

all the debt that has been run up in our Nation from the beginning when George Washington was President through George W. Bush's term in office, take all that debt, President Obama has proposed and is spending—this government is spending—at a rate that will double that debt in just 5 years. It is an inexcusable action to pass this much debt on to our children.

This chart, called the "Wall of Debt," puts it in numerical terms. We can see how it goes up and up and up and up. By the end of this budget, the debt will have increased three times—three times from about \$6 billion to \$16 billion, about \$5.5 to \$16 trillion—excuse me, trillion dollars. It is hard to use the term "trillion."

This is intolerable.

How do we address this situation? We need to control spending, and we need, to the extent we raise taxes, use those taxes to reduce our debt, not expand the size of government. Yet what are the proposals we are seeing coming from this administration and Members on the other side of the aisle?

We have seen a House of Representatives proposal in the area of energy called the cap-and-trade bill, which should be more accurately described as the cap-and-tax bill because it creates a national sales tax of inordinate size. We have never seen anything of this size before. Every time you hit your light switch, you are going to end up paying a new tax under this bill for the purpose of addressing climate change and energy policy. Yet it does not really accomplish any of that.

The primary polluter in America today is the automobile. All that the new tax that is being put in place from the House bill does is increase the cost or increase the tax on gasoline. It does not reduce the mileage. It does not reduce the pollution. It just increases the tax.

As Senator ALEXANDER spoke prior to my speaking, in the area of energy production, electrical production, cap and trade simply becomes a windfall, a pure and simple corporate welfare program for a lot of large, major electrical producers. They get this asset, a certificate to sell, which we have seen generate huge amounts of income to them, in exchange for theoretically reducing the amount of emissions that go into the atmosphere.

If you wanted to address this issue, you don't do it with a massive new tax on American workers, which is then basically given back to the industry which uses it, which gets an advantage from it. Rather, you should use the ideas Senator ALEXANDER has talked about and we have been talking about on this side. Build 100 nuclear powerplants in the next 20 years, move the automobile fleet to at least half electrical by the year 2020 so that you have actually brought online nonpolluting electrical power and you have put in place automobiles which do not pollute also.

That is not the proposal. The proposal is this massive new tax, not used

to reduce the debt or the deficit but basically used in many areas to expand the government with lots of new programs but also to underwrite a huge corporate welfare program.

Then the other proposal we have from the administration that is major public policy is the issue of health care. Again, proposals are about expanding dramatically the size of government. In fact, the bill being worked on in the HELP Committee, by its own scoring, is at least \$1 trillion unfunded. That adds to the debt. That is going to go on top of this debt.

To the extent there are new taxes being talked about—and there are a lot of them, especially in the House of Representatives—those taxes are not being used to reduce the debt. They are being used to grow the size of government, to increase the government. As a result, the debt does not go down; the government's size goes up when we should be focusing on this debt issue.

It is unconscionable that we as one generation would be running up these types of deficits and passing this type of debt on to our children. There may be an excuse for it during a period of recession—

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

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I ask for 1 additional minute.

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

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, there may be an excuse for it during a recession—and we are in a recession, a severe one—but there is no excuse for it as we move out of this recession, and we are moving out of this recession. There is no excuse for having deficits that are \$1 trillion for the next 10 years. There is no excuse for running deficits of 4 to 5 percent of GDP for the next \$1 trillion. There is absolutely no excuse for putting a debt on our children's backs that is 80 percent of the GDP of this country because what we are doing is passing on to our children a nation with fiscal policies that are unsustainable and which will basically give them less of a lifestyle than we received from our parents. No generation should do that to another generation. Yet there are no policy proposals coming forward from this administration which would turn this debt line down. None. Instead, their policy proposals increase the size of government and increase the tax burdens of Americans without reducing our debt by any significance. It is an unfortunate situation and a difficult situation and one which we better start addressing for the sake of this country and for our children's future.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. 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. MCCAIN. Madam President, the pending business, I understand, is the DOD authorization bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is still in morning business, and the Democrats control the remaining time.

