transforming the system to pay doctors for the quality of care they provide and to turn the current disconnected, reactive health care system into one that is integrated and concentrates on delivering the best care for patients.

Again, I want to stress this, when we talk about saving costs, when we look at these studies, those States that are most efficient, those areas that are more efficient, have high quality care.

I leave you with this figure: The Mayo Clinic, in the last 4 years of a patient's life, if those protocols were followed across the country, we would save $50 billion every 5 years in taxpayer money. That is an independent study, $50 billion.

I know we can do better. At the same time as we reduce the cost, we can improve the quality of care that our Nation's seniors deserve. Working together, we can give them the system they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN.) The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 664 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, this next week we will be taking up the budget for fiscal year 2010. Anyone who previously had not been concerned about that debate and what it means for the country and its future probably should be concerned, based upon the most recent CBO report that came out on Friday of last week. It was sobering. It reinforces the point that we have been making about the outline we have seen of the President's budget; that is, this budget spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much.

We have spoken extensively about the new spending in the budget. We have talked at great length as well about some of the new taxes in the budget and how it will drive up taxes on small businesses, the largest job creator in the economy, the economic engine that creates two-thirds of the jobs in our economy.

We also want to talk about the fact that it borrows too much. The CBO report punctuates that point. I couldn't have put it more clearly than what they came out with last week, which suggests the initial estimates about the President's budget outline, which we received earlier, were dramatically understated and, in fact, it is going to add significantly more to the deficit than what we initially anticipated. In fact, in fiscal year 2009, which is the year in which we find ourselves right now, the CBO has revised its deficit estimate to where it is going to go over $1.8 trillion for fiscal year 2009, which represents 13.1 percent—13.1 percent—of our gross domestic product, which dwarfs anything we have seen at any time in history.

So as we enter this debate next week, I think it really is important for all of us in this Chamber to take a good look at this analysis and to try to digest it and, hopefully, for the American people to be able to take a good look at what these numbers mean as well. It is sometimes difficult to even put it into terms people can understand. When I think about $1 trillion, it is a staggering amount of money. We are throwing around numbers in trillions and trillions and trillions today in the abstract. When you try to put it in terms that everyday Americans can understand, it is almost daunting to try to accomplish that.

So when this new report came out, I think many of us found it even more sobering than what we already knew was going to be a very difficult economic and fiscal climate for the next several years. In fact, the President's budget outline that had been analyzed up to this point suggested the debt was going to double in 5 years and triple in 10 years. That is still the case.

If you can believe this, the publicly held debt, in 2019, is going to be $17.3 trillion under the CBO's new estimate. It is about $5.8 trillion today. It literally does, in a 5-year period, double the debt and in a 10-year period triples the debt. It takes the publicly held debt, as a percentage of gross domestic product, from where it is today—a historical average of about, if you look back, 20, 30, 40 percent, but let's say today we are looking at 40 percent, and that is a very high number relative to anything we have seen in history—it takes it up to over 80 percent by the end of that period. So you are looking at public debt and public deficits that are unparalleled and are unprecedented in American history. I think that is the whole point behind the argument we have made throughout the last several weeks in the lead-up to this budget discussion we are going to have next week: This budget spends too much, taxes too much, and borrows too much.

The taxing component is something many of my colleagues have spoken to already. But if you look at, again, the overall tax increases—which many are imposed. And they talk about that it just applies to high-income taxpayers. But you are talking about small businesses, many of which file or organize as subchapter S's or LLCs. So the income they get from their small business flows to their individual income tax statement, which means when these rates go up—and they are going to go up—the effective rates, to 40 and 42 percent, when today those same businesses would be paying 33 or 35 percent, they will be significant increases in the tax burden we are imposing. That is not to mention the new climate change initiative which is also contemplated in the President's budget, which imposes an entirely new energy tax on the American people, on the American consumers, creating all kinds of new costs for energy, whether it is electricity or fuels. There have been studies that have been done, very credible studies by researchers at MIT, that have suggested it is going to cost the average family in this country over 3,000 additional dollars per year in energy costs by the year 2015.

