

are they going to be responsible for the debt we have today, but the \$78 trillion worth of unfunded liabilities for Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and all the other trust funds, including Federal employees' retirement, which adds up to \$1.3 million for every person in this country under 25, ask yourself: How in the world will they ever own a home or send their kids to college if in fact they are having to support \$60,000 a year in interest on a debt they didn't create?

The promise of America was freedom. Debt is a hard taskmaster. But it is doubly hard when it wasn't your debt but that of your parents and your grandparents, yet you are tasked with changing your lifestyle, your opportunities, your hope and vision for your children because this generation didn't have the courage to stand up and say: Enough is enough.

When will it ever be enough—when we can't sell our bonds? When will it ever be okay to offend those who are on the dole and who don't deserve to be on the dole? When will it be okay to eliminate the waste in the Federal Government, if not at a time we are going to have a \$1.8 trillion deficit; if not at a time when \$50 billion is going to be defrauded out of the stimulus program? When will we ever do it?

We have never been in the financial situation our country is in today—never before in our history.

Our whole foreign policy is now being affected and impacted because of our debt. We have to keep an ear toward China as we conduct our foreign policy, in the fear that they may dump our bonds. Why would we put ourselves in that position when we do not have to? Because there is no spine in the Senate. There is no spine in the Congress. There is no spine to go out and say: Yes, I made the hard choices. You may not like it, but your children deserve that we make hard choices and difficult decisions. If I am not here, it is OK, I did the right thing. I secured our future. I will be able to sleep at night, knowing I was not a part of taking and stealing that blossom of potential from our children and grandchildren.

I will finish by asking a question of the American people. Is it right that you have to make choices within a finite budget, yet your elected leadership in Washington does not? Is it fair for you to have to sacrifice to create a future for your children, when we are destroying that future in Washington?

It is a time for Americans who have never been involved in the political arena, in our Nation, to get involved because the future of your children and your children's children depends on it. We have a very short window within which to recapture the economic renaissance in our country, and it is less than 4 years. If you look at what we are coming to in terms of debt-to-GDP ratio and in terms of the size of the government to the size of the GDP, we will be on an irreversible course that will eliminate American exception-

alism forever because the thing that made us free and kept us free was a fairly limited Federal Government. What we have in front of us is an attempt not to get it back down to a size that is manageable and within the intent of our Founders' vision and the American people's expectation; we have an intent to grow. The discretionary budget of the Federal Government, on the rate that has been passed by this body the last 2 years alone, not counting the stimulus, will cause the Federal Government to double in size in 5 years. We are 40 percent bigger than we were 2 years ago; actually, it is 38.6 percent bigger. We hear the average Federal employee now makes \$72,000 and the average private employee now makes \$40,000. We have added 170,000 new jobs in the government in the last 7 months, while we have lost three times that in the private sector. Things are out of whack. The only way they are going to change is if the American public demands it to be changed.

I will go back. This is not a tax extenders bill. This is a debt extension bill. We are going to extend another \$104 billion of debt across the threshold of opportunity for our children and grandchildren. I am not going to be a part of that. I am not going to be complicit in it. If that is not satisfactory to the people of Oklahoma, I am fine with that. I am ready to make the hard choices to make us a lean mean fighting machine again as an economy, a lean mean fighting machine as far as opportunity. The way to do that is to downsize the Federal Government, put it back within the role of its intended purposes, and return to the States both the money and the authority to handle what is rightfully theirs in the first place.

The second thing that is important is to get rid of the \$350 billion worth of waste, fraud, abuse, and duplication that occurs every year that we do nothing about. We do nothing about it. We send out press releases, but when it comes time to vote to make a hard choice, we do not do it. We refuse to do it. We refuse to offend those who are well connected and well heeled, while we send our country into the trash heap of history through financial collapse.

My hope is, my colleagues will stand and say we are not going to pass this debt extender bill until you pay for it, until you make the hard choices about what is waste, what is duplication, what is fraud, and get rid of some of that to pay, if these are truly priority items.

