

terms of the interest costs and the debt?

Necessity is the mother of invention. We have a need now as a nation—not as Republicans and Democrats but as a Nation—to come together and make the decisions that will put us on a course that guarantees the future for our kids and grandkids. The easiest way I know right now to take some of the sting out of the parochialism and partisanship is for every Member of this body and those in the House to become acutely aware of what this report says.

The minority leader listed a few of the programs. Let me go through these. Sitting at home or sitting in your office, think about if any of this makes sense.

There are 82 separate teacher training programs run by the Federal Government—82 separate sets of bureaucracies and sets of Federal employees. None of these teacher training programs, by the way, have a metric on them to evaluate whether they are successful. So when we are not successful—and I question whether it is even the role of the Federal Government to be involved in teacher training. I couldn't find it in the Constitution. Thomas Jefferson couldn't find it in the Constitution. Roosevelt couldn't find it in the Constitution. Johnson couldn't find it in the Constitution. They all said so. We have quotes on that. Yet we have 82 programs, none of which do we know whether they are working.

We have 47 job training programs, 44 of which overlap one another—some to the degree of 100 percent, some 60 percent. We spend \$18 billion a year on it, and not one of them has a measurement of whether it is effective. We have a great need in our country today to retrain people to available jobs. Yet we don't have any idea whether these will work. If you are trying to figure out how to get through these programs, you need another government program to help you figure out how to get through them.

We have 20 offices with programs for homeless people—20 different programs—at the Federal level. Again, if you read the Constitution and the enumerated powers, you find a real difficulty in saying whether that is a Federal responsibility versus a State responsibility. Yet we have 20 separate programs for homeless people. How about one that works—if, in fact, it is a responsibility of the Federal Government.

We run 80 separate economic development programs—80 of them. That is in four different Cabinet agencies. We spend \$6.5 billion a year, and what the GAO says is you cannot say whether there is any economic development that has come out of this \$6.5 billion.

The Department of Transportation spends \$58 billion on 100 separate programs run by 5 different agencies with 6,000 employees, with no idea whether that is the most efficient or effective

way to do it because nobody has ever put a metric on it.

We have 30 separate programs on food safety, run by 15 different Federal agencies. We just added a whole bunch more with the last food safety bill—none of which had a metric on it, none of which perfected the food safety in terms of interstate transport, which is undoubtedly a Federal responsibility. How about an efficient and effective way to do that. How about 1 agency being responsible for food safety instead of 15.

We have 18 domestic food and nutrition programs—we spend \$62.5 billion—11 of which we have no idea whether they are performing effectively.

The first question you might ask is, How in the world did we get all these programs? We got all these programs because somebody saw a need and thought that would solve that need. They did so without the benefit of one of the No. 1 obligations of Congress, which is the oversight of the bureaucracy. We have all these complaints by those who favor the earmarking process that if we don't earmark it, then the Federal agencies will spend the money where they are. They forget one little clue in terms of the Congress. We have absolute power to oversee every branch of the Federal Government in terms of their effectiveness and their efficiency.

Yet we have not done it. The Congress has that. Whether it is run by Republicans or Democrats, it is not done. It is not a partisan issue. It is laziness on our part. It is far easier to write a new bill that solves the same problem and not oversee the others. Consequently, we answer the humanitarian, compassionate call to fix something we have done by treating symptoms rather than the disease.

We have a real disease in our country today. The disease is a cancer that will take away our freedom. If you look back in history, all republics have fallen. The average age of a republic is 206 years. How did they fail? What caused them to fail? If you read the history books and look at all of them, you will find that even though they might have been overrun by an enemy, the key factor that caused them to fail was fiscal every time. They lived beyond their means. Look at what is happening to us in the world today. The scope of our power militarily is being limited by our economic power because we are extremely far in debt. When you go to the lead economists, such as Ken Rogoff and Carmen Reinhart—the book they have written is “This Time is Different.” The economists tell us our debt right now—not what is coming this next year but right now—with the interest costs we have today, is costing 1 percent of GDP. We are only going to grow about 3.5 percent this year. If we didn't have the debt, it would be 4.5 percent. That means 1 million more people would have great-paying jobs this year if we didn't have this debt. So there is a clarion call out there coming

from America—not inside Washington—to fix the real problems.