Mr. MCCAIN. And when does that time expire?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 1390, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1390) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2010 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Levin/McCain amendment No. 1469, to strike \$1,750 million in procurement, Air Force funding for F-22A aircraft procurement, and to restore operation and maintenance, military personnel, and other funding in divisions A and B that was reduced in order to authorize such appropriation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the Levin-McCain amendment which is before the Senate would strike \$1.75 billion in funding for the F-22 aircraft that is in the committee bill that was adopted on a very close vote, and we would also restore some very serious reductions that had to be adopted in order to pay for that increase.

I come to this debate as somebody who supported the F-22 program until the numbers were achieved that were needed by the Air Force. This debate is not about whether we are going to have the capability of the F-22, it is a debate about how many F-22 aircraft we should have and at what cost. And we are talking here about whether we should accept the recommendations of two Commanders in Chief, two Secretaries of Defense, two Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that 187 F-22s is what we need and all we can afford and all we should buy.

Madam President, yesterday we put in the RECORD two letters, one from the

President of the United States saying he would veto a bill—not consider a veto but actually veto a bill—that has more than 187 F-22s that are to be provided. We also put a letter from the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the RECORD yesterday going through all the reasons they strongly oppose any additional F-22s and oppose the committee language which costs \$1.75 billion, taking it away from some very important programs.

Today, I wish to read briefly and then put in the RECORD a letter that came from the Secretary of the Air Force yesterday afternoon and from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force opposing the additional F-22s that are in the committee bill. This letter reads in part:

As we prepared the fiscal year 2010 funding submission, and mindful that the final lot of aircraft is scheduled for completion over the next year, we methodically reviewed this issue from multiple perspectives. These included: emerging joint war-fighting requirements; complementary F-22 and F-35 roles in the future security environment; potential advantages of continuing a warm F-22 production line as insurance against possible delays/ failures in the F-35 program; potential impacts to the Services and international partners if resources were realigned from the F-35 to the F-22; overall tactical aircraft force structure; and funding implications, given that extending F-22 production to 243 aircraft would create an unfunded requirement estimated at over \$13 billion.

And then they summarized—this is the Air Force speaking; top civilian, top military leader in the U.S. Air Force—as follows:

We assessed the F-22 decision from all angles, taking into account competing strategic priorities and complementary programs and alternatives, all balanced within the context of available resources. We did not and do not recommend F-22s be included in the FY10 defense budget. This is a difficult decision but one with which we are comfortable. Most importantly, in this and other budget decisions, we believe it is important for Air Force leaders to make clear choices, balancing requirements across a range of Air Force contributions to joint capabilities.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the entire letter from the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force at this time.

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

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE,
Washington, DC, July 13, 2009.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As the Senate considers the FY10 Defense Authorization Bill, we write to reiterate our personal and professional views concerning the future of the F-22 program, and why we recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the Air Force not pursue F-22 production beyond 187 aircraft.

The F-22 is the most capable fighter in our military inventory and, arguably, the world. Among its principal advantages are stealth and speed; and while optimized for air-to-air combat, it also has a ground attack capa-

bility. Requirements for the F-22 have changed significantly over the past 20 years, as DoD has continued to reassess potential threats, scenarios, and force structure—to include the number of major combat operations we might be challenged to conduct and their timing/phasing.

Broadly speaking, previous assessments have concluded that a progressively more sophisticated mix of aircraft, weapons, and networking capabilities will, over time and within practical limits, enable us to produce needed combat power with fewer platforms. As the overall requirements for fighter inventories have declined, including F-22s, the rising F-22 program costs also led to smaller buys. Together these trends, coupled with constrained resources, ultimately led to a DoD-imposed funding cap and a December 2004 approved program of 183 aircraft (later adjusted to 187).

As we prepared the Fiscal Year 10 funding submission, and mindful that the final lot of aircraft is scheduled for completion over the next year, we methodically reviewed this issue from multiple perspectives. These included: emerging joint warfighting requirements; complementary F-22 and F-35 roles in the future security environment; potential advantages of continuing a warm F-22 production line as insurance against possible delays/failures in the F-35 program; potential impacts to the Services and international partners if resources were realigned from the F-35 to the F-22; overall tactical aircraft force structure; and funding implications, given that extending F-22 production to 243 aircraft would create an unfunded requirement estimated at over \$13 billion.

