

with that same enthusiasm, knowing that his service would be limited in days but not limited by any aspirations or any ideals. He wanted to do the best for the people of Illinois and the Nation. I thank him.

BYRON DORGAN

Next is BYRON and Kim DORGAN and their family. Again, BYRON was an integral part for many years in this Senate. He is one of those individuals whose wisdom you appreciate more and more each day. He is someone who spoke years ago about the offshoring of jobs, and he spoke years ago about a tax system that doesn't reward investment in American jobs but ironically might encourage disinvestment of those jobs. He is someone who spoke with reason, candor, thoughtfulness, and facts about issues that the rest of us are beginning to recognize today are critical to the future of this country.

We will also miss his steady hand on the Appropriations Committee, where he battled to ensure that the reasonable priorities of this Nation were met. His support and help in terms of LIHEAP funding and his help to me personally in so many different ways is deeply appreciated. I thank him for his service. I know he will continue to provide, in his writings and speeches, the wise and thoughtful insights that, again, as we look back, I think we should have heeded with much more energy and enthusiasm when he spoke them.

RUSS FEINGOLD

Senator RUSS FEINGOLD—and this is said often, but it applies so accurately—is a conscience of this body. He is someone who came here to fight for the principles in which he deeply believes and would not deviate from that very serious challenge. He did it with skill, thoughtfulness, and gentility. I appreciate that very much. He was a champion for so many things—Pell grants, making sure the opportunity was still a watchword of this country. What he was most famous for was his efforts in campaign finance reform. Frankly, we will miss him dearly because of that.

There is a growing concern in this country that elections have become auctions, not about the quality of the candidates and their positions, but simply how much money can be funded and by how many different sources. So at a time when we have to confront again an even more serious challenge of campaign finance reform, we are losing one of the great voices and great minds in that effort. I know he will be helping us in this effort going forward, and I thank him for that.

CARTE GOODWIN

Carte Goodwin served with us for a very brief period of time, but in that time, we saw the incredible talent of this young Senator—his skill, his judgment, his ability to communicate with everyone in this Senate. He has been succeeded by another remarkable gentleman, Senator MANCHIN, who is cer-

tainly keeping up the high standards of Senators from West Virginia.

Carte, good luck, and thank you for your service, and I know you will continue to serve the country.

JUDD GREGG

Senator JUDD GREGG and Kathleen are stalwarts in the Senate, with their 18 years of service. I worked very closely with Judd on so many issues but most recently on the Dodd-Frank bill, where we worked collaboratively on this whole complex concept of derivatives. I was impressed with his intellect, his grasp, his balance, and I think we both pushed ourselves to think harder, to do better, and to come up with a solution, frankly, that was much better than I know I could have done individually. So I thank JUDD GREGG for what he did there and on so many other things.

TED KAUFMAN

My dear friend Ted Kaufman and Lynne. We traveled the world together—including Afghanistan multiple times. He served with such distinction. He took up the effort to ensure that our securities markets in particular are well regulated, especially in regard to the new phenomenon of high-frequency trading. And it is no coincidence that just this week, we had a hearing on high-frequency trading. Ted has not let us forget that very critical issue for the future.

GEORGE LEMIEUX

Senator GEORGE LEMIEUX and his wife Meike. Again, they served here for a short period of time but with such distinction, such character, and such concern. I want to salute him. He and I worked together on the Teacher and Principal Improvement Act. He is a brilliant and a decent civil servant. I thank him.

BLANCHE LINCOLN

BLANCHE LINCOLN. BLANCHE and I served in the House together. She decided to raise her family and then came back to the Senate. I can say without any hesitation that without her very courageous stand with respect to some of the aspects of the Dodd-Frank financial legislation, it would not be as comprehensive, as effective as it is today. She stood up and essentially demanded that we create a structure where you could trade derivatives rather than simply clear them. That is a remarkable achievement, and it is her achievement.

ARLEN SPECTER

Finally—and I beg the indulgence of my colleague from Vermont, who I know is scheduled to speak—let me say to ARLEN SPECTER and Joan Specter, thank you for such service. Senator SPECTER is the champion of NIH. It is an incredible achievement, what he has done to fund that over the years.