These are some pretty daunting numbers. But they come on the heels of a stimulus bill that was passed a few weeks back that was about $800 billion. When you add interest in it, it was about $1.2 trillion. That was a huge amount of money. When we try to put that in perspective relative to anytime in our Nation's history, it eclipsed anything we had seen previously. Then we had the Omnibus appropriations bill, which increased spending over the previous year by twice the rate of inflation—about 8.3 percent. Then you add the continuing resolution that was passed last year, which funded Government programs last year through March 6 of this year because that was a stopgap appropriations measure that was put in place because the appropriations bills had not been passed last year. Then we had the stimulus bill, which was, as I said, with interest, $1 trillion. Then we had the Omnibus appropriations bill, and with that a twice-the-rate-of-inflation increase. You add all those numbers together, and we have increased the size of Government this year by 49 percent—49 percent—from fiscal year 2008. I think that points to the fact, again, as to the amount of spending we are doing. It adds up because a lot of that, as I said before, is borrowed money, and it is contributing to these deficit numbers the CBO had just released.

So it would be my hope—and I know others are on the floor who are going to speak to this issue a little bit more in detail. I know the Budget Committee has analyzed the new CBO report. We are awaiting the markup of the budget this week in the Senate. We suspect it is probably going to follow somewhat closely the President's outline, his proposal, although my guess is there will be some differences. But if you take the overall trajectory it creates, it creates a trajectory over the next 10 years that calls for an average deficit—this is the average over the 10-year period—of almost $1 trillion. It is $929 billion, according to the Congressional Budget Office. That is the average.

This year, it is $1.8 trillion. Next year, it is $1.4 trillion. It drops down to $670 or $650 billion, I think, for 1 year. But then it starts spiking and trending back up again, to where, over the course of the 10-year window—the budget analysis and planning that is done here is done in a 10-year window. If you look at that 10-year window, the average deficit is $929 billion a year.

As I said, these are numbers that are staggering and unlike anything we have ever seen. It is hard to put into perspective what we are talking about relative to anytime in American history.

The other thing I will mention with regard to the stimulus bill as well—because I think there was an assumption that all this borrowing and all this spending would somehow lead to job creation and hopefully getting the economy expanding and growing again—what the CBO found in their analysis, again, was that in the long term the impact would be negligible or negative from the spending that was created in the stimulus bill. So not only were we getting no additive benefit in terms of job creation from the stimulus spending—or in the long term, at least—we are going to see negative, they think, or at least negligible, zero, economic growth as a result of it. We are adding $1 trillion to the amount we have borrowed from future generations, and we are asking our children and grandchildren to have to pay it back, not to mention what I am sure are going to be other types of economic consequences associated with that: higher interest rates, higher inflation. There is already a lot of discussion about that as we continue to borrow more and more money, whether there will be people out there who will want to buy our debt.

I believe those are all legitimate concerns and questions we need to raise in this debate, coupled with the fact that there is nothing done in this budget that would in any way significantly reduce the long-term costs associated with the entitlement programs and what is really driving, in the outyears, these deficits: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. There has been a lot of discussion in the new administration about a willingness to sit down and talk about how to reform and make these programs strong and better and more efficient for the future, but there is nothing in this budget that does that.

In fact, the only serious savings we can point to in the President's budget that they try to achieve come out of defense, come out of the military, come out of our national security, which I would argue: If we do not get national security right, the rest is conversation. But they are assuming savings as a result of drawing down troops in Iraq and places such as that, which I think they are overstating what they are going to be able to achieve in savings.

I would argue some of the other assumptions in the President's outline are optimistic with regard to revenues—and I think the CBO study bears that out—to the point now that even the Washington Post, yesterday, came out with an editorial that I think illustrates exactly how serious this fiscal situation is for our country, and drawing into question the fact that there is very little done in this budget that addresses those long-term fiscal problems I just mentioned in the entitlement programs.