This review concluded with a holistic and balanced set of recommendations for our fighter force: 1) focus procurement on modern 5th generation aircraft rather than less capable F-15s and F-16s; 2) given that the F-35 will constitute the majority of the future fighter force, transition as quickly as is prudent to F-35 production; 3) complete F-22 procurement at 187 aircraft, while continuing plans for future F-22 upgrades; and 4) accelerate the retirements of the oldest 4th generation aircraft and modify the remaining aircraft with necessary upgrades in capability.

And finally, while it is tempting to focus only on whether the Air Force would benefit from additional F-22s, which we acknowledge some in the airpower community have advocated, this decision has increasingly become a zero-sum game. Within a fixed Air Force and DoD budget, however large or small, our challenge is to decide among many competing joint warfighting needs; to include intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; command and control; and related needs in the space and cyber domains. At the same time, we are working to repair years of institutional neglect of our nuclear forces, rebuild our acquisition workforce, and taking steps to improve Air Force capabilities for irregular warfare. Ultimately, buying more F-22s means doing less of something else and we did not recommend displacement of these other priorities to fund additional F-22s.

In summary, we assessed the F-22 decision from all angles, taking into account competing strategic priorities and complementary programs and alternatives, all balanced within the context of available resources. We did not and do not recommend F-22s be included in the FY10 defense budget. This is a difficult decision but one with which we are comfortable. Most importantly, in this and other budget decisions, we believe it is important for Air Force leaders to make clear choices, balancing requirements across or-
ange of Air Force contributions to joint capabilities.

Make no mistake: air superiority is and remains an essential capability for joint

warfighting today and in the future. The F-22 is a vital tool in the military toolbox and will remain in our inventory for decades to come.

NORTON A. SCHWARTZ,
Chief of Staff.
MICHAEL B. DONLEY,
Secretary of the Air
Force.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, at this point, I thank Chairman LEVIN for his important comments, especially about the letters from the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force on this issue. Let me repeat that this debate is not about depriving, in my view, the U.S. Air Force of a much needed part of our arsenal to defend this Nation's national security; it is about whether we will continue to spend money on the F-22, of which we are already acquiring 187, and additionally adding the F-35, the Joint Strike Fighter, which is very badly needed by the other services as well. I believe the F-35, the Joint Strike Fighter, is a very important counterpart to the F-22. The F-22 has great capabilities in certain areas, and the Joint Strike Fighter does too. So this debate is not just about removing the funds for the F-22. What it is about is removing funds for the F-22 and moving forward with the Joint Strike Fighter to give the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy a balanced inventory that will maintain the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps as the most powerful projections of air power in the world for a long time to come.

So I emphasize, this is not so much about terminating a program as it is ending a much needed program and supplementing it with another. I think that sometimes this argument is portrayed simply in the area of the F-22 itself. It is not. I know the chairman and I and the majority of the committee want a balanced, powerful, capable Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy throughout the 21st century.

There have been various points raised and arguments made during this debate. I would like to respond to several of those arguments that have been made so far and probably will be raised again during the rest of this debate.

The first argument addresses the fact that 187 F-22s will not meet operational demands at an acceptable level of risk.

In the view of some Air Force officials, including the Air Combat Command general, John Corley, for example, a total of 381 F-22s would be sufficient to meet operational demands at a low level of risk and a total of 243 to 250 would be sufficient to meet operational demands with a moderate level of risk. That is the view of some very credible individuals.

Our response to that is that in December 2004, the Department of Defense determined that 183 F-22s was sufficient to meet its military requirements. This is back in December of

2004. The Department conducted several analyses which affirmed that number based on a number of variables, including the lengths and types of wars the Department of Defense believes it will have to fight in the future and future capabilities of likely adversaries.

The President, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Air Force Chief of Staff, and the Secretary of the Air Force have all stated that 187 F-22s is sufficient to meet operational requirements, particularly when combined with other U.S. military assets, including cyber warfare, strike fighter aircraft, long-range standoff precision weapons to counter enemy aircraft and surface-to-air missile systems in the future from potential adversaries.

We need to look at this in the entirety of its inventory. That means cyber warfare, it means long-range standoff precision weapons, it means the dramatic increase in capability of unmanned aircraft. Look at the role unmanned aircraft have played in Iraq and Afghanistan. In all candor, look at the role the F-22 has not played in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has not been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan; whereas, our unmanned aircraft, our Predators, have had an incredible effect in identifying, locating, and destroying the enemy. I think General Petraeus will attest to that in a very persuasive fashion.