As a physician, what I know is this: If I treat the symptoms of a disease and do not treat the real disease, I ultimately make the disease much worse. I cover up the signs and symptoms of the disease. The disease we have is a disease of not recognizing the very critical nature that you cannot—never—you can never live above and beyond your means without ultimately paying a greater price. The difference between the Federal Government, most of the State governments, and every family is when you have maxed out the credit card, it is maxed. You are not going to get another credit card company to give you more. You will either have to start paying or you will default on it.

The question comes, Will we honor our true commitments? Will we make the hard decisions that are required to put us on a path for renewed prosperity? Will we take real information—and I have offered 70 amendments on this over the past 6 years, which have been voted down—and will we start paying attention now because, ultimately, if we don't make decisions today that will control and set us on a path of prosperity, we are going to be in a position where our debtholders will make our decisions for us. That is when liberty declines. That is when American exceptionalism dies. That is when our destiny is taken from our hands. It should not be that way.

I, again, call on the President to lead this Nation to define the problem, the real threat to our freedom, and come forward and pull us together and let's solve this problem, with everyone recognizing that everyone is going to sacrifice, but the sacrifice will create a future benefit that will be rewarded in the lives of our children and grandchildren.

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

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

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, I rise to support this continuing resolution. As we know, the Senate is set to pass a short-term funding bill, while negotiations continue on a longer term funding bill for the rest of the year.

The administration has presented us with a request also to fund the government next year and is expected to ask for an increase in the Federal debt ceiling. This legislation cuts about \$4 billion. Up against our annual deficit or the total debt, it is but a microdrop in the budget.

The Federal Government is on track to spend about \$3.7 trillion this fiscal

year, while taking in only \$2.2 trillion in revenue. If we compared this to a middle-class example, it would be as if someone was spending \$37,000 a year, with an income of only \$22,000.

Replace “thousand” for “trillion” and you get a good idea of how fiscally irresponsible the Federal Government has become. We have a \$14 trillion debt and, as we all know now, we are borrowing 40 cents of every \$1 we spend. Clearly, there is a growing danger in the country from tremendous debt and runaway spending. It is this resolution that will help in a very small way to put us on a better track.

I encourage us to use a multipronged approach as we move forward. We need to reverse the current spending trend of the Congress. We need to address long-term obligations and put statutory backstops into place to make sure it will be very difficult for future Congresses to do what past Congresses have done.

As a very new member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will be asking Federal agencies to identify further programs and ways to reduce Federal spending. The administration has been on the right track in several key areas. They have proposed to cut or terminate almost 150 discretionary programs that would save about \$21 billion and defense programs that would save about \$25 billion. But that savings should be put to reducing our total need to borrow and not bumped back into additional spending by the government.

Additionally, we need to incorporate what we just learned from the Government Accountability Office about inefficient and duplicative areas of the Federal budget. GAO’s recommendations for consolidations and eliminating programs should be fully reviewed and, in many places, implemented for next year’s budget.

Treasury Secretary Geithner will soon ask the Congress to increase the allowable Federal debt a fourth time for the last 2 years. In my judgment, Congress should say no unless such an increase is coupled with new and dramatic antispending reforms that would make any future additions to our debt nearly impossible.

While defaulting on U.S. bonds is not an option, Congress must tie future debt limit extensions to reforms that produce much smaller and smarter government. As Indiana’s Governor Daniels has said: “You will never know how much government you won’t miss.”

I yield the floor. 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.

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

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

DEALING WITH THE DEFICIT

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, we face as a nation some of the most difficult circumstances this country has faced since the Great Depression. Two of the major issues we are facing is the collapse of the middle class and, simultaneously, while poverty increases and the middle class in this country disappears, we also find ourselves with a \$14 trillion national debt and a \$1.6 trillion deficit.