There is nothing to reduce the cost of Government in the outyears, only things that are going to pile on additional costs and add and multiply over a long period of time. The incredible amount of borrowing we are already doing is going to be multiplied many times over into the future.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the editorial from the Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 22, 2009]

RED INK RED ALERT

A CONGRESSIONAL REPORT SHOULD GIVE THE PRESIDENT PAUSE

The new estimates by the Congressional Budget Office showing a federal deficit of 13.1 percent of gross domestic product for the current budget year, which began Oct. 1, are neither surprising nor particularly alarming, though it's larger than the 12.3 percent foreseen by the White House. Both are stunning numbers—far and away the largest deficit ratio since World War II. But spending rises in recessions and tax revenue falls, and we're in a big recession. It would be counterproductive to balance the budget in this historic downturn. The huge deficit includes $700 billion for a necessary rescue of the financial sector. Nor is it shocking that the CBO forecasts a deficit of 9.6 percent of GDP in fiscal 2010 if Congress enacts President Obama's $3.6 trillion budget plan—a deficit also much larger than what the president predicted. The difference largely reflects the CBO's economic forecast, which is more up-to-date and, hence, gloomier than the one Mr. Obama relied on.

What is scary, though, is the CBO's depiction of the remaining years of the president's term, and the half-decade after that—'if his budget is enacted. In none of those years would the federal deficit fall below 4.1 percent of GDP—and it would be stuck at 5.7 percent of GDP in 2019. This is in stark contrast to the president's projection: that his plan would get the deficit down to about 3 percent or so of GDP by that time. It's true, as Peter R. Orszag, director of the Office of Management and Budget, told us, that the CBO's forecasts are subject to large margins of error, especially in the out years. And Mr. Orszag is correct to point out that, even under the CBO's scenario, the deficit as a share of GDP would decline by half under Mr. Obama.

Still, it's less significant to meet that target than to keep the deficits within sustainable bounds, and few experts believe that years of deficits above 4 percent of GDP are consistent with long-term economic vitality.

If the CBO's numbers are subject to revision on account of changing circumstances, then so are the administration's; and those were based on very rosy economic assumptions to begin with. Very little of the claimed deficit reduction in the Obama plan comes from policy changes; it results more or less automatically from the assumed end of the recession, as well as by claiming savings in reducing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from unrealistically high forecasts. Yet both the White House and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that the CBO report is no reason to revise the president's ambitious tax and spending blueprint.

Mr. Obama should treat the CBO report as an incentive to fulfill his repeated promises, during and after the campaign, to make hard choices on the budget. Until now he has offered a host of new spending—on health care, middle-class tax cuts, education and alternative energy—without calling for much sacrifice from anyone except the top 5 percent of the income scale. Though his emphasis on controlling health-care costs is welcome, it's not a substitute for reforming the entitlement programs that are the drivers of long-term fiscal crisis, Medicare and Social Security. Yet the president has offered no plan for either and no road map even for achieving a plan. Several members of his own party in the Senate have been expressing doubts about his strategy, and the CBO report will lend credibility to their concerns. He should heed them.

Mr. THUNE. As to the stimulus bill, in and of itself, we are told, if the spending that is included there is not terminated at the end of the 2-year period—when we assume the short-term stimulus spending would terminate—if those programs are continued, the estimate of what they would cost goes from about $1 trillion to over $3 trillion over that 10-year period.

So there will be mountains and mountains and mountains of debt as far as the eye can see, complicated by an unwillingness by the new administration to take on any of the serious decisions that have to be made with regard to entitlement programs and mandatory spending in this budget, with lots of new programs created, as I said, new energy taxes under the guise of climate change, a new health care program that is estimated to cost around $600 billion but which many independent analysts are now saying is going to cost up to $1.5 trillion.

These are all costs that are adding up and continuing to lead to more and more borrowing, higher and higher deficits, to the point that this year 13.1 percent of GDP is the percentage and over $1.8 trillion is the actual number of the deficit. And that goes on now for years and years, and an average of $1 trillion a year just in deficits, to where the public debt, at the end of that 10-year period, will be $17.3 trillion. That is an incredible problem for our country and for future generations.

So it is high time we got it under control. It is why this budget is so wrong for America and for our future.

