the consummate spenders we now have in charge.

For proof, we need look no further than the President's budget, the trillion dollar stimulus bill, this \$2.5 trillion health care bill, and the recent \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill with its double digit percentage increases over last year's spending. The deficit has grown exponentially this year alone.

The numbers themselves tell the story. The Treasury Department's Monthly Treasury Statement for November shows a deficit over the first two months of this new fiscal year alone of nearly \$300 billion. This 2-month deficit is greater than the full-year deficits in 2002, 2006, and 2007, which, by the way, are part of the past eight years that were supposed to represent the ultimate in reckless spending.

I am scared. All Americans should be frightened as well. We are on an unstable raft in the middle of an increasingly raging river. The currents are swirling around us and we are beginning to lose control of where we are going. Sharp rocks are starting to appear in the river that threaten our destruction.

Our alarm grows as we begin to hear a sound off in the distance that slowly gets louder as we head downstream on these increasingly wild rapids. The sound we hear is the cataract that represents our fall from the greatest nation in the history of mankind to that of a second-rate player on the world stage. Can you hear it? Can we find a way to turn this boat around before it is too late to avoid the fall? Many of my fellow Utahns can hear it and they are begging me to find a way to get us off this destructive course and get us back to safe waters.

The first step is to reject this debt limit increase. Let us cut up the credit card and stop this frightening spending spree before it takes us to the precipice.

It is a good thing we are recessing for a few days. The Members of this Senate need to go home and get a reality check from those who have sent us here. I hope that over the recess each of us will get a message, loud and clear, from our recession and debt-weary constituents that they are sick and tired of this fiscal irresponsibility. They are demanding change, and they will get it, one way or the other.

I hope that in the new year, we can consider these messages and find a new resolve to come together, to find the restraint that is simply lacking now, and to reverse this reckless spending so we do not send our country down the river.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader is recognized.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the minority leader and I have some things to

discuss, so I ask unanimous consent that we recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:35 a.m., recessed until 8:26 a.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. CANTWELL).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, during the consideration of the health care bill, one of my primary concerns has been ensuring that the longstanding Hyde amendment would be incorporated into the bill. I have strongly held views on the subject, and I fought hard to prevent tax dollars from being used to subsidize abortions.

I was pleased that the House included strong abortion provisions in its health care bill in the form of the Stupak amendment. I modified this language to meet the Senate bill and offered the Nelson-Hatch-Casey amendment to prohibit Federal funding of abortion, and I was disappointed to see that amendment was tabled by a vote of 54 to 45.

I knew then that the underlying bill did not adequately prohibit Federal funding of abortion and, consequently, I would not be able to support it. So I began to look for other language to accomplish the goal that no public funds should cover abortion in the new health care bill. After long days of negotiations, I believe we came up with a true compromise that stays faithful to my principles.

I want to be clear, I stuck to my guns and stood for my pro-life principles. I did not look for weaker language. I looked for clearer language, and my goal stayed the same: to maintain the standard that we have had in Federal law since the mid-1970s.

While I respect the opinion of the Senator from Kansas, I have to respectfully disagree. The Senate language fully upholds the Hyde principle like the language in the House bill. The wording may be different, but the principle is, in fact, upheld.

Under the health care bill, if you cannot afford insurance, you will receive Federal assistance to help pay for a private health care plan. The Stupak language prohibits that Federal assistance from paying for insurance that covers abortions. If you like a plan that covers abortion, you must purchase a rider or an endorsement to your plan with your own funds. You could do that as well by writing just one check to the insurer. For that you get a separate piece of paper addressing abortion.

The Senate language, with my added compromise, also prohibits Federal funds from paying for private insurance that covers abortion. The only difference is that in the Senate bill, if you are receiving Federal assistance to buy insurance, and if that plan has any

abortion coverage, the insurance company must bill you separately, and you must pay separately from your own personal funds—perhaps a credit card transaction, your separate personal check, or automatic withdrawal from your bank account—for that abortion coverage.

Now, let me say that again. You have to write two checks: one for the basic policy and one for the additional coverage for abortion. The latter has to be entirely from personal funds.

So under both the Stupak and the new Senate language, no Federal funds can be used to pay for a plan that covers abortion, and if you choose to purchase abortion coverage—if it is available—you must pay out of your own pocket.

Furthermore, the Senate language allows States the right to ban public and private insurance from supplying abortion coverage. Already, 12 States ban abortion coverage on public plans and 5 States ban abortion coverage on both private and public plans. So, in short, the Senate bill ensures, once again, no Federal funds would be used for abortion.

I would like to note that the Senate bill goes beyond Stupak in two life-promoting ways. One, it adds funding to support pregnant and parenting teens and women and, two, it expands the adoption tax credit to help adoptive parents with the considerable expense of adoption by making that credit a refundable tax credit. This means many potential parents who lack the regular resources to adopt will now be in a better position to do so.

The Senate bill also contains the same strong conscience protections included in the Stupak language. We tried winning approval for the Nelson-Hatch-Casey abortion language in the Senate, but we were unsuccessful. However, we did not give up. I know people have very strong feelings about the issue of abortion, and I respect those who disagree with my position, but I could not support health reform that did not maintain the 30-year standard barring public funding of abortion. I did not compromise my pro-life principles; we just found different wording, different language, and both will work. I believe people will see that no public funding will go to abortion.

In addition, my provision empowers the States to pass laws banning the sale of insurance that covers abortion. We make it clear that this new law, this new bill does not in any way preempt the rights of States to be able to continue to make that ban in the decisions they might make legislatively, and we want to make certain there is no doubt but that this bill has no pre-emption of the States rights.