You see, if they are truly priority, if America truly needs them, then there has to be something that is a lower priority that we can take away. But we do not have that kind of thought in the Senate because we just keep putting the credit card into the machine. Thank you, China. It is not going to be too long before we are saying: May we please, China. May we please. May we.

Watch what is happening to Greece. Look at the articles on Ireland today, the hard choices they had to make to get themselves out of trouble. But they are doing it. We are ignoring it in this body, and we are going to pass another \$104 billion along to our children and grandchildren.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HONORING THE WASPS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, we just had a beautiful, really incredible Congressional Gold Medal ceremony honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots known as the WASP. It was the largest audience to have ever attended a Congressional Gold Medal ceremony or any ceremony in the Capitol because we have now the wonderful new Capitol Visitors Center that allows us to accommodate very large ceremonies.

This one had over 2,000 family members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots who were honored by Congress. I thought it was worth also including comments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to be sure the American people know that today was, in fact, a wonderful day in which we honored women who did so much in World War II. They did not get the recognition they deserved at the time but they received those accolades today when they were recognized with the highest honor that Congress can give.

I would like to read the speech I gave at the ceremony, and also just embellish a little bit about the WASP.

I wrote a book called "American Heroines: The Spirited Women Who Shaped Our Country." In that book each chapter focused on specific areas in which women trailblazers had done so much to open doors for the future women leaders in our country. One of those chapters focused on those who blazed new trails in aviation.

The pioneers I profiled were Amelia Earhart and also Jackie Cochran. Jacqueline Cochran was a true pioneer, as was Amelia Earhart. They were contemporaries—actually, Amelia achieved her fame just a little bit before Jacqueline Cochran. But Jacqueline Cochran went on to become the first woman to break the sound barrier in an aircraft. She was a protégé of Chuck Yeager who, of course, we know was the first to break the sound barrier in a jet aircraft. He was a test pilot and a fabulous aviator who I saw recently in Dallas and understand he still enjoys flying.

For everyone who knows anything about aviation, Chuck Yeager is an

icon. He took Jacqueline Cochran under his wing and helped her, and she went on to become the first woman to break the sound barrier. She also was the woman who conceived of the Women Airforce Service Pilots and was the leader during World War II of this incredible group of women.

I wish to read the remarks I made because they tell much of the story of the WASP and Jacqueline Cochran's leadership.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, this is the perfect time for us to gather to honor the Women Air Force Service Pilots. They were not in the Air Force at the time, but they were called the WASP. We are presenting them the Congressional Gold Medal during Women's History Month because these women truly made history. America's first women to fly military aircraft, they blazed a trail in the sky that opened the door for today's women military pilots. By the time the war ended, 1,074 women had earned their wings at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas. Thirty-eight of those women were killed in the line of duty. Throughout the war, these courageous women flew over 60 million miles around the world, in every type of aircraft flown by male pilots. They were never commissioned, were never afforded Active-Duty military status, and were not granted veterans status until 1977, 30 years after they had served.

All these women volunteered to serve their country in wartime. The reason the organization was formed was the every available male pilot was needed to fly combat missions. So, for the first time, women were recruited to fly non-combat missions. They ferried new aircraft from the factory to the coast and delivered the aircraft for shipment overseas. Some flew airplanes that towed targets so that male gunners could practice shooting with live ammunition and others even trained male pilots. They did all the things someone in the Air Force would do today except fly combat missions. That is why Jacqueline Cochran convinced the Army Air Corps of that their recruitment was a necessity. Women were eager to serve the war effort. That was why the Women's Army Corps, the WAC, was created. They too contributed to the war effort. The WAC was headed by Oveta Culp Hobby, a wonderful woman who later became a member of President Eisenhower's Cabinet.

Women volunteered by the thousands during World War II. The WASP volunteers paid their own way to Texas for training. Just before the war ended, the program ended, and the WASP paid their own way back home. The 38 courageous women who died as a result of their service in the WASP received no military honors and the expense of their burials was borne by their families or through contributions from their fellow WASP. Their families even had to pay to have their bodies transported home for burial. They were not even accorded the honor of having a flag on their caskets because they were not considered to be in the military.