Madam President, I yield the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I thank Senator THUNE for his excellent remarks. I will just say that sums it up pretty well. I would like to go into a little more detail about the budget—just some of the matters in it—so we confront honestly the situation with which we are dealing.

This is the budget, which I hold up in my hand. This is the budget the President sent up. It is from the Executive Office of the White House, Office of Management and Budget. The big print on it says, ''A New Era of Responsibility.'' The small print says, ''Renewing America's Promise.'' Well, I am not sure what ''Renewing America's Promise'' means, I guess, but I am pretty sure that ''A New Era of Responsibility'' is not what this budget is. I would like to talk about it because it is breathtaking, really.

Now, some would think: Oh, here we go. This is just another political dustup, just another fight between the Republicans and Democrats, just another partisan spasm. That is what it is all about. They talk about these numbers, and I don't know what these numbers mean: a billion, a trillion, a million. What does all that mean? Well, sometimes numbers do mean something. Sometimes numbers are quite different from one another. Sometimes situations have changed, and sometimes they have not changed much. Sometimes the changes are dramatic, significant, directional in nature, historic in nature. That is what I think we are dealing with today.

I believe the discussion over this budget—I am a member of the Budget Committee—is historic. I believe the decisions we make around this budget will affect the very nature of the economy, the nature of the Government that we have, whether we will continue to have a government of limited powers, and where we are heading. Are we moving toward a ''Francification'' of America, a socialization of America? That was a big issue in the campaign. It turned out to be where, in the last few weeks, you remember Joe the Plumber and the quote ''We are going to spread the wealth around.'' People said: Oh, no, President Obama does not really mean that. Yes, he is going to do some new things and make some changes, but he is not heading toward a European-type of economy for America.

So let's talk about the budget. What does his budget say? What does it mean? A budget is a President's plan for the future. It tells where he will get the money he wants to spend. It tells where he will spend it. It tells how much money he will spend and how much spending will occur, and will there be a surplus or will there be a deficit?

Now, some people think: Well, he can't help it. That is just the way things are. These are things that a President does not have power over.

Not so. These represent Presidential priorities. Most States in this country have a balanced budget constitutional amendment. They have had shortages bigger than we are having, and those States are getting by. They are having to make some reductions in their expenditures. I have had a bunch of cities and counties in to visit with me the last 2 weeks, and all of them are making some kind of reduction in their spending. They are not disappearing from the face of the Earth.

So here we go. This is not a secret document, fundamentally. The numbers I am talking about that he proposes as his budget for the country are here.

Normally, since I have been in the Senate—12 years—and on the Budget Committee most of that time, budgets pass on a party-line vote. There have been some tough, close votes. I remember the budget that had the tax cuts in it was a close vote. Several Democrats voted with the Republicans, and it passed. But this budget is different because we have a very large Democratic majority in the Senate. I think it is a three-vote Democratic majority on the Budget Committee. Under our rules, a budget does not have to be subject to a 60-vote point of order, and it is not subject to filibuster or any kind of 60-vote threshold; it passes on a simple majority. So the Democratic majority—a very large majority now—has the power to pass this budget. That is just the way it is. They have the power. I hope, therefore, they will feel the awesome responsibility they have in discussing this budget because it is so unusual, it is so large, and it is so game-changing, to a degree which I have never seen before, and I don't think any of us have.

One of the things that disturbed me in this whole process is the spectacle of our Secretary of Treasury going to Europe to meet with European leaders and chastising them—and they have had some pretty big stimulus packages—for not having bigger stimulus packages, not spending more money, and not going into more debt. This is so odd because we as Americans have normally been the ones who have criticized the Europeans for their tax and spend and entitlement, socialistic welfare system. So here we are doing that.

Prime Minister Merkel in Germany said it is extraordinarily dangerous that transatlantic conflict is being fanned, and, ''I am grateful to the American President that he has told me this is an artificial debate,'' she told lawmakers on April 2 at the Group of 20 nations. She said:

> The Group of 20 nations need to send ''a positive psychological signal, not a competition over stimulus packages that can't be implemented.''

