

My thoughts and prayers are with all those whose lives have been touched by this terrible tragedy—those who have died, those who have been injured, and those who cannot yet get in touch with their loved ones.

I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in pledging steadfast support for the people of Haiti in this time of crisis.

Haiti is one of the poorest nations on Earth, so this earthquake only compounds the challenges its people continue to face every day.

There are shocking disparities between Haiti and all other nations within the Western Hemisphere, and this tragedy has only widened the gap and exposed these disparities for all to see.

That is why it is especially gratifying that, in the wake of great calamity, America has answered the call again.

I commend President Obama for his focused and timely humanitarian response to this situation, and I applaud the excellent work of the volunteers, rescue workers, and military personnel who have rushed to provide aid.

They continue to save lives and provide care to those in need.

And I will work with my colleagues here in the Senate and with the administration to make sure these people have the tools and resources they need to be a part of the recovery.

Americans have already made a difference in the lives of many Haitians.

But we can and should do more.

The humanitarian crisis in Haiti is growing more desperate by the hour. In spite of the best efforts of relief workers, aid is not arriving fast enough, and thousands of lives hang in the balance.

That is why the American people have already responded in record numbers to requests for help.

They realize that, in many ways, the Haitian people are no different than ourselves.

And while they are not our countrymen, they are our neighbors in the world community, and today they require our assistance.

The American people have shown an extraordinary capacity for generosity. Donations and volunteers continue to stream into the disaster area. Here in Washington, we must do everything we can to encourage people to keep giving, and to make sure we can get supplies and assistance to those who need it most.

We must pledge ourselves to this humanitarian cause—to the belief that, in the aftermath of great tragedy, we can help restore hope to the beleaguered people.

Out of rubble, and chaos, and pain, we can help the people of Haiti begin to rebuild their lives and their country.

We can play a constructive part in the rebirth of this island nation, to help them chart a new course as they emerge from these trials and hopefully relegate the days of poverty to the past.

I ask my colleagues in this great body to join me in this pledge, and to

join the millions of Americans who have already rallied to this cause. Both individually and as a nation, we can make a difference.

In this situation, we must make a difference because some of our brothers and sisters in that country are in dire need of our assistance and help for which we have responded very aggressively and very favorably to help them.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the period of morning business be extended until 3:45, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

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

Mr. BURRIS. I ask unanimous consent that time under the quorum call be equally divided.

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

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HAITIAN CHILDREN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to call attention to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Haiti and to the plight of the many Haitian children who have been adopted by American families and are still waiting to be brought from the disaster to loving homes, to families who are waiting to welcome them. Many have been waiting for a year, 2 years. Many of the families in my State have actually gone to Haiti, and they have met these children.

In the days immediately following the earthquake, the United States, the United Nations, other nations, and organizations have moved swiftly to provide food and water, medicine and clothing, as well as international aid workers to assist in these disaster areas. The people of this country, the

people all over the world, have been extraordinarily generous. Currently, thousands of American civilians, as well as members of our Federal agencies and Armed Forces, are in Haiti lending their hands to help the Haitian people.

Unfortunately, though the United States is doing much to save lives in Haiti, lives continue to be lost. And unfortunately, some of the most helpless of Haiti's people—its children—are among those in most need of our help. I am focusing on this issue, this small but important piece of our aid relief, because I have had so many families come to me from my State who are clutching photos of children they are waiting to bring home.

Minnesota has one of the highest rates of international adoptions in the country. Part of that is because we have had a strong tradition of aid, of bringing people from Somalia, the Hmong community, to our State. We have also had a strong tradition of reaching out for decades and adopting children from other countries.

Many of the families I met with over the weekend have been able to confirm that their children are safe, and for that they are so grateful. But they have also heard reports of orphanages that are not in the best shape—not enough food, not enough water. They know these children because so many of them have seen them before. They knew even before this in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere that these children were not always getting adequate diets.

On January 15, I wrote to Secretaries Clinton and Napolitano, urging them to use their authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act to grant humanitarian parole to all U.S. families applying for entry to the United States on behalf of their prospective children during this period of emergency. I also spoke with Secretary Clinton. She was amazingly generous with her time, and sympathetic and working on this issue.

I am thankful that on Monday, January 18, Secretary Napolitano announced her authorization of the use of humanitarian parole for orphans who are eligible for adoption in the United States. Humanitarian parole is typically used sparingly in cases of compelling emergency. But as I noted in my letter, the magnitude of this disaster clearly warrants broader application of this policy.

There are details, and the details are important. How are these kids going to get to the United States so the paperwork can be processed? There has been talk of a safe haven set up, but we have not seen that happen. Meanwhile, our families in Minnesota are getting more desperate as they hear about the second quake today, as they hear about the problems from the people who are running the orphanages.

