

One person gets it, and you have seven people still unemployed.

What a lot of people do not even know is that in order to even qualify for unemployment benefits, you have to be actively looking for work. You cannot sit at home. You have to be actively looking for work. A lot of the people I talked to 2 days ago who were here who were employed, you hear their stories. They have tried everything. Some have gone to different States. They have gone to different communities. They have tried everything to find another job.

I just read a letter from one the other day, a math teacher, has three college degrees. She has lost her job. She has tried to find work in different States. She has tried everything from McDonald's to everything else and cannot find a job.

By the way, the people who are truly hurting the most in this job market right now are people over the age of 50, mostly women. Women over the age of 50 who have worked hard, many of them had good jobs. Again, I spoke to one on Tuesday who had worked all her life, had a very good job. She admitted she was making \$70,000 a year, good middle-class income.

She lost her job and has been out of work for over a year. She cannot find work. She has tried and beat the pavement and looked all over. But, you know what, she is in that area between 50 and 60. Very tough. Very tough. Yet we will not even extend unemployment benefits for people like her.

Well, as I said, I think it is a moral outrage, and I would hope our President would get out there and start saying that. Let the American people know how the jobless are being held hostage by the Republicans in trying to get their tax breaks for the wealthy.

So it is been said the Republicans are playing hardball. Well, if they are playing hardball for the rich, we ought to play hardball for the jobless, too, in this country. They want to play hardball, we ought to play hardball. My friend from South Dakota says he would like to get out of here and spend Christmas with his family. Would not we all?

But, I think, rather than identifying with those on Wall Street and those who wear suits and ties every day and have a comfortable life such as we do, we ought to be identifying with those middle-class Americans who are out of work.

If the Republicans want to play hardball, I think what we ought to say is: Look, we are going to stay here every day, we are going to be here every day, and every day we are going to ask consent to bring up this bill to extend unemployment benefits. If we have to be here on Christmas Eve, so be it. If we have to be here on Christmas Day, we ought to be here on Christmas Day, if necessary, so the American people will get an idea of what is going on in this Senate Chamber, the outrageousness of it.

So, yes, we would all like to spend time with family over the holidays. But unless and until we extend the unemployment benefits, at least at a minimum, we should not leave this Chamber and see how long the Republicans want to hold on to that and how much they want to deny people their benefits.

If 2 million Americans and 10,000 of my fellow Iowans are going to be suffering because they will not even be able to put food on the table or have a nice holiday season with their families because they are unemployed, the least we can do is identify with them. They are not going to have a very good holiday season unless we do something and take action. So I think we should stay as long as is necessary.

Lastly, for too long and for too many times, the Republicans have used an archaic 19th century procedure called the filibuster to thwart the will of the majority of the people in this country, to stop legislation, to stop a whole bunch of things, nominations, things they even, when we finally get them through, get 99 votes out of 100.

But they stop them because of a filibuster. Well, that may have been OK in the 19th century. It may have been OK in the early part of the 20th century. But we can no longer live with that. We cannot run a 21st century government in a 21st world with an archaic millstone around our neck called a filibuster.

When this body reconvenes in January, we finally have to break the shackles of that. We have to break the shackles of that 19th century rule, proceeding, where one or two Senators can stop everything. Stop it. I quote Vice President BIDEN who said: No democracy has ever survived that needed a supermajority. No democracy.

Ours cannot survive either if we continue with a supermajority needed in the Senate.

I hope we stay here. I hope we increase the unemployment benefits. We will continue the debate on the taxes. I will be supporting, tomorrow morning, the vote on continuing the tax benefits for those families making \$250,000 and less, to extend the tax breaks for that group. I will not go higher than \$250,000. I will not vote to extend tax breaks for anybody over \$250,000.

Quite frankly, if you make \$250,000, you are in the top 7 percent or so of income earners in America. So is that the middle class? I think that is stretching it. Those making \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year are clearly in the middle class. That is the broad middle class of America. What are we doing for them? What are we doing for them?

So I will vote to go up to \$250,000 but not a cent more than that. Quite frankly, I have a hard time even going to \$250,000. It ought to be less than that. If you want to give more tax breaks to people, extend the earned-income tax credit and increase the childcare tax credit for working families.