In response to the argument that more F-22s are necessary to close a gap in fifth-generation fighters between the United States and China, on May 14, Secretary Gates noted, “[W]hen you look at potential threats—for example, in 2020, the United States will have 2,700 TACAIR. China will have 1,700. But, of ours, 1,000 will be fifth-generation aircraft, including the F-22 and the F-35. And, in 2025, that gap gets even bigger. So, the notion that a gap or a United States lead over China alone of 1,700 fifth-generation aircraft in 2025 does not provide additional fifth-generation aircraft, including F-22s, to take on a secondary threat seems to be unrealistic.”

Secretary Gates summarized his position on the operational need issue on June 18, when he said that “the U.S. military has to have the flexibility across the spectrum of conflict to handle the threats of the future” and that “this will mean a huge investment for the future, one that is endangered by continuing the F-22 Raptor program.” He concluded, “frankly, to be blunt about it, the notion that not buying 60 more F-22s imperils the national security of the United States, I find complete nonsense.”

As military deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition GEN Mark D. Shackelford said, “the capability that we get out of the 187 F-22s we believe is more than sufficient for the type of threat that the Secretary of Defense is addressing in the future”. Whatever moderate risk

may arise from ending the F-22 program, now is merely short term and, under the Air Force’s Combat Air Force—CAF—restructure plan, necessary for the Air Force to transition the current fleet to a smaller, more capable fifth-generation fighter force for all the Services.

The next argument being made is buying more F-22s could help mitigate a projected fighter shortfall of up to 800 aircraft by 2024 that Air Force leaders identified in 2008 and a projected gap recently identified within the Air National Guard’s fighter inventory. Such purchases could also hedge the United States against the risk of unexpected age-related problems developing in the Air Force’s legacy force.

Our response to that is the fighter gap that the Air Force identified is questionable, given that it turns on various assumptions regarding threats and whether the United States will fight by itself or as part of a coalition. In any event, the Air Force has put in place a plan that will both mitigate any shortfall in fighter capability and bridge the current fleet to a smaller, more capable fifth-generation fighter force. An essential element of that plan—called the Combat Air Force—CAF—restructure plan—is to stop investing in the F-22 program after the current program of record of 187. That plan addresses possible shortfalls in fighter capability more cost-effectively than simply buying more F-22s. It does so by restructuring the Air Force’s current fleet of fighters now and directing resulting savings to modifying newer or more reliable fighters in the legacy fleet, including, upgraded F-15s and F-16s, procuring less expensive aircraft, including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and investing in joint enablers. Under the plan, those investments will help create a more capable fleet that can bridge the Air Force to a future fleet with a smaller, more capable force.

In addition, in the years ahead, the Department of Defense needs to focus on improving its capabilities for irregular warfare operations, and the F-22 is not a key program for improving those capabilities. While the F-22 is an extraordinarily capable “air superiority” platform, its limited air-to-ground capability makes it less appropriate for supporting counterinsurgency operations—so much so that, as Secretary Gates has pointed out several times, “the reality is we are fighting two wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the F-22 has not performed a single mission in either theater.”

The next argument is the decision to end the F-22 program is purely budget driven.

Secretary Gates has indicated numerous times that his decision to end the program is not resource driven. He announced that decision on April 6, weeks before his plan was even submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for vetting. On April 30, Secretary Gates plainly stated, “if my

top-line were \$50 billion higher, I would make the same decision [regarding the F-22 program].” That having been said, given the current fiscal crisis, buying more F-22s would likely reduce funding for other more critically needed aircraft, such as the F-35, F/A-18E/F, and EA-18G, which unlike the F-22 are equipped with electronic warfare capability—the combatant commanders’ number one priority. In that sense, continuing to purchase of F-22s could create operational risks for the United States military in the near term.

The next argument is buying more F-22s will ensure the Air National Guard gets modernized fighter aircraft sooner.

Our response is that under the Total Force policy, all the Services, including the Air National Guard, will receive Joint Strike Fighters at the appropriate time and at the appropriate rate to replace their aging F-15 and F-16 aircraft. The only requirement that the Air National Guard obtain Joint Strike Fighters “sooner” arises from the “additional views” of Senator CHAMBLISS in the report accompanying the fiscal year 2010 authorization bill.