Despite what some partisans and talk show hosts say in their scare tactics, the conscience clause remains. Also, despite what those same people and even some of my colleagues have said, the bottom line is that the Senate health care bill will not allow taxpayer money to pay for abortion, period.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which, in a historic vote only an hour and a half ago, the Senate overwhelmingly passed. I wish to talk for a moment about how that bill will improve the health of children across our country, particularly for children in my State of Ohio.

Ohio is home to six of the best children's hospitals that house a combined 1,749 beds. Ohio is also home to 218,400 uninsured children. The health reform bill which we have been debating on this Senate floor for 26 straight days will help cover Ohio's uninsured children and help our children's hospitals provide the right care at the right time in the right place. This legislation will make sure the children have access to oral and vision care. It will keep children healthy by eliminating copays and deductibles for recommended preventive care.

Similarly, in the Medicare section of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, senior citizens in Olympia, Redmond, Seattle, Cleveland, Akron, and Canton will be able to get free mammograms and colonoscopies and preventive care and annual checkups. Children, too, under this legislation will have copays and deductibles eliminated for recommended preventive care.

It will extend the Children's Health Insurance Program for an additional 2 years and provide States with additional funding to ensure children have access to this program. It will increase the number of pediatric primary care physicians and pediatric specialists. And we now know how important it is, as I learned at Akron's Children's Hospital a decade and a half ago, that the government assist in helping with training and providing funding through

Medicare and through appropriations to train pediatric primary care physicians and specialists.

Perhaps most important of all is this legislation will do something Senator LAUTENBERG, Representative SCHWARTZ, and I have tried to do for 3 years: it will eliminate immediately the preexisting coverage exclusion for children. For the past two Congresses, Senator LAUTENBERG, Representative SCHWARTZ, and I have introduced the Children's Health Protection Act, legislation that would prevent insurers from denying children needed medical care.

Twenty percent of school-age children suffer from a chronic illness—20 percent. All too often, these children face challenges accessing affordable and adequate health insurance due to their preexisting conditions. Children have preexisting conditions too. Yet children with preexisting conditions are so often denied medical insurance by insurance companies.

Our bill, which is largely included in the Senate health reform legislation which we passed an hour and a half ago, would ensure children suffering from chronic and debilitating and life-threatening illnesses have access to comprehensive and affordable health care coverage.

This bill will help children such as Shaunell Johnson from Ohio. When her parents were unable to care for her, Shaunell was adopted by her grandparents, Dorothy and Jack Johnson. Because their income exceeded the limits for medical income eligibility, they turned to the private health insurance market for Shaunell. However, due to her asthma, a preexisting condition, the Johnsons were unable to afford health insurance because they earn more than would qualify Shaunell for Medicaid but they don't earn enough to afford the \$8,700 a year for private insurance coverage for a child with a preexisting condition.

Children with serious medical conditions shouldn't be cherry-picked out of health insurance policies while their families struggle to provide care and pay medical bills.

The time has come for Congress to act on behalf of children such as Shaunell and the Senate has acted today.

We must insure that children most in need are no longer denied access to health coverage. We must immediately prevent the insurance industry from denying millions of children the health care they need.

The health care reform legislation we passed an hour and a half ago will do that.

Let me explain again why this matters and give some examples. A woman named Renee has a 5-year old boy in Ohio with hydrocephalus. He has a shunt that drains the fluid from his brain down to his belly. That said, he is a healthy, smart, and extremely happy little boy.

His neurosurgeon said he is truly a best-case scenario—very healthy. How-

ever, no insurance company will take him—no quote, no interest in looking at his medical charts, nothing.

Renee said her family is truly left with no options for health care, unless she and her husband close down their business and go to work for corporate America and get in a huge health insurance pool plan.

Renee, writing about her son, says she can't get him health insurance because he has a preexisting condition. This bill, as soon as the President signs it, will say to the health insurance industry: You can no longer deny, refuse, or lock out insurance for a family because they have a child with a preexisting condition.

Think of the progress and of the thousands whom I mentioned in the beginning and the 1,700 children's hospital beds in the children's hospitals in my State. There are 200,000 uninsured children in Ohio. Many of them are sick enough that they are deemed by the insurance company as having a preexisting condition. No longer.

When the President signs this bill in January, children from Seattle to Cleveland, from Cincinnati to Tacoma, will be able to be on their parents' health insurance policy and be able to get the coverage they need.

I will share two other stories. Laurie writes:

As a mother who had to deal with a baby born with problems and had many days of hospital stays, and many months of in-and-out-of appointments and check-ups, I realized the vital importance of health care.

I was one of the lucky ones I guess, as I did have good insurance at the time.

As a healthcare provider myself, I see too often parents not being able to get their child seen [by a physician] due to lack of insurance that does not cover the costs of anything true.

It is our children who will be our future and those in Congress' future. When will enough be enough?

An hour and a half ago, we answered that question, when will enough be enough, when we made this decision collectively—60 of us, an overwhelming majority in the Senate—that children with preexisting conditions will no longer be denied health insurance.

Cassandra, a 14-year-old from Toledo, is uninsured simply because she is sick. She suffers from seizures and, as a result, no insurance company will cover her.

Cassandra is a nationally ranked figure skater and once skated with Michelle Kwan, but after selling their home and everything else they own and putting \$30,000 on their credit cards just to pay for Cassandra's care, the family had to finally sell her ice skating equipment on eBay.

Her parents do everything they can to protect their daughter, including buying dim lights and blackout drapes and making sure there aren't too many breakable items in the house.

Cassandra gets treatment for her seizures through the State's Bureau for Children's Medical Handicaps, but they are on their own for Cassandra's basic medical needs.