

million low-income college students would lose some or all of their Pell grant.

At this moment in American history where we are involved in an international, global economy, with so much pressure from abroad, we have to invest more in education, more in higher education, not less.

In the State of Vermont, the Community Services Block Grant Program provides vital services to low-income people who are in need of emergency food, emergency housing—emergency services. They do a great job. The Republican proposal would cut the Community Services Block Grant Program by \$405 million, which would harm 20 million low-income people, including millions of seniors.

Lastly—not lastly because there is a long list of these cuts which make no sense to me—I want to mention a cut of \$1.3 billion to the Social Security Administration. Our Republican friends say we are not cutting Social Security, but they are proposing a \$1.3 billion cut to the Social Security Administration—the people who administer the program. What does that mean?

Right now, there is a significant delay if you are looking for disability benefits—a huge delay. People are calling my office all the time saying they can't find anybody to process their claims. Yet the Republicans would propose a \$1.3 billion cut, which would delay Social Security benefits to about 500,000 Americans.

The issue is pretty clear: The top 1 percent in America earns 23 percent of all income, more than the bottom 50 percent. The wealthiest people in this country over the last 20 years have seen a reduction—a reduction—in the tax rates they pay. Today, at 16 percent, the wealthiest people in this country are paying the lowest tax rates that the rich have paid in many decades.

This is not a complicated issue. This issue is, do we move forward to balance the budget on the backs of people who are on Social Security, on the backs of little children who need Head Start, on the backs of seniors in the State of Vermont who depend upon heating assistance? Do we balance the budget on the backs of the weak, the vulnerable, the elderly or the poor or do we say: When we have an increasingly unequal distribution of income—the rich are doing very well—do we ask the wealthiest people to start paying their fair share of taxes?

The American people are pretty clear on this matter. They think it is wrong to balance the budget on the backs of those people who are already hurting in a recession. Let's ask the people on top to start paying their fair share so we can see some shared sacrifice in the midst of this recession.

Madam President, with that, I yield the floor, and 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. DURBIN. 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.

Mr. DURBIN. What is the pending business before the Senate?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask consent to speak in morning business for a few minutes.

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

THOUGHTFUL BUDGETING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in a few minutes the Senate will gather here to vote on the continuing resolution which funds our Federal Government, in this case for 2 weeks. It is hard to believe we have reached that point in Washington where we are going to fund our government 2 weeks at a time. Critics may look at us and say that certainly the men and women who serve in the House and Senate ought to be able to gather together, to sit down like adults, Democrats and Republicans, and really plot the spending and budget for our government for at least the remaining 7 months of this year. It does not seem like an unreasonable request. Instead, we appear to be lurching from 1 month to 2 weeks, and I don't know what is next.

What is at issue is how much money will be spent in the remainder of this year and whether we will follow the House lead in a bill known as H.R. 1, the House budget bill, which made \$100 billion in cuts for the remainder of this year. The Senate has already made some \$41 billion in cuts in an effort to use these spending cuts to reduce the deficit, but the House wants to move that to a higher level.

I just returned this past week from a visit to my State when we had a week of recess and went from one end of the State to the other to measure the House budget cuts and their impact on my State of Illinois. What I found is, in community after community, many of the cuts that were made by the House were not done in a thoughtful manner.

I was a member of the deficit commission. I acknowledge we have to deal with this deficit in a timely and serious way. I was 1 of the 11 who voted for the commission report, and I stand by the commission report, at least in its goal to bring all of our spending on the table and to look at it seriously so we bring this deficit down and not saddle our children and grandchildren with this obligation to pay off our debt. But we took a measured, thoughtful approach and engaged all levels of government spending to reach our goal.

The House took 14 percent of the Federal budget, the so-called domestic discretionary section, and made all the

cuts there—all of them. As a result, they went too far. Let me give an example of how they went too far.

My last visit was to the Argonne National Laboratory outside of Chicago. I had representatives there from the Fermilab, a national accelerator laboratory in the same region. The resulting cuts from the House budget will reduce the amount of money available for those two key national laboratories by 20 percent. That sounds painful but not crippling; yet it is because it is a cut that has to take place in 7 months.

In the Argonne National Laboratory, they will have to lay off one-third of their scientists and support staff and cut back their research by 40 to 50 percent for the remainder of this year. Well, so what. What difference would it make? Here is the difference. Right now, the Argonne National Laboratory is doing critical research and work in areas of innovation. Where is the fastest computer in the world today? Good old USA, right? No. The fastest computer in the world today is in China. We have been doing research to make sure we develop the next "fastest computer." It is not just bragging rights either; it is developing the technology that helps us develop our economy and develop our businesses and create jobs.

Part of this laboratory, the Advanced Photon Source, brings in pharmaceutical companies from all over the United States that test drugs that cure disease. They do it right there, Argonne National Laboratory.

I asked the person from Eli Lilly what happens if they close down for the next 6 months.

He said: I don't know where we will go. We may have to go overseas.

I said: Where?

Well, Europe, he said, or perhaps India or China.

Time and again, there is a recurring theme here. When we back off of an investment in America, our competitors have an advantage and an opportunity. That is why the House budget was so shortsighted to cut back in research and innovation.

The day before, I had gone to the Northwestern University Cancer Research Center and met with 50 or 60 medical doctors and researchers who said the cuts in the House budget would force them to lay off medical researchers for the remainder of this year. Is there anyone among us who has not had a moment in life when someone sick in their family needs help? You look for the best doctor and best hospital and ask that question we all would ask: Doctor, is there anything going on? Is there a drug we can turn to? Is there some experimental opportunity here?