In a letter to Senator CHAMBLISS, the head of the Air National Guard LTG Harry M. Wyatt III noted, “I believe the current and future asymmetric threats to our nation, particularly from seaborne cruise missiles, requires a fighter platform” such as the F-22. However, that threat is simply not present today. This is something that is being closely looked at now in the on-going QDR debate. When asked about the cruise missile threat during our committee hearing recently, Secretary Gates correctly noted that the most effective counter to these sorts of threats is an aircraft that doesn’t have a pilot inside of it.

The next argument is that large-scale production of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters has only recently begun and has not yet increased to planned higher annual rates. Until production of the Joint Strike Fighter has been successfully demonstrated at those planned higher annual rates, it would be imprudent to shut down the F-22 production line, which is the only “hot” fifth-generation production line.

Our response is that given how relatively similar the development and manufacturing efforts supporting the Joint Strike Fighter are to those supporting the F-22, concerns about an overall compromise in the industrial base appear to be overstated. In addition, whatever moderate risk may arise from ending the F-22 program now is operationally acceptable: it is short-term in duration and, under the Air Force’s Combat Air Force—CAF—restructure plan, necessary for the Air Force to transition the current fleet to a smaller, more capable fifth-generation fighter force for all the Services.

It is true that although “full-rate production” of the Joint Strike Fighter isn’t anticipated until 2015, the program is making very meaningful

progress. But, maturation in the technical, software, production-processes, and testing aspects of the program are on track to plan and are in fact exceeding legacy standards—including those for the F-22. All 19 “systems development and demonstration” aircraft will roll out by the end of the year and major assembly on the 14 aircraft comprising the earlier “low-rate initial production,” L-RIP, lots have begun. I can assure the Members of this body that Senator LEVIN and I and our capable staffs will be keeping a very close eye on the Joint Strike Fighter production. It is vital that aircraft meet its cost estimates and meet its time schedules.

At this point, the first of those copies is expected to be delivered on time to Eglin Air Force Base in May 2010, and the first operationally capable versions of the fighter are expected to be delivered to the Marine Corps in 2012, the Air Force in 2013, and the Navy in 2015.

This is not to say we should take, as I said, our eyes off the program. We need to track continuous progress on the F-35 to ensure that development costs leading to production remain stable.

I am persuaded, as I hope the majority of this body will be, that on the issue of whether the F-22 program should continue, the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Air Force Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force are all correct: Ending the F-22 program now is vital to enabling the Department to bridge its current fighter capability to a more capable fifth-generation fighter force that is best equipped to both meet the needs of our deployed forces today and the emerging threats of tomorrow.

Finally, the chairman and I are not unaware that this will lead to the loss of jobs in certain States in certain production facilities around the country. We know this is very tough, particularly in times of high unemployment across the country. But I would like to make the argument, No. 1, that the F-35, the Joint Strike Fighter, once it gets into production, will also be a job creator.

But I would also point out that the purpose of building weapons is not to create jobs. The purpose is simply to defend this Nation's national security. We have an obligation to be careful stewards of all our taxpayers' dollars but, most importantly, those taxpayers' dollars that go to the defense of this Nation should be first and foremost what can best defend the Nation's national security in times when we are in two wars and facing future threats that are, indeed, formidable in the view of most.

We are not without sympathy for the parts of our country, including the State of Georgia, where there are a large number of jobs that are at risk. Our sympathy is with them, and we will do everything we can to provide

job opportunities, including in the defense industries across this country. But we cannot argue that we should spend taxpayers' dollars for weapons systems simply to create or keep jobs. That is not the use of taxpayers' dollars. If we want to do that, then there are many other programs we should fully fund to help create jobs and small business opportunities across this Nation.

This issue, I hope, will continue to be debated today and that we could resolve it, hopefully, sometime tomorrow morning with a final vote.

I know, from previous experience, there are perhaps 100 or more amendments that await the consideration of this body on the Department of Defense authorization bill. This is, obviously, a very important issue. This issue, perhaps, is maybe even more important than the \$1.75 billion we are talking about. This debate is about whether we are going to make the tough decisions to most wisely and most expeditiously defend this Nation and spend those dollars wisely.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, first let me thank Senator MCCAIN for his very comprehensive, thorough, and compelling argument relative to the F-22.