GEORGE VOINOVICH

And also to Senator GEORGE VOINOVICH and Janet Voinovich, thank you so much for what you have done. GEORGE VOINOVICH has been someone

who has really tried to be the watchdog for all Americans. He has also been an advocate for infrastructure investment and for early childhood care and education.

To all of these colleagues and their families, my deepest appreciation and my profoundest respect.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REED). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes and that Senator SANDERS be recognized upon the conclusion of my remarks.

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

RECOGNIZING FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

DEBORAH AUTOR

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise again to recognize the service of another great Federal employee. This is a tradition that was started by our friend and former colleague, Senator Kaufman, and I am proud to carry on that tradition. But I want to first say that I appreciate the remarks of the Presiding Officer about our colleagues who are leaving this body, and I share his great respect for not only Senator Kaufman but all of the colleagues who are leaving the body at the end of this Congress.

Mr. President, oftentimes we forget that thousands of Federal employees go to work every day with the sole mission of making this country a safer place to live. Ms. Deborah Autor is one of those employees.

As we enter into the cold and flu season, there is great concern about harmful medications that may fall into the hands of our children or other loved ones. As Director of the Food and Drug Administration's Drug Compliance Office, Ms. Autor works to protect public health by minimizing Americans' exposure to unsafe, ineffective, and poor-quality drugs that enter the marketplace.

Ms. Autor is particularly focused on removing potentially dangerous prescription medicines, including cough medicines, anti-inflammatory drugs, antihistamines, and migraine medications, just to name a few. Under her leadership, the FDA has taken enforcement action to remove more than 500 unapproved prescription drugs from the market. She is also credited with designing a program used to identify unapproved drugs, evaluate the public health consequences, and explore any potential legal challenges.

Many believe Ms. Autor is the brains behind the FDA's aggressive enforcement efforts. In conducting the research for these remarks, we found a quote from Mr. Steven Galson, a former Acting U.S. Surgeon General, and this is what he had to say about Ms. Autor:

She developed the program under budget constraints, withstood scrutiny and criticism from some in the drug industry and

Congress, successfully navigated the internal FDA process and took aggressive action to clamp down on illegal drug marketers.

There are many others who have sung her praises and highlighted her commitment to public service.

Prior to work at the FDA, Ms. Autor was a trial attorney for the Office of Consumer Litigation at the Department of Justice, where she served for 7 years. In this role, she litigated civil and criminal cases on behalf of the FDA.

I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring Ms. Autor for her dedicated public service and important contributions to our Nation's health and safety.

I would also add that in these challenging fiscal times, as we approach and go through the holiday season, I hope we all recognize the enormous contribution all of our Federal employees make. The Presiding Officer many times reminds all of us of the enormous role our men and women in the armed services play, and our thoughts and prayers are with all of them. But I think it is also important to recognize these great Federal employees such as Ms. Autor and literally the countless others who oftentimes—and sometimes at the disdain of folks in elective office—are the folks who provide enormous public service to all Americans. So I hope we keep them in our thoughts as well during this holiday season.

Before I conclude my remarks, I also wish to thank my friend, the Senator from Vermont, who is a passionate advocate for trying to end the growing income inequality in this country. I know he is going to be making some impassioned comments, and I appreciate his giving me a couple of moments to recognize this Federal employee, and I look forward to hearing his comments.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking my friend from Virginia for doing what is very important. I think the essence of what he is saying is that today there are millions of Federal employees, people in the Armed Forces, who are doing the very best they can. In many instances, they are doing a great job to protect our country, to keep it safe. And very often, to be honest with you, these folks get dumped on. So it is important that people such as Senator WARNER come here and point out individuals who are doing a great job, people of whom we are very proud. So I thank Senator WARNER for that.

Mr. President, as I think everyone knows, President Obama and the Republican leadership have reached an agreement on a very significant tax bill. In my view, the agreement they reached is a bad deal for the American people. I think we can do better.