If you want to do that, now you are talking about helping middle-class families. Some people say: Well, we have to do something for small businesses. I am all for that. But I wish to make sure it really goes to small businesses that employ Americans, keep the jobs here, manufacture things in America, and do not ship them overseas.

You do that, I am all for a small business tax break. You bet. So that is the debate we should have. But the unemployment benefits during this holiday season should not be held hostage.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, it is good to see the distinguished Presiding Officer. He must have been here all day. He was here yesterday, and I am glad to see him again.

Are there limits on my speaking time at the moment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We have a 10-minute grant at this time.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Will the Chair please let me know when I have consumed 9 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will so notify.

THE NEW PROMISE OF AMERICAN LIFE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I just returned from the Hudson Institute, a distinguished think tank downtown where I made an address called the New Promise of American Life—Less From Washington and More of Ourselves. It included a panel of the following people: Kate O'Beirne of the National Review; Christopher DeMuth, who was formerly the head of the American Enterprise Institute; Chester Finn, who runs the Fordham Foundation; Bill Kristol, the founder of the Weekly Standard; and William Schambra, who is a fellow at the Hudson Institute. They commented on what I had to say. It was one of my most enjoyable experiences because it was a reprise of something we did in 1995.

In 1995, I was a fellow at the institute and I was also touring the country trying to persuade Americans that I was the next logical choice for President of the United States. That didn't work out exactly right. In fact, when I lost, my brother-in-law, who is a preacher, said I should think of that political loss as a reverse calling. I have always tried to think of it that way. Nevertheless, during that time, Chester Finn and I edited a book called "The New Promise of American Life." We selected that title because Herbert Croly,

in 1909, had written a book called “The Promise of American Life” which really was the progressive manifesto that launched the thinking of President Wilson and more recently President Obama.

Our thought then, in 1995 and 1996—Mr. Kristol, Mr. Schambra, and Mr. Finn were all contributors to our volume—was that progressivism had gone too far and that we needed less of Washington and more of ourselves. That is what we said in 1995. Looking back over that volume, that was pretty good advice, but obviously nobody took it. So today the Hudson Institute sponsored another forum about the new promise of American life. I talked about it, and the people I just mentioned commented.

It was interesting for me in a variety of ways. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the address I made at the institute today as well as excerpts from “The New Promise of American Life” published in 1995, namely, the introduction, the preface, and the first chapter.

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

LESS FROM WASHINGTON AND MORE OF OURSELVES: THE NEW PROMISE OF AMERICAN LIFE

(By Senator Lamar Alexander, Hudson Institute, Dec. 3, 2010)

A wise political candidate, like a good composer, listens for words and music that resonate with audiences—and then repeats those phrases and melodies over and over again.

For the phrases that resonated during the 2010 election, we might listen to the senators who were successful.

In a year when television screens displayed anger, these politicians often talked about hope.

There were Rand Paul and Pat Toomey evangelizing about spreading free market prosperity instead of dwelling on government austerity.

Rob Portman and Kelly Ayotte and Roy Blunt and Ron Johnson using their experience to describe ways to make it easier and cheaper to create new private sector jobs, rather than just wringing their hands about ten percent unemployment.

And Marco Rubio affirming with his life's story America's exceptionalism, instead of lamenting America's decline.

To be sure, the issues that fired up voters this year were about too much spending, too many taxes, too much debt and too many Washington takeovers.

But the senators who voters elected to fix these problems are mostly American dreamers who believe that in this country anything still is possible for anyone who will work for it.

Europeans and others find this to be an irrational view held by citizens in no other country in the world. Yet most of American politics is about setting high goals and dealing with the disappointment of not meeting them and then trying again—all men are created equal, pay any price to defend freedom, no child left behind.

This is not an enforced Americanism where the government in Washington tells you what to believe. It is a spontaneous patriotism of the kind you get reading Lincoln's second inaugural address, or the oath of allegiance that George Washington's men swore

to at Valley Forge, or David McCullough's 1776, or attending citizenship day at any federal courthouse when new citizens from all over the world become Americans.

The vitality of that dream is why Herbert Croly's book, “The Promise of American Life,” written in 1909, still is powerful today. The first chapter of Croly's progressive manifesto could be read with enthusiasm at any Tea Party. But it is the rest of the book that we propose to discuss and dispute in this forum, for in his remaining chapters Croly argues that for individuals to realize the promise of American Life the central government in Washington must play a much larger role. His book launched the progressive movement, featuring first President Wilson and most recently President Obama. His is a strategy of made-in-Washington policies, grand schemes to solve big national problems based upon the assumption that these are things that individual Americans can't do for ourselves.