This last point about the number of amendments which we expect would be, if not offered, at least proposed and considered, we need those amendments to come to the floor.

We have a lot of work ahead of us. I know it is a statement of high ambition to suggest that we try to finish the bill this week. But I think we are obligated to use the time wisely. There are not going to be votes today. We attempted to schedule a vote prior to lunch today, but as an accommodation to some Senators, we did not do that. We then attempted to schedule a vote for tomorrow morning. That effort did not succeed last night. But as Senator MCCAIN said, we are trying to see if we can't schedule that today.

In the meantime, while we are awaiting some other speakers, apparently on this amendment, we would welcome those who are considering amendments; that they get those to us and our staffs so we can begin the arduous work of going through those amendments and determining which ones we might be able to accept, which ones we cannot, so that those who want to proceed, even if we cannot accept those amendments, can then indicate they wish to debate.

The floor is open now to debate. We await other speakers.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the Levin-McCain amendment to strike excessive funding in this bill for the F-22. I want to briefly outline why this amendment is in the best interests of our national defense and our fiscal future.

This amendment represents the best of leadership that our Nation has to offer. Senator MCCAIN and President Obama have put political parties aside and have acted to protect taxpayers at a time when our fiscal circumstances require us to make difficult choices. And Chairman LEVIN has supported their efforts. They are willing to make hard choices. Congress must follow their wise leadership.

The media has reported that our budget deficit now exceeds \$1 trillion. We have provided middle class tax cuts, first-time homebuyer tax credits and invested resources in order to turn this economy around. But we have to reexamine our other spending choices and say no to excessive spending. The F-22 embodies spending to an excess, and it borrows from key operations and maintenance and personnel accounts to do so.

The Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and our Commander-in-Chief have said we do not need any more F-22s. In fact, they say that the costs of acquiring and maintaining these aircraft, which have ballooned far beyond the Pentagon's original estimates, are hindering our ability to make much-needed investments in other necessary programs.

It is not only the Obama administration. President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld also agreed that this is an area where we can show restraint and help strained taxpayers. The Levin-McCain amendment is the right policy for the country—armed services leadership and Presidents from both parties agree.

We should be listening when the Air Force tells us that the 187 F-22s that we have are enough. Our President has shown the wisdom to listen to our uniformed leaders. Now only Congress stands in the way of saving taxpayers \$1.75 billion.

The F-22 has never supported a single mission in Iraq or Afghanistan. It is time to reassert the actual military priorities of today. It is true that the F-22 supports jobs, sprinkled around our nation. But we need to focus on weapons programs that create jobs and also serve a modern military purpose. As the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee have said, the F-35 represents the future of our fighter fleet. As we look to the future, I simply cannot lend my support to this effort to allow unnecessary expansion of a program at the expense of the American and Colorado taxpayer.

There are far more useful ways to create and maintain jobs that actually enhance our military readiness. Phasing out expansion of the F-22 fleet will

allow needed funding to be reallocated to more important, pressing needs of our military. Let's pass a Defense authorization bill actually contains the requests that our military has made. Madam President, \$1.75 billion for the F-22 has not been requested, and I agree with Chairman LEVIN, Senator MCCAIN, Presidents Obama and Bush.

I urge my colleagues to join in this effort to show fiscal restraint. Support the Levin-McCain amendment. The best way to defend our country is to listen to our military when it tells us to change the way we invest. Our fiscal health and our national security both depend on 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. LEVIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECESS

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:12 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President pro tempore.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business to speak about the health care deliberations we are undertaking. I know we are under the Defense authorization bill. My remarks should not take that long.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, as I indicated, I rise today to talk about health care reform and the hard truths that have so far been not hidden but I do not think have been very much aware to many Americans.

I was inspired to come to the Senate floor today because we are holding hearings in the HELP Committee—and we are holding hearings in the Finance Committee—and a series of events in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee made me recall the observations of a well-respected public opinion analyst, pollster Daniel Yankelovich, founder of the New York Times/Yankelovich Poll.

The HELP Committee has been struggling—well, we have been working hard; “struggling” probably is not the right word; and many thanks to the chairman, CHRIS DODD, our ranking member, MIKE ENZI, and the members

of the HELP Committee—but we have been going through a multiweek markup that I think has been characterized by some very wishful thinking on the part of the majority members of that committee; namely, the hope or the wish that they can somehow not reveal the very real costs and tradeoffs raised by their health care reform bill. I think the American people ought to become more and more aware of this.