I am here today to take a strong stand against this bill, and I intend to tell my colleagues and the Nation exactly why I am in opposition to this bill. You can call what I am doing today whatever you want. You can call it a filibuster. You can call it a very long speech. I am not here to set any great records or to make a spectacle; I am simply here today to take as long as I can to explain to the American people the fact that we have to do a lot better than this agreement provides.

Let me enumerate some of the reasons I am opposed to this agreement.

First, as everybody knows, this Nation has a recordbreaking \$13.8 trillion national debt at the same time as the middle class is collapsing and poverty is increasing. And I think it is important to say a word—because I am not necessarily sure a lot of Americans know this—about how we got to where we are today in terms of the national debt.

I know there are some people who think this all began the day President Obama took office. Well, that is not quite the case. When President Clinton left office, this country was running, in fact, a very significant surplus, and the projections were that we were going to continue to run a surplus. During the 8 years of President Bush's administration, for a number of reasons—the primary reasons being the war in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan, huge tax breaks for the wealthiest people in this country, a Medicare Part D prescription drug program, the Wall Street bailout, among other things, all of which were not paid for—we saw an almost doubling of the national debt. Since President Obama has been in office, we have passed a stimulus package which has also added to the deficit and national debt.

But here we are today with a \$13.8 trillion national debt, a \$1.4 trillion deficit, and almost all Americans are in agreement that this is a very serious issue. So the first point I would make is that it seems to me to be unconscionable—unconscionable—for my conservative friends and for everybody else in this country to be driving up this already too high national debt by giving tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires who don't need it, and in a number of cases they don't even want it.

Here is one of the interesting ironies. There are lists of many very wealthy people who have come forward and said: Sure, I want a tax break. Everybody wants a tax break. But you know what, there are other priorities in this country, and I don't need it. Two of the wealthiest people in the world—and these are billionaires—Bill Gates of Microsoft and Warren Buffett of Berkshire, say: It is absurd. We don't need a tax break.

All over the country, you hear a lot of folks who have a lot of money saying: Don't drive up the deficit and force our kids to pay higher taxes to pay off the national debt in order to give tax

breaks to the richest people in this country. We have been told not to worry too much because the extension of these tax breaks for the wealthy will only last 2 years—not to worry. Maybe that is the case. But given the political reality I have seen in Washington, my guess is that 2 years from now these tax breaks for the wealthiest people in this country will be extended again. What happens around here is that the argument will be made that if you end these tax breaks you are raising taxes. That is what we are hearing right now. I see no reason why, in the middle of a Presidential election, those arguments will not be made again and I see no reason not to believe that those tax breaks will be extended again.

(The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the chair.)

Mr. SANDERS. Clearly, we have a number of Republicans who want to make that extension permanent. Whether it will ever be made permanent I don't know. But the point is, when you hear folks say it is only a 2-year extension, I suggest you take that with a grain of salt.

Let me say, if in fact we do what the Republicans have wanted to do right now as we enter this debate—they wanted a 10-year extension—that would add \$700 billion to our national debt. I have four kids and I have six grandchildren. None of them has a whole lot of money. I think it is grossly unfair to ask my kids and grandchildren and the children all over this country to be paying higher taxes in order to provide tax breaks for billionaires because we have driven up the national debt. That is plain wrong. I think the vast majority of the American people, whether they are progressives like myself or whether they are conservatives, perceive that concept of giving tax breaks to billionaires when we have such a high national debt makes no sense at all.

Furthermore, it is important to point out that extending income tax breaks to the top 2 percent is not the only unfair tax proposal in this agreement. This agreement between the President and the Republican leadership also calls for a continuation of the Bush era 15-percent tax rate on capital gains and dividends, meaning that those people who make their living off their investments will continue to pay a substantially lower tax rate than firemen, teachers, nurses, carpenters, and virtually all the other working people of this country. I do not think that is fair. That is wrong. If this agreement were to be passed, we would be continuing that unfair arrangement.

On top of all that, this agreement includes a horrendous proposal regarding the estate tax. That is a Teddy Roosevelt initiative. Teddy Roosevelt was talking about this in the early years of the 20th century. It was enacted in 1916 and it was enacted for a couple of reasons. Teddy Roosevelt and the people of that era thought it was wrong that a handful of people could have a huge