In 1995, at the Hudson Institute's request, Checker Finn and I edited a book, which we called “The New Promise of American Life.” Checker and I then both were fellows at Hudson and I was touring the country hoping to persuade Americans that I was the logical choice for President of the United States. (The public didn't agree with my logic, prompting my preacher brother-in-law to suggest that I should think of that political loss as a “reverse calling.”)

Our book was an attempt to provide intellectual context for the anti-Washington fervor of the moment, a fervor that surges throughout American history. We chose the title “The New Promise of American Life” because we believed that progressivism had been carried too far and that what our country now needed was a reverse mirror image of Croly's vision—“Less from Washington and more of ourselves.” Our idea of America was one created by states, operating community by community, depending upon civic virtue, valuing individual liberty—a nation simply too large and too diverse to be managed successfully by an all-knowing central government in Washington, D.C.

Speaking of phrases that resonate, my best political one liner at the time was “Cut Their Pay and Send Them Home” (referring to Congress), which made few friends in the world's greatest deliberative body in which I now serve.

Reading what we published 15 years ago, I have been impressed with the prescience of the essays from contributors such as William Kristol, Paul Weyrich, Howard Baker, David Abshire, Francis Fukayama, William Schambra and Diane Ravitch. Their advice resonates as well today as it did then. Reading their advice also reminds me of how little of this advice anyone took. Republicans who were elected in 1994 on the cry of “No more unfunded federal mandates” soon were promulgating conservative big-government rules to replace liberal big-government rules. Since 1995, the size of the federal budget has grown 140 percent, the federal debt has grown from \$5 to \$14 trillion.

Within the last two years, the progressive solution symphony has been playing in Washington again, reaching a new crescendo with budgets that double the debt in five years and triple it in ten, with government bailouts, and, as one blogger has suggested, the appointment of more new Czars and Czarnas than the Romanovs ever had.

Seeing the inevitable anti-Washington surge rising again to counter the excesses of progressivism, I suggested to Checker about six weeks ago that we ask Hudson to revisit our 1995 book. This forum is the result of that suggestion. After this luncheon address we will hear from a panel that includes three contributors from the 1995 volume—Checker,

Bill Kristol and William Schambra—as well as from Chris DeMuth and Kate O'Beirne. Our hope is the same today as it was fifteen years ago: to provide an intellectual context for the latest anti-Washington surge—with the additional hope that, this time, more elected officials listen to and act on our advice.

To begin the discussion, let me renew a suggestion that I have made before: the new Congress should proceed step-by-step in the right direction to solve problems in a way that re-earns the trust of the American people rather than invent comprehensive, conservative big-government schemes in an attempt to correct comprehensive, liberal big-government schemes.

To make this point, I thought of hanging up in the Republican cloakroom photographs of Nancy Pelosi and Henry Waxman because they symbolize what the federal government has done wrong during the last two years: not just to head in the wrong direction, but to try to go there all at once. This has been government by taking big bites of several big apples and trying to swallow them at the same time, which has had the effect of enraging Republicans and terrifying the independent voters of America.

During the recent health care debate, I heard a number of times from friends on the other side of the aisle this question: What are Republicans for? My answer was that Democrats would wait a long time if they were waiting for the Republican leader, Sen. McConnell, to roll into the Senate a wheelbarrow filled with a 2,700-page Republican comprehensive health care bill, or, for that matter, a Republican version of a 1,200-page climate change bill or an 800-page immigration bill.

Congressional action on comprehensive climate change, comprehensive immigration bills, and comprehensive health care have been well-intended but the first two fell of their own weight and the health care law has been subject to multiple efforts to repeal it since the day it passed the Senate a year ago on Christmas Eve in a driving snowstorm.

What has united almost all Republicans and a majority of Americans against these bills has not only been ideology but also that they were comprehensive. As George Will might write, “The. Congress. Does. Not. Do. Comprehensive. Well.”