The bill the HELP Committee is marking up establishes all sorts of new government programs, all sorts of new government mandates and controls—all justified by the need to “rein in health care costs” and “increase health insurance coverage.” I know those are two very good and noble pursuits, which I support wholeheartedly. As a matter of fact, I think Republicans now have about six bills to do the same thing. They do not get much attention, but we have six bills.

But there is a big problem with this bill. It does neither of these things, in my opinion. It neither reduces costs, nor does it significantly increase coverage. In fact, it significantly increases costs for very little gain—“costs,” c-o-s-t-s. Remember that word. But my colleagues on the HELP Committee continue to wish and to hope they can obscure this reality through a barrage, really, of speeches and rhetoric and what I call misleading figures.

It has been this behavior that has caused me to recall Mr. Yankelovich's observations on something called the evolution of opinion. I am going to use that as the basis of my remarks—the evolution of opinion. The article was in Fortune magazine, and it jogged my memory in this regard. But, in any event, I think it serves as an important illustration of the health care reform process so far. Mr. Yankelovich observed that the evolution of a person's opinion could be traced through a continuum of seven stages. That is a fancy way of saying there are steps you go through when you are trying to think something through.

First, we have had daunting awareness: the realization that our health care system was not working for every American and needed to be addressed. I think everybody understands that.

The second stage, greater urgency: the economy began to go south and people who used to rely on their employer for health insurance began losing their jobs.

Then there is the third stage: reaching for solutions. Our committee has held hearings and began to meet with stakeholders. The administration met with stakeholders. The stakeholders, I think, probably met in good faith. And it has only been recently they have discovered they may have signed on to something that is very illusory, to say the least.

Fourth, the stage where many on the HELP Committee and elsewhere have arrived at today: the wishful thinking stage, the well-intentioned, romantic, simplistic, perhaps naive moment

where all one sees are the benefits, without considering the consequences—the law of unintended effects. For example: the totally misleading claim by the majority that the new data from the Congressional Budget Office revealed a much lower score for this bill, \$597 billion—a lot of money—while still expanding health insurance coverage to 97 percent of Americans. This claim is the very definition of “wishful thinking.” But facts are stubborn things. The actual CBO numbers say this bill leaves 34 million people still uninsured. That is not 97 percent coverage. In order to gain anywhere near 97 percent coverage, we would have to significantly expand Medicaid—a very expensive proposition which, according to CBO, adds about \$500 billion or more to the cost of this bill.

More wishful thinking: The \$597 billion cost was further artificially lowered through several budget maneuvers, such as a multiyear phase-in and a long-term care insurance program that will increase costs significantly outside the 10-year budget window CBO is required to use. Here we are passing a long-term insurance bill that goes beyond 10 years that CBO cannot even score.

After taking these realities into account, a more accurate 10-year score of this bill is closer to \$2 trillion. I said that right: not \$1 trillion—\$2 trillion.

This is when we should arrive at the fifth stage of opinion making: weighing the choices. Since the true cost of this bill is approximately \$2 trillion, we must own up to the American public about the tradeoffs. We must finally understand that the tradeoffs threaten a health care system that polls tell us has a 77-percent satisfaction rate.

This is not to say we should not undertake any reforms, but we need to honestly discuss the costs and benefits of reform proposals. And the majority's proposal is high on cost and low on benefits.

The No. 1 tradeoff that Americans need to know is, higher taxes. Remember when the President promised: If you make under \$250,000, you will not see your taxes increased, that you would actually see a tax cut. Well, like so many other pledges, those promises had an expiration date, and that date is rapidly approaching.

The bill raises \$36 billion in the first 10 years in new taxes on individuals who do not purchase health insurance. That is a penalty. It raises another \$52 billion in new taxes on employers who do not offer their employees health insurance.

As an aside, guess who suffers when the employer's taxes get raised? It certainly is not the employer. It is the employee who gets laid off or does not get a raise. It is the applicant who does not get hired. Even President Obama's own Budget Director admits this fact.

At least one economic survey estimates that an employer mandate to provide health insurance, such as the