I wrote about the WASP in my book, "American Heroines: The Spirited Women who Shaped our Country." These women surely did. Despite their patriotic and historic impact, the WASP were never formally recognized by Congress for their wartime military service—until today. Both Houses of Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives, passed a resolution to present the Congressional Gold Medal. It was unanimous on both sides of the aisle. It is the highest award given by Congress. We honor their service, the history they made, and the history they made possible for other

women to make as a result of their courageous service.

Today, we right a wrong and acknowledge our debt to these great patriots, women who are so worthy of this award and this recognition.

I recognized Tom Brokaw during the ceremony. Tom was on the stage with us at the ceremony. Of course, Tom wrote the book "The Greatest Generation" that raised the awareness in America about the incredible contribution of the veterans who served in World War II—primarily of course, the combat veterans who served in World War II. He chronicled those because they served so valiantly in horrendous circumstances. They came home, never talked about it, didn't talk about their experiences to their wives or their friends or their children. Most went back to life as normal and considered that they had done their duty and now it was time to go back to work. Tom Brokaw did a wonderful service for all of us. He raised the awareness of the "greatest generation" and made us appreciate so much what they had done.

I said at the ceremony that Tom Brokaw, who came to the ceremony today because he had gotten to know about the WASP through his own research, was really here helping us close the circle for so many of those who served in World War II and were never recognized. We recognized the combat veterans. We recognized their incredible service in combat and in battle. But there were some who contributed that we have only recently received the Congressional Gold Medal. The WASP was the third of the three. The first was the Tuskegee Airmen. They were an incredible group African American pilots who flew combat missions but whose service was never fully recognized until later, when they were presented the Congressional Gold Medal.

Then there were the Navajo code talkers who did an incredible service for our country but operated in secret. They promised they would not ever tell what they did, and they didn't until years later when they were given leave to do so after a movie was made that chronicled their critical wartime role. They too were recognized with the Congressional Gold Medal. And now today we honor the WASP, the women who were the first women to fly military missions but never made a part of the military.

This effort to recognize the WASP started in the Senate where I was proud to introduce the legislation with my colleague from Maryland, BARBARA MIKULSKI, that culminated in the celebration today. Senator MIKULSKI and I shepherded that bill through the Senate, and in the meantime legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representatives SUSAN DAVIS and ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, who passed it on the House side. It passed in record time for a Gold Medal resolution. For this, I thank my colleagues in the Senate and House. It took less than a year from the day we introduced this

legislation in the Senate to arrive at this day in which we award this medal to the WASP. There have not been too many Gold Medal resolutions signed into law, usually one per year, two at the most. But these resolutions usually take much longer. But because these women are older and have waited so long, we wanted to pass this quickly so as many of them as possible could come to Washington to celebrate. In fact, over 2,000 WASP veterans and their family members did come. Of the 1,074 women who earned their wings, over 200 were here today. I thank them.

I ended my remarks today by saying:

I thank the WASP and their families who have waited so long and traveled so far to be here today to finally hear these words: on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your service.

Speaker PELOSI was eloquent. The distinguished Minority Leader in the House, our leaders, Senator HARRY REID and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL, all participated with the Secretary of the Air Force in this special day. And of course, the four of us from the Senate and House who sponsored the resolution spoke as well. It was a beautiful ceremony. I wished to put that in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as a record of this day and as an additional record of the recognition the WASP so richly deserve and for which they have waited far too long.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEMIEUX. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### MEDICARE FRAUD

Mr. LEMIEUX. Madam President, yesterday, the President was in St. Charles, MO. He talked about a new effort the Federal Government would undertake to go after waste, fraud, and abuse in the health care system. He focused on the use of payment recapture audits and the teams of auditors who will now go through the process of looking at the payments being made in Medicare, for example, health care for seniors, to make sure the money is actually going for health care to seniors and not going to criminals who are stealing money from the system. I commend the President for doing this. It is the right thing to do. Republicans and Democrats can work together. This is a good initiative.

But I would like to request of the President, as I have requested of this Congress, to take further steps and more bold steps to stop fraud in the system.