Two recent articles help to explain the trouble with the Democratic comprehensive approach. The first, which appeared in National Affairs, was written by one of our panelists today, William Schambra, who explained the “sheer ambition” of President Obama's legislative agenda as the approach of what Mr. Schambra called a “policy president.” Mr. Schambra wrote that the President and most of his advisers have been trained at elite universities to govern by launching “a host of enormous initiatives all at once—formulating comprehensive policies aimed at giving large social systems—and indeed society itself—more rational and coherent forms and functions.”

Or, in the terms of today's forum, this is the latest outburst of Crolyism or progressivism. Mr. Schambra notes that other most prominent organizational feature of this Obama administration is its reliance on Czars to manage broad areas of policy. In this view, systemic problems of health care, of energy, of education, and of the environment can't be solved in pieces.

Analyzing Mr. Schambra's article, David Broder of the Washington Post wrote this: “Historically, that approach has not worked. The progressives failed to gain more than a brief ascendancy and the Carter and Clinton presidencies were marked by striking policy failures.” The reason for these failures, as Broder paraphrased Schambra, is that “this

highly rational comprehensive approach fits uncomfortably with the Constitution, which apportions power among so many different players." Broder then adds this: "Democracy and representative government are a lot messier than the progressives and their heirs, including Obama, want to admit."

In a memorial essay honoring Irving Kristol—Bill Kristol's father—in the *Wall Street Journal* last year, James Q. Wilson wrote that the law of unintended consequences is what causes the failure of such comprehensive legislative schemes. Explains Wilson: "Launch a big project and you will almost surely discover that you have created many things that you did not intend to create." The latest example of the truth of Mr. Wilson's observation can be seen by anyone watching the new health care law increase premiums, add to the federal debt, cause millions of individual policy holders to lose their policies, cause businesses to postpone adding new jobs, and inflict huge unfunded Medicaid mandates on states—all consequences the sponsors of the law strenuously argued were never intended (although, I have to say, they were all predicted by Republicans).

Wilson also wrote that neoconservatism, as Irving Kristol originally conceived of it in the 1960s, was not an organized ideology or even necessarily conservative but "a way of thinking about politics rather than a set of principles and rules. It would have been better if we had been called policy skeptics."

This skepticism of Schambra, Wilson and Kristol toward grand legislative policy schemes helps to explain how during the 2010 election the law of unintended consequences made being a member of the so-called "party of no" a more electable choice than a member of the so-called party of "yes, we can."

James Q. Wilson also wrote in his essay that respect of the law of unintended consequences "is not an argument for doing nothing, but it is one, in my view, for doing things experimentally. Try your idea out in one place and see what happens before you inflict it on the whole country," he suggests.

That is why if the Republican Party aspires to be a governing party rather than merely an ideological debating society, the question "What are Republicans for?" still is a question that must be answered.

If you will examine the Congressional Record you will find Republican senators tried to answer the question by following Mr. Wilson's advice, proposing a step-by-step approach to confronting our nation's health care and other challenges 173 different times on the floor of the Senate during 2009.

On health care for example, we first suggested setting a clear goal: that is reducing Americans' costs so that more of them could afford to buy insurance. Then we proposed the first six steps toward achieving that goal: 1. allowing small businesses to pool their resources to purchase health plans; 2. reducing junk lawsuits against doctors; 3. allowing the purchase of insurance across state lines; 4. expanding health savings accounts; 5. promoting wellness and prevention; and 6. taking steps to reduce waste, fraud and abuse.

We offered these six proposals in complete legislative text, totaling 182 pages for all six steps. The Democratic majority ridiculed the approach as "piecemeal," in part because our approach was not comprehensive.

Take another example. In July of 2009, all 40 Republican senators announced agreement on four steps to produce low-cost, clean energy and create jobs: 1. create the environment for 100 new nuclear power plants; 2. electrify half our cars and trucks; 3. explore offshore for natural gas and oil; and 4. double energy research and development for new forms of clean energy.

This step-by-step Republican clean energy plan was an alternative to the Kerry-Boxer national energy tax that would have imposed an economy wide cap-and-trade scheme, driving jobs overseas looking for cheap energy and collecting hundreds of billions of dollars each year for a slush fund with which Congress could play.