This is what I am talking about. Betsy Sathers, a Minnesota resident, was widowed when her husband of 10

months was killed in the tragic I-35W Minneapolis bridge collapse on his way home from work. They talked about having children. So Betsy Sathers decided to adopt some children. She signed up to adopt kids in Haiti. She recently returned from celebrating their second birthday—twins. That is who I am talking about when I talk about someone who is awaiting the arrival of these children in her home.

This is another family—I have their picture here—I met over the weekend. Ginger and Dale Reynolds are adopting two kids, Roselene and Rodeley. They were in the final stages and hoping to bring their kids home. They were told they were in the next batch of adoptions when they last visited before the earthquake hit.

What is striking about this family is that Ginger still signs all of her e-mails with blessings, and they are still incredibly positive despite having their kids in this orphanage. They are also stressing how they want us to help all families, not just theirs. When I met with them, another family was there who was not quite as far along in the process. They spent most of their time talking about how this other family should be helped as well.

Finally, Dawn and Lee Sheldon—I have their photo as well. This is when they were in Haiti. These are the two children they want to adopt who are not with them yet. They are adopting two children. The conditions have been very bad for the particular orphanage where their two kids have been staying. This family has been glued to CNN, which has filmed at the orphanage, looking to see these children's faces.

While we talk legalities, understandably, orphans in Haiti are continuing to suffer from lack of water, lack of food, lack of shelter. Many orphanages have been partially or entirely destroyed in the shocks from this quake. In others, the bodies of deceased personnel still lie near the children, for aid agencies are unable to take away all of the dead.

The hardship and the horror that these orphans face is extreme, and we must act now to bring them out from the unsanitary and potentially traumatizing situation in which they find themselves.

I am grateful for the quick work of Secretary Napolitano and Secretary Clinton. They are on the scene. They are doing the work. But we have to do everything we can to bring these children home. These orphanages, the ones that have not been damaged and are still functioning, need the beds, sadly, for other children. These children have homes to go home to—homes that are welcoming them, homes that consider them their children.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURRIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

INCREASING THE STATUTORY LIMIT ON THE PUBLIC DEBT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask consent to execute the order of December 22, 2009, with respect to H.J. Res. 45.

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

Under the previous order, the Committee on Finance is discharged of H.J. Res. 45 and the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the joint resolution, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 45) increasing the statutory limit on the public debt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 3299

Mr. BAUCUS. Pursuant to the previous order, on behalf of the majority leader, I have a substitute amendment at the desk which I now call up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. BAUCUS], for Mr. REID, proposes an amendment, numbered 3299.

Mr. BAUCUS. I ask unanimous consent that further reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: "That subsection (b) of section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking out the dollar limitation contained in such subsection and inserting in lieu thereof \$14,294,000,000,000."

AMENDMENT NO. 3300 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3299

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, pursuant to the previous order, I send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Montana [Mr. BAUCUS] proposes an amendment numbered 3300 to amendment No. 3299.

Mr. BAUCUS. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To protect Social Security)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

() (a) LIMITATION ON CHANGES TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, it shall not be in order in the Senate or the House of Representatives to consider any bill or resolution pursuant to any expedited procedure to consider the recommendations of a Task Force for Responsible Fiscal Action or other commission that contains recommendations

with respect to the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program established under title II of the Social Security Act.

(b) WAIVER.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by the affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(c) APPEALS.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required in the Senate to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, Ralph Waldo Emerson enjoined:

Pay every debt as if God wrote the bill.

Today, we will debate whether the United States continues to pay its bills. We will debate whether the United States will continue to pay the interest it owes on the money it has borrowed.

The spending laws that created the current national debt are behind us. The only question that remains is whether the government will honor its obligation to pay the bill. We have gone to the restaurant, we have eaten the meal, the waiter has delivered the check, and now the only question is whether we will pay the check. To state the question is to answer it: We simply must do so. We must pay the check for the bill, for the restaurant, for the meal we have eaten.

The legislation before us would increase the limit on the amount of money the U.S. Treasury can borrow. If Congress does not enact this legislation, and soon, then the Treasury would default on its debt for the first time in history. If Congress does not enact this legislation, then the government would fail to pay the benefits to a portion of Social Security recipients, the Government would fail to pay benefits to a portion of the beneficiaries of all other Federal programs. That plainly would be unacceptable, and plainly we must enact this legislation.

When the Federal budget runs a deficit, the U.S. Treasury must borrow money to make up the difference. In language around here, we call it the shortfall. That shortfall results from laws enacted in the past that spent money and cut taxes. If we want to avoid the need to borrow, then Congress and the President must enact laws that will cause the Federal Government to spend less money or raise more revenue in the future. Simply preventing the Treasury from borrowing more money is not the solution.

If Congress does not allow the Treasury to borrow more money, then the Treasury will not have the money to pay its bills. The Treasury has no legal authority to prioritize spending and pay only the most important bills. They do not have that authority. If the bills are due, they are due. The Treasury does not even have a way to determine which are the most important bills. If the debt ceiling is not raised, the Treasury would have to pay bills on a first-come, first-served basis. Some of these bills would be interest