The European Central Bank president, Mr. Trichet, said this:

> If the additional deficits are costing you both a strong increase of the cost of your own refinancing and a loss of confidence of your people, you are not better off!

He goes on to say:

> If your people have the sentiment that they will not be better off in an endless spiraling of deficits, they will not spend any money that you give them today!

So the Europeans are pushing back. They are warning us that we are going too far.

So let's look at some of the numbers to which Senator THUNE made reference. The first is the title of the budget, the President's budget, which came right out of this book—these numbers the President has submitted to us—what he plans to occur in America over the next 10 years under his budget.

In 2008, last September 30, we had a $455 billion deficit. Since World War II, that is the largest deficit the country has ever had—$455 billion. Do you know what it was the year before? It was $161 billion. Why did it jump that much? Well, 150 billion of the dollars that jumped was the checks that got sent out. President Bush sent out the checks. He was going to stop the recession. He sent everybody a check last spring. It didn't work. I voted against it. It wasn't easy to vote against constituents getting a check, but I didn't think it worked then, and everybody agrees now that it didn't, but that helped jump the deficit to this record amount—$455 billion.

What about this year? Including the stimulus package—or a part of it that we just passed—and the $700 billion Wall Street bailout and the bailout of Fannie and Freddie, scored at about $200 billion according to CBO, it comes out this year, September 30, the deficit will be $1,752 billion, more than three times the highest deficit we have had since the Republic—well, at least since World War II, when we were in a life-and-death struggle with millions of people in arms all over the world, turning out airplanes and ships by the thousands.

Is this just one time? Is it just a one-time expenditure? No, it is not. In 2010, the President's own numbers show the deficit will be $1,171 billion, or about $1.2 trillion.

According to the numbers in the President's budget, which were gimmicked, in my view, we will already be under a recovery in 2010. We will not be in negative growth; we will have I think 1.6 percent economic growth, GDP growth. We are still going to have $1.2 trillion in deficits. It drops down to $912 billion, $581 billion, $533 billion, and then starts growing again, and in the 10th year of his budget, he is projecting a deficit of $712 billion.

Now, within those projections are some rosy scenarios, such as if the economy is growing and unemployment is not too high, then you have more money to spend than if the economy is still slow-sinking and unemployment is high. So the budget assumes an unemployment rate of 8.1 percent, the highest—that is as high as it would ever get during this entire 10-year period. It assumes that next year or later this year, we will have 8.1 percent unemployment. Well, we are at 8.1 percent unemployment now. That is the current figure. The blue chip group, the top economists and the ones most people look at, project unemployment to be over 9 percent. CBO projects 9 percent will be the maximum unemployment rate. If it goes that high, then we are going to have bigger deficits. So there are some other rosy scenarios in there that the objective economists do not believe will occur.

When you score this budget without using those gimmicks or rosy scenarios, as the Congressional Budget Office is required to do—they are required to make an independent analysis of the President's budget, and they have done so.

Let me just say that we are proud of the independence of the Congressional Budget Office. They are a talented group. They work for us here. The new Director was chosen in a bipartisan way but clearly with the final power in the hands of the substantial Democratic majority in the Senate. They control the ultimate choice of the Congressional Budget Office.

They come out not with a $712 billion deficit for that year—not $912 billion but $1.2 trillion, $500 billion higher when they use numbers they believe are fair and honest and accurate, coming out with $1.2 trillion in deficit, not $700 billion in deficit. There will not be, in this entire 10-year period, taking President Obama's own numbers, and certainly not the Congressional Budget Office's numbers, a single year that is close to as low as the $455 billion deficit of President Bush's last year. Most of them are twice that or will average twice that.

So what I wish to say to my colleagues is that this is not sustainable.

The President had a great meeting with the Republicans one day at lunch in the room right over here. He was very personable, open, and responded to any questions asked. I thought he was very sincere when he said: Look, we are going to have to spend a lot of money now, but when this economy comes back we are all going to have to work together to reduce the systemic threat of out-of-control deficits. He said that more than once. I thought he meant that. But when you propose a budget that has deficits increasing every year over the next 5 years and reaching, in his own numbers, $712 billion in deficit—and according to CBO, $1.2 trillion—then I can't take that very seriously. There is not one act in this budget plan of any significant evaluation of the out-of-control entitlement programs we have or how to bring those under control.