Here is still another example, a bipartisan one. In 2005 a bipartisan group of us in Congress asked the National Academies to identify the first 10 steps Congress should take to preserve America's competitive advantage in the world so we could keep growing jobs. The Academies appointed a distinguished panel that recommended twenty such steps. Congress enacted two-thirds of them. The America COMPETES Act of 2007, as we call it, was important legislation, but it was fashioned step-by-step.

This style of governing squares with my experience as governor of Tennessee during the 1980s. My goal was to raise family incomes for what was then the third-poorest state. As I went along, I found that the best way to move toward this goal was step-by-step—some steps larger, step steps smaller—such as changing banking laws, defending the right-to-work, keeping debt and taxes low, recruiting Japanese industry and then recruiting the auto industry, but also building four lane highways so that suppliers could deliver parts to the auto plants just-in-time, and then a 10-step Better Schools program—step one of which made Tennessee the first state to pay teachers more for teaching well. I did not try to turn our whole state upside down at once, but working with leaders of both political parties, I did help it change and grow step by step. Within a few years, Tennessee was the fastest growing state in family incomes.

What do this approach and these examples have to suggest to Republicans as we look toward a new session of Congress? As a result of the 2010 elections, we have enough clout to stop risky, comprehensive schemes featuring more taxes, debt and Washington takeovers replete with hidden and unexpected surprises. And we have enough clout to suggest alternative approaches for the most urgent problems of the day. In fact we have an obligation to do so if we want to be able to persuade independent voters as well as Republicans that we ought to be the governing party in America after 2012.

It is no mystery what our country's focus should be: jobs, debt and terror. Jobs and debt dominated the 2010 election.

Applying the step-by-step, rather than comprehensive, approach our first goal therefore should be to make it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs. A quick list of steps comes to mind: don't raise taxes on anybody in the middle of an economic downturn; repeal one-by-one the mandates on job creators in the health care law; reduce the corporate tax rate; reduce or eliminate the tax on capital gains; defend the secret ballot in union elections; defend states' ability to protect the right to work; create the environment for 100 new nuclear power plants; double research and development for clean energy; build a first class transportation system; repeal the so-called consumer protection agency in the financial regulation law; and enact Korea, Colombia, and Panama free trade laws.

I would add repeal the health care law entirely, although this might seem to be a comprehensive act violating the Wilson-Kristol-Schambra step-by-step doctrine. Such a comprehensive undoing carries the risk of scaring independents, but as a practical matter there is no good way to deal with that historic mistake other than by repealing and replacing it with a step-by-step approach reducing health care costs. In addition,

most of its provisions do not take effect until 2014.

The same step-by-step approach can be applied to the second goal: making annual spending come as close to revenues as soon as possible. Trying to eliminate the annual deficit in the first year would turn the nation upside down. It is at points like this that the photographs of Pelosi and Waxman in the cloakroom become useful.

But for a nation that is borrowing 42 cents of every dollar to wait one day longer to begin to address its debt is suicidal. There are steps that can and should be taken immediately, while larger steps are being fashioned:

For example, step one could be no new entitlement automatic spending programs. In other words, don't dig the hole any deeper as would the President's budget proposal to shift a half trillion dollars in Pell grants over ten years to mandatory spending.

No more unfunded federal mandates on state and local governments. The Democratic governor of Tennessee, which has a \$1.5 billion revenue shortfall this year, estimates that the new health care law will impose \$1.1 billion in unfunded Medicaid mandates on our state between 2014 and 2019.

Caps on discretionary spending. While this is only one-third of the budget, even non-defense discretionary spending increased by an average of 6.2% each year under President Bush and by an average of 15% over the last two years under President Obama. These dollars add up.

Take the half trillion in Medicare savings that the new health care law spent on new entitlement programs and use it to make Medicare solvent.

Adopt a two-year budget—this would allow Congress to spend every other year on oversight, repealing and revising laws and regulations that are out of date or wasteful.

Give the rest of the government's General Motors stock to every American who paid federal income taxes last April.

I also support a 2-year earmark ban—Earmarks have become a symbol of wasteful Washington spending; there are too many of them and too many for less-than-worthy purposes. This process needs to be cleaned up, but this is more about good government than saving money since even unworthy projects are paid for by reducing spending in other places; and long-term it turns the checkbook over to the president at a time when most Americans voted for a check on the presidency.