At this momentous time in American history, the question arises as to how we, in fact, will deal with the deficit. Will we deal with it in a way that is fair and just or will we, at a time when the gap between the very wealthy and everybody else is growing wider, in fact, try to balance the budget on the backs of the middle class, on the backs of the poor, on the backs of the elderly, the sick, the children?

That is the question we have to address right now.

Yes, the deficit is a serious problem. Yes, we have to go forward in deficit reduction. But, no, in the midst of a major recession, it is morally wrong and economically bad policy to balance the budget on the backs of those people who are already hurting.

I find it interesting that some of the loudest voices who come before us every day talking about the serious problem of the deficit are precisely those people who have voted time after time after time to raise the deficit, raise the national debt. Yet now they come forward and say we have to cut programs for the elderly, the poor, and the children in order to balance the budget.

I suppose it turns out that now I and a few others are the real deficit hawks in the Senate. When it came to the war in Iraq—which will end up costing us some \$3 trillion—I didn’t hear a whole lot of discussion about how that war was going to be paid for. I voted against that war.

When it came to giving huge tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country, I didn’t hear my Republican friends say: Oh, gee, we can’t do that because it is going to drive up the deficit. I voted against tax breaks for the wealthy.

When it came to passing an unfunded \$4 billion Medicare Part D prescription drug program—written by the insurance companies and the drug companies—I didn’t hear my Republican friends say our kids and grandchildren are going to have to pay for that. I voted against that.

Madam President, you will recall that after the crooks on Wall Street drove this Nation into a recession and they needed a bailout from the American people, you didn’t hear too many of our friends who voted for that bailout say: Oh, we can’t do that; it is unpaid for. It is going to drive up the deficit and the national debt. You didn’t hear that.

But now, suddenly we have people who have great concern about the na-

tional debt and the deficit, and they intend to balance that budget on the backs of working people, the elderly, the sick, the poor, and the children. Among other things, which is incomprehensible to me, at a time when approximately 16 percent of our people are truly unemployed—way above the official levels, the official numbers, because the official numbers do not include those people who have given up looking for work, those people working part-time when they want to work full-time—the Republicans come up with a deficit reduction package which will cost us some 700,000 jobs.

Now, I don’t know how or why in the middle of a severe recession, when unemployment is so high, they would come up with a proposal that costs 700,000 jobs.

Madam President, you well know that we do an abysmal job in this country in terms of taking care of our children. We have the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world. We have a totally inadequate early childhood education program in this country. Head Start, to the degree that it is funded adequately, does a good job. But in the midst of the crisis in early childhood education and childcare, the Republican proposal would cut Head Start—Head Start—one of the most important programs in America, giving low-income kids a chance to maybe get into school in the first grade, in kindergarten, on par with the other kids. They want to cut that program by 20 percent from fiscal year 2010, depriving over 200,000 little kids the opportunity not only to receive early childhood education but health care benefits and nutrition benefits from this important program.

I worked very hard to expand community health centers in America because maybe—just maybe—it is a bad idea that 45,000 Americans are going to die this year because they do not get to a doctor. Pick up the papers all over America. Tens of thousands of people are going to be thrown off Medicaid. What do you do if you don’t have health insurance and you are 40 or 50 years of age and you get sick? What do you do? Yet the Republican proposal would cut community health centers by \$1.3 billion, denying 11 million patients access to quality primary health care. In the midst of a major health care crisis, when millions of people are uninsured—50 million uninsured and people being thrown off Medicaid—you don’t shut down community health centers and deny people access to health care.

In Vermont—and I am sure in New York State—young people are finding it very difficult to afford a college education. They are coming out of college deeply in debt. In some cases, they can’t go to college. We are falling behind other countries in terms of the percentage of our young people graduating from college. Yet the Republican proposal would reduce by 17 percent the average Pell grant, and 9.4