So that is not politics; that is reality. It is not acceptable. We have to say no to this budget. I know my Democratic colleagues are uneasy about those numbers. They tell me they are uneasy about them. They want to support their President. They want to pass this budget. But at some point, I think my colleagues are going to have to say no. I hope they will. Certainly, the Republicans can't say no; we don't have enough votes.

Now, Senator THUNE made reference to this number.

Madam President, what is our timeframe?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business expires at 4 o'clock p.m., in several minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I would just point out these numbers. The public debt, which I think is probably the clearest definition of what our debt situation is—you can argue about that, but the public debt, I believe, is correct—is now $5.8 trillion. In 5 years, it will be $11.5 trillion, a doubling of the debt; and in 10 years, another 5 years, it will be $15.3 trillion, tripling—that is the debt since the founding of the Republic—$5 trillion right here. In 10 years, we are going to triple the total debt. That is not acceptable. And they are projecting not a recession in the next 10 years after we get out of this one, they are projecting growth, no wars, and it is still like this. The truth is, those of us who observed budgeting before don't stay to the budget totals; we usually go over them through some sort of gimmick or maneuver.

How about another number that is disturbing to me—very disturbing. The White House estimate on interest payments in the budget is $148 billion for 2009. According to CBO, they estimate it higher at $170 billion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. It shows the interest rate or payments on this tripling debt reaching $694 billion, according to the White House's own estimate, in 2019, to the people who buy our debt—the largest foreign recipient of which is China.

CBO says that is underestimated. They calculate it to be $806 billion. The entire general fund of the State of Alabama, an average-size State, is about $7 billion for the counties, schools, teachers, and roads. The highway budget for the entire United States of America is $40 billion a year, including interstate, all the money we send to the States, and all of the pork money we put on top of it. This is $806 billion in interest alone on a debt that we have run up in previous years. That is why people are worried about it.

I will conclude with that and say, again, I know we all get caught up in politics, that is true. But this year, this budget is not a normal budget. It is not a bigger budget or a lot bigger. It is a gargantuan budget, the likes of which we have not seen before. It results in debt increases that are not sustainable. It has no projection of any containment of spending. It does nothing to deal with the entitlement difficulties that are driving much of the debt, and it cannot be passed in this fashion.

I urge my Democratic colleagues to say: No, Mr. President, you have to go back and look at this some more. We cannot pass this budget and not just take a few hundred billion dollars off, or something like that. We need to have a serious discussion of the financial condition of our country. I think the Republicans will be there trying to work with you on it. But without some leadership from the other side, this budget will go into effect.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL SERVICE REAUTHORIZATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1388, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to consideration of the bill (H.R. 1388) to reauthorize and reform the national service laws.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled 6 p.m. cloture vote now occur at 5:45 p.m., and that 10 minutes immediately prior to 5:45 p.m. be divided as previously ordered, and that all other provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, for the information of Members, a number of Senators wanted us to start the vote earlier tonight, and we are happy to do that. For those who aren't going to arrive until 6 o'clock, we will drag the vote out so they will not miss it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I am proud today to bring the legislation to the floor entitled Serve America Act. This bill is the result of extensive bipartisan work by Senators KENNEDY and HATCH who have worked more than a year on this legislation but who have devoted their lives to this bill. I know in a short time I will be joined by the distinguished Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, who was one of the prime sponsors of the bill. Senator ENZI of Wyoming, the ranking member of the Health, Education Committee, was also going to be here. He is in a snowstorm in Wyoming. Senator ENZI will bring his remarks to the floor tomorrow.

Let me just say that I want to, first of all, salute Senators KENNEDY and HATCH for designing this legislation because it expands the opportunity to serve this country. At the same time, Senator ENZI and Senator DODD worked assiduously to strengthen the bill.

Senator ENZI brought very key legislative analysis to the bill, and his background as an accountant gave us