Fifteen years ago Republicans captured control of Congress during one of those recurring outbursts when American voters announced that they wanted less of Washington, and more freedom for themselves. That advice was not well heeded, and now we find ourselves the political beneficiaries of another such outburst and an opportunity to lay the groundwork to be a governing party within two years.

My hope is that this time, Republicans heed the advice of Wilson, Schambra, and Kristol, that rather than attempt comprehensive conservative schemes, we keep our eye on the goals that matter most—making it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs; reduce spending closer to revenues; and dealing in a tough, strategic way with terrorism. And that we proceed step-by-step toward those goals in a way that earns the trust of the American people.

We should give Hebert Croly credit for reminding us in 1909 in the first chapter of his *Promise of American Life* that this is still the one country in the world where most people believe that anything is possible and that anyone can succeed if he or she works hard. This is a country where your grandfather can tell you, as mine did, "Aim for

the top; there's more room there," and really believe it.

Hopefully, Republicans who were elected in 2010 will follow their instinct not just to oppose the excesses of Croly's progressivism but to offer a new promise of American life. That they will continue to remind Americans that this debate is not some dry, dusty analysis but a contest of competing governing philosophies about how to realize the dream of an upstart, still new nation in which most people still believe that anything is possible. Our argument is that our country's exceptionalism is best realized by the largest number of Americans when we expect less of Washington, and more of ourselves.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the premise of my remarks was that we don't do comprehensive very well in the U.S. Congress. That was challenged by some of the conservatives on the panel today. That was my point. My suggestion was that those who were elected in the 2010 election not make the same mistakes as those elected before made, which, in my opinion, was not just to head in the wrong direction but to try to do it all at once. It is one thing to think comprehensively; it is another thing to act comprehensively. There have been multiple attempts to repeal the health care law from the day it passed. Our efforts at comprehensive immigration and comprehensive climate change fell of their own weight.

I am tempted, as I am sure most people are, to make comprehensive changes. We talked about some examples with the panel. Take education. I suppose I have had about every position on education reform possible. I have been for abolishing the Department of Education. I have been the U.S. Department of Education Secretary. I have been both.

I remember as a Governor in 1981, I went to see President Reagan and asked him to swap all of elementary and secondary education for Medicaid. In other words, the Federal Government would take all of Medicaid and the States would have all of elementary and secondary education.

The Presiding Officer is from the State of Minnesota, where there is a high value placed on education. My own view is that the high value placed on education by the communities of Minnesota does much more to assure quality education than anything we could do here. I thought if we got rid of the idea that Washington could make our schools better, those in the communities of Tennessee would feel more responsibility.

President Reagan liked that, but it didn't get anywhere. Most big comprehensive schemes don't. Our country is too big and complicated and too diverse. Our constitutional system separates power into too many places. And on top of that, we just are not smart enough to figure out a solution for all the many different things that are happening in this country.

My advice in this address is that those who were elected in 2010 head in a different direction. We talked a lot about less government, less taxes. We

talked about fewer Washington takeovers. We don't like all the czars and czarinas. There are more of them than the Romanovs ever imagined. But as we head in a different direction, I suggest that we go step by step to attempt to re-earn the trust of the American people.

There used to be signs that said: Think globally, act locally. I think we might think comprehensively but act step by step. Because if we don't, there are two dangers. One is that we won't succeed. It will be a lot easier, for example, to fix No Child Left Behind, the education law, than it will be to comprehensively reauthorize it. It is a 1,000-page law filled with provisions backed by those with vested interests—Members of Congress, teachers unions, principals, people all over the country. Comprehensively reauthorizing it will be hard to do. But if we want to fix it, we can probably pick four or five or six things we need to fix and maybe, in a bipartisan way, go step by step to do that.

If we want clean energy, comprehensive, economy-wide cap and trade proved too much to swallow here. But we could create an environment for 100 new nuclear plants. We should be able to encourage electric cars. We should be able to double energy research and development. Those are steps in the right direction.

We took steps in the right direction with the America Competes Act. We did that in a bipartisan way.

Our overwhelming priorities today are jobs, debt, and terror. We are not likely to solve any of those problems all at once. We might think comprehensively about how to do it, but we need to act step by step.

For example, our goal would be to make it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs. That should be the first goal. Especially on this side of the aisle, we believe that raising taxes on anybody—anybody—in the middle of an economic downturn makes no sense, because it makes it harder to create private sector jobs. But that is only one step.