The clinical trials that are part of the National Institutes of Health will be cut back by 20 percent during the remainder of this year. The oncologist at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine said: I have 100 people suffering from cancer who are gravely ill, and unfortunately I can only put 80 of

them in a clinical trial because of these budget cutbacks. Senator, which ones should I turn away?

That is why the decisions on cutting money should require more than just bragging rights of how much you cut. We should be thoughtful. We should not cut education and training; that is tomorrow's workforce. The Pell grants that are denied today stop children, young people from low-income families, from going to school and getting an education and being prepared for the workforce. The cutback in innovation and research we have seen here with this House budget goes too far. The idea that we cannot invest in basic infrastructure for America so our economy moves forward is so shortsighted.

Today, we are likely, by a strong bipartisan vote, to extend the budget of the U.S. Government for 2 weeks. In the meantime, we have to sit down and be honest, honest about reducing the deficit in a thoughtful way that does not cripple our economy, that does not kill basic research, that does not stop the job training and education we need for the workforce of the 21st century because, I will tell you this, if we don't think about it carefully, our competitors around the world, particularly the No. 2 economy in the world today—China—will have an opportunity for a toehold and an opportunity to move forward at the expense of American businesses and American workers.

In this recession, with 15 million Americans out of work, we cannot afford to make the wrong decision on our budget. We have to sit down and make the right decision, carefully cutting waste and inefficiency—and there is plenty of it—but not cutting the essential services of our government that will build our economy and give us a chance to succeed in the future.

Mark Zandi, who is with Moody's, has said that H.R. 1, the House budget, will literally kill 700,000 jobs in America. With 15 million Americans out of work, is that the best Congress can do? I don't think so. Let's be thoughtful about what we are going to do. Let's make sure we get this economy moving forward and creating good-paying jobs for Americans so we can walk into a store someday, pick up a product, flip it over, and smile when we read "Made in the U.S.A." Wouldn't that be a great thing to prepare for by spending our money, investing our resources today for the workforces and businesses of tomorrow?

THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. INOUE. Madam President, this is the fifth time this fiscal year that I have urged the Senate to support a continuing resolution to keep the Federal Government running. CRs are inefficient and hamstringing our agencies and departments, especially the Department of Defense in a time of war. A CR funds programs that should be terminated and does not fund programs that need to be initiated. There is only one

advantage to a CR—it is better than the alternative, a government shutdown.

The House has proposed a 2-week continuing resolution, which would keep the government operating through March 18. The proposal includes \$4 billion in cuts, many of which were recommended by the President in his fiscal year 2012 budget request. Clearly, the 2-week extension in this CR does not provide sufficient time to hammer out a final agreement. At this point, however, it would appear that the only alternative is a government shutdown. This is an unacceptable outcome—the consequences for our economy and the American people would be severe. As a result, I have come to the reluctant conclusion that we should pass this extension quickly and send it to the President for his signature.

As things stand today, I believe that we will find ourselves in the same place 2 weeks from now. I am not optimistic that there will be sufficient time to work out a final deal that will pass the House and Senate prior to March 18. I hope I am wrong, but the reality is that the two Houses remain far apart and the negotiations will be long and intense. By accepting this extension, Senate Democrats have demonstrated a good faith effort to work with our House and Senate Republican counterparts on a reasonable compromise that will end the current budget stalemate. Let us hope that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are willing to meet us half way as we move forward with these critical negotiations in the weeks to come.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, let us be clear about where we are. The legislation before us is designed to avoid a shutdown of the Federal Government. It would provide funding for a 2-week period while we continue to debate and negotiate funding levels for the rest of fiscal year 2011. The price its supporters want to exact for that 2-week respite is our agreement to major cuts in spending, without any attempt to address our deficit by closing tax loopholes.

I do not believe we should pay that price. Let me offer one example why. Under this continuing resolution, the Army Corps of Engineers' investigations budget—the funding for Army Corps studies of possible projects—would be reduced by 35 percent, for the whole year, not just this 2-week period. The Corps' construction budget would be reduced by 17 percent. What does that mean? It means that the Army Corps of Engineers, which already faces a huge backlog of necessary projects, would be deprived of a big chunk of the funding it needs to do its vital work, funding that was included in the President's budget for 2011.

This legislation exacts other big cuts. It reduces funding for surface transportation projects by \$293 million. We will not build needed roads and bridges—and we will not gain the jobs those projects would create—under

those cuts. We will also cut tens of millions of dollars from energy research projects at the very moment our Nation faces the urgent task of liberating ourselves from dependence on foreign oil. These cuts will damage our economy today, and they will damage our competitiveness tomorrow. They will do our country harm.

The new House Republican majority sent us those spending cuts while continuing big tax cuts for upper income taxpayers. Last year, when we approved the extension of those tax cuts, I opposed them. I did so because I feared that they would create such strain in the budget that some would argue for massive, damaging cuts in spending levels. The legislation before us is confirmation that those fears were justified. The cuts it would impose would do very little to reduce our budget deficit, while doing much to harm working Americans, and leave untouched one large cause of deficits, the unfair and unnecessary tax cuts for upper bracket Americans. In fact, the price of those tax cuts for upper bracket taxpayers, about \$30 billion a year, far exceeds the \$4 billion in spending cuts included in this bill. In other words, we could avoid draconian spending cuts if we do not continue the Bush tax cuts for the roughly one in 50 U.S. households with incomes above \$250,000 a year, households that have done very well in the last 10 years while the middle class has lost ground.

That is not a fair approach. I cannot agree to it, and I will vote against this continuing resolution.

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. UDALL of New Mexico. 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 44, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2011, and for other purposes.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.