If I were to make my list, I would add to that list: reducing the corporate income tax so our corporations can be competitive in the world, and I would say defend the right to work and the secret ballot in union elections. I would also say build a first-class transportation system. I would also say increase funding for research and development at major universities because it is that brainpower that creates jobs for us. So there are many different steps we would take to create a pro-growth economy. Take the issue of debt. We have a debt commission report today which has attracted all of our attention. We have a horrendous problem with Federal debt. Mr. President, 42 cents out of every dollar we are spending is borrowed. If we try to fix it all at once, the country would collapse. But if we wait another day to begin to fix it, we should be ashamed.

We can take steps. We can say caps on discretionary spending. That is a third of the budget. We can say no new entitlement automatic spending programs. Let's not dig the hole any deeper. We could say, let's have a 2-year budget so every other year we can devote the year to reviewing the regulations we have and laws we have and the rules we have, so we can get rid of some of them. We may need some new laws, but let's get rid of some of the old ones.

I stood right here on the floor of the Senate a couple years ago and voted against the Higher Education Act. Now, here I am a former university president and Education Secretary and so-called education Governor, and education is my passion—I say to the Presiding Officer, if another Senator comes to the floor, I will be glad to yield the floor—but I voted against the Higher Education Act. Why did I do that? During the debate, I got permission to bring to the floor all of the regulations that now exist under the current Higher Education Act.

You have to ask for unanimous consent to bring demonstrative evidence on the floor. I had to do that once with Minnie Pearl's hat. I had it here in the drawer, but I could not bring it out unless I asked unanimous consent, which I got. And I got it to bring all these regulations.

And what I said was that I am voting against this act because reauthorization of the act would double the stack of regulations.

So all of these things have to do with debt, limited government, and spreading prosperity and spreading freedom. So my argument is basically that those of us who are in the Republican Party, those of us who this year won more of the elections—we know what it is like to be on the other side. Two years ago, we hardly won anything. Two years before that, we got elected one Republican Senator. But those of us who are on the winning side this time I think would do well to head in a different direction. Yes, make it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs, get to work on the debt, be strategic and tough about terror, be resolute about the direction we are going, but do it step by step. We are more likely to be able to persuade people to do it. When we are through, we may be more likely to persuade them to live under those rules and regulations.

When you do it comprehensively, when you bite off more than you can chew, when you offer a 2,000-page solution to anything—whether it is a comprehensive liberal solution or progressive solution or whether it is a comprehensive conservative solution—you are likely to frighten—well, you are likely to make angry the people on the other side and scare the independent voters half to death. As a result, you will not succeed.

We as Republicans have a chance in the next 2 years to prove to the Nation we deserve to be the governing party.

We are not today. There is a Democratic President and there is a Democratic Senate and there is a Republican House. So if we want to make progress, we have to work together when we can form a consensus.

But if we want the privilege of being more than an ideological debating society and being actually a governing party, we have to re-earn the trust of the American people. We have to say: What are Republicans for? I am suggesting that when we say what we are for, we pick our goals—make it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs, reduce spending closer to revenues, be tough and strategic on terror—and then we go step by step in that direction, and we take people with us and we gain their support.

I have mentioned on this floor before the example of the civil rights laws. Slavery was the greatest injustice in our country's history. It plagued us from the day of our country's founding. Our Founders punted on the subject, and then we tore ourselves apart in a war, and then we waited a century to do much about it. By any intellectual standard, by any moral standard, we should have fixed that all at once. But Lyndon Johnson, who was the majority leader at the time, knew better than to try to do that. In fact, he knew he could not do that. So starting in 1958 and then in 1964 and then in 1968 and then in 1975 were the major civil rights laws in the country. We went step by step to realize the promise of American life: that all men and women are created equal.

Now, it is easy to sit somewhere and say: Well, that went too slow, and a comprehensive approach toward civil rights would have been the right thing to do. It would have been the right thing to do, but it never would have happened.

There is one other problem with it: it would not have been accepted by the country. The civil rights laws of 1964 and 1968, during a time of Democratic majorities and a Democratic President, were written—where?—in the office of the Republican leader of the U.S. Senate, Everett Dirksen.

Now, why did President Johnson do that? Well, you can say he did not need the votes. He had huge majorities in the House and in the Senate. Well, it was a little more complicated than that because he had southern Democrats, and they were against it. So first he needed the votes to pass the bill. But the thing President Johnson understood so well was that he not only needed to pass the bill, he needed the country to accept it. And as controversial as the Civil Rights Act of 1968 was—the one written down the hall in the Republican leader's office by a Democratic President and a Democratic Congress—as controversial as it was, when it was over, Senator Russell of Georgia, for whom a building here is named, went to Georgia and said: I fought this for 30 years, but it is the law of the land, and we obey it. Lyndon

Johnson knew that going step by step in the right direction was the right way to get where our country had to go.

So we have some big challenges ahead of us, and some of them we will be able to do in a bipartisan way. I hope we can do that with No Child Left Behind. Let's fix it with four or five or six steps. Arne Duncan has some good ideas. They are very consistent with the ideas of a number of Democrats and a number of Republicans. That would be a start. The America Competes Act we should authorize at some point. That would be another step we could take. I think we have some steps on clean energy.

There are some areas where we will disagree. We are going to have some Republican ideas about making it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs that our friends on the other side will honestly disagree with. We are having one of those disagreements this weekend because we believe it makes no sense to raise taxes on anybody in the middle of an economic downturn if your goal is to make it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs, and they have a little different view. So we will have votes on that.

So we will have our differences of opinion. But if we want to be successful, we as a country—and if we as a party, the Republican Party, want to be successful in earning the trust of the American people to prove we are eligible, qualified, worthy of being a governing party after 2012, then we better set our clear goal: make it easier and cheaper to create private sector jobs and go step by step toward that goal, explaining carefully what we are doing, attracting independent voters, keeping independent voters, so that when we pass a law, the country accepts it, and then we move on ahead.

So that is what our discussion was about today, and it is an important discussion. It is not just some dusty, dry thing. Herbert Croly's book in 1909, "The Promise of American Life," is the manifesto for the progressive movement that has ascended in this country right now. And our idea of less from Washington and more of ourselves is an intellectual context for the antidote to that. It is for the resurgent movement in America that began with President Jefferson's yeoman farmer, with his distrust in the Federal Government and his skepticism of great big policy schemes imposed from Washington. That is the grand debate of the last century, and it is the one we are in the midst of today.

So I thank the Senate for giving me an opportunity to present my thoughts. I thank my colleagues who attended the Hudson Institute discussion today. And I especially urge my Republican colleagues to remember that if we want to re-earn the trust of the American people, we need to set the right goals and move in that direction, step by step. We will have to be a little patient to get there, but that is a good way to get where we want to go.

I see the distinguished Senator from the University of Arkansas on the floor.

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

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

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, back in July of this year, the subcommittee I chair on contracting oversight held a hearing about heart-breaking incompetence at Arlington National Cemetery.

Because of a series of management errors, bungling, neglect, the contracts that were supposed to be executed to make sure we were keeping track of America's heroes in our most sacred place in this country—we discovered that, in fact, the officials at Arlington National Cemetery were not sure who was buried where.

The reaction I have had to that hearing has been so reassuring because as I travel around Missouri, person after person comes up to me, so many veterans, saying: Thank you for getting on top of this disaster at Arlington National Cemetery.

Since that hearing, when it was very clear there was no direct line of authority in terms of managing Arlington National Cemetery—that they had no problem issuing multiple contracts for millions of dollars and getting absolutely nothing for it, an acknowledgment that they did not have a system that was adequately keeping track of the location of burial for potentially thousands of America's finest—we have continued to stay on top of this and have realized that more and more problems continue to arise.

This morning, it was reported nationally that they now found a grave site that has eight different urns buried—eight different urns—cremated remains buried in one location with a tombstone that said "Unknown." And, of course, they have been able to identify some of those remains—gratefully, they have—and they are contacting those families.

But as a result of the hearing, I filed legislation, along with Senator BROWN, who is with me on that committee as the ranking member of that committee. Together, we filed a bill, with a number of cosponsors, setting up some basic oversight of Arlington going forward—basic but very important—making sure we have review of contract management, making sure we have compliance with an Army directive, making sure we have a report on the grave site discrepancies that have arisen, so we can be assured that every family in America who looks upon Arlington as the last resting place for