

heights. They have spent trillions of dollars we do not have on things we do not need and cannot afford. The amount of red ink Democrats plan to rack up this year alone would exceed all the debt run up by the Federal Government from its inception through 1984.

This recklessness is the reason we have seen a national uprising against their policies. Americans have demanded we reverse this recklessness and restore balance. Democrats have resisted at every turn.

To conceal the extent of their spending plans, they did not even pass a budget last year. After a nationwide repudiation of their policies in November, they proposed a massive spending bill loaded with new spending that amounted to a slap in the face to the voters.

Following the outrage that provoked, they tried to get a spending freeze past the public. They said: How about we just lock in place the out-of-control spending levels we set last year?

To them, this entire debate is not about how to respond to the American people. It is about seeing what they can get away with.

Well, Republicans have taken a different approach. Responding to our constituents, we have insisted the status quo simply will not cut it anymore. We have insisted on actually shrinking the size of government. And yesterday we delivered, by forcing the first actual cut in government spending in recent memory.

While it was just a small first step, yesterday we showed it is actually possible to change the status quo in Washington. Not bad.

What about the White House? The White House responded to all of this by announcing they want to have a meeting. We are happy to go to the meeting, but putting a meeting on the schedule does not change the fact that neither the White House nor a single Democrat in Congress has proposed a plan that would allow the government to remain open and that would respond to the voters by reining in spending.

All we get is talk. The President made an audacious assertion yesterday after the 2-week CR was passed. He said he wants his advisers to come up with a plan that "makes sure we are living within our means." Live within our means?

Let me remind you, Mr. President, that the President's budget has us amassing a national debt of more than \$20 trillion within the next 5 years—amassing a national debt of over \$20 trillion within the next 5 years. We are projected to spend this year \$1.6 trillion this year more than we are taking in. That is a \$1.6 trillion deficit this year.

Does this mean we can expect the President's Budget Director to present us with a piece of paper that outlines \$1.6 trillion in cuts for the current fiscal year? If so, that is great news.

If the President's measure of success, as he said, is a plan that makes sure we

actually live within our means, the way most people do, count on me showing up early for this meeting. Unfortunately, I suspect the President is once again just saying something he thinks people want to hear.

The fact is, if Democrats had a plan of their own that would cut one dollar in spending, I think we would have seen it by now. But we have not. Democrats have abdicated all responsibility for their own recklessness over the last 2 years. They have left us to do something about it.

We made a step in the right direction yesterday after months of resistance on their part. Now we look forward to their plan. It is time for Democrats to present a serious plan of their own that addresses this crisis. It is time for Democrats to take the concerns of the American people seriously.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half, and the majority controlling the final half.

The Republican leader is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCONNELL and Mr. PAUL pertaining to the introduction of S. 468 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I note 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. WARNER. Mr. 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. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask to speak for up to 8 minutes on the Democratic time.

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

HONORING ROBERT BENZON

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor another great Federal employee and a constituent of mine from Fredericksburg, VA.

As we debate this week and over the coming weeks about making sure the Federal Government stays open, I think it is important to realize what we are talking about are the real lives

of many of our great Federal employees who provide the services day-in and day-out to make sure many important public purposes are served.

I know the Presiding Officer realizes this is an initiative that our former colleague, the Senator from Delaware, started. I was proud, when Senator Kaufman moved on, to pick up that mantle on a regular basis, coming to the floor of the Senate to recognize Federal employees who very often, in an unsung way, do great things for our country.

The Federal employee I am going to recognize is someone who the Presiding Officer, who I know, spends a lot of time in the air, coming from the great State of New Mexico, will be particularly interested in. My colleague, the Senator from Illinois, who is also present, spends a lot of time in the air as well. That is the subject of what we will talk about today.

Nearly 2 million people in the United States take to the skies every day. Once in flight, their safety relies on the diligent work of individuals responsible for ensuring that airplanes are well-designed and safe. When we reach our destination, as we often do, it is because of their tireless work.

In the rare moments when accidents happen, we rely on individuals like Robert Benzon who possess the skill and innovative thinking to find the cause of the accident and ensure we don't make the same mistake twice.

Robert Benzon is a senior air safety investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board. His job is to investigate aircraft accidents. He analyzes the equipment and data, identifies the cause of the accident and makes recommendations to the industry on how to improve safety.

He began his career flying combat missions in Vietnam as an Air Force pilot. In 1984, he went to work for the National Transportation Safety Board in Chicago.

Over his 25-year career, he has served as the lead investigator in several high-profile cases and is considered the best in his field. More than 80 percent of his team's recommendations have been adopted by the industry.

In 1996, Mr. Benzon led the investigation of the TWA flight 800 crash in the Atlantic Ocean. His investigation following this crash led to the recommendation that oxygen contained in aircraft fuel tanks be replaced with another nonburning gas, like Nitrogen, to prevent fuel tank explosions.

In 2001, Mr. Benzon led the investigation of the fatal crash of American Airlines flight 587 in Queens, NY. His investigation led to an industry-wide redesign of the rudder system, as well as changes to the pilot training program for similar aircrafts.

Mr. Benzon also led the investigation of U.S. Airways flight 1549, known nationwide as the "Miracle on the Hudson," which made Captain Sullenberger a household name. His investigation included an analysis of the engine damage and black box flight recorders,

interviews with the pilots, cabin crew, air traffic controllers and passengers, and meetings with the manufacturers of both the airplane and its engines.

Mr. Benzon has also been a strong advocate for the collection of more in-flight data points from flight recorder black boxes, which he believes is critical to understanding what exactly may have gone wrong during a flight. His efforts have led to a significant increase in data: from less than 10 data points collected in-flight to over 1,000.

In an interview, Mr. Benzon said, “[My work] is a way of giving back—I get a good feeling after every one of these investigations is over. It’s service to the country.”

It is this sentiment that inspires me to highlight great Federal employees on the Senate floor. There are countless Federal employees who dedicate their lives to making the rest of our lives better and safer.

Each day we set foot on an airplane and arrive safely at our destination, we have Robert Benzon and his team to thank. I hope that my Senate colleagues will join me in honoring Robert Benzon and all those at the National Transportation Safety Board for their dedicated service and important contribution to our Nation’s aviation safety.

I know Senators share the regard for this Federal employee and the many others who make our country a better place. It is my hope that in the coming weeks we can come to some resolution so these Federal employees can know that for the balance of this fiscal year the Federal Government will stay in operation and that they can continue to do their work.

With that, 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. Mr. 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.

SOMALI PIRATES

Mr. KIRK. With the cold-blooded murder of four Americans by pirates, our country faces a dangerous enemy as old as the second Washington administration and the earliest days of the U.S. Navy.

This danger now stretches across our vital oil supply lanes and threatens not just Americans handing out Bibles at Indian Ocean ports of call but our vital supply of energy. I think it is time to recall the tough choices made by the Jefferson administration to suppress the 21st century’s pirates in this new chapter.

We may forget that as much as 10 percent of all Federal revenues were paid by the Washington administration to the Barbary pirates operating in

what became Libya. Payments continued under the Adams and Jefferson administrations, but as always with kidnapers and pirates, ransoms only led to more danger on the high seas.

In 1801, President Thomas Jefferson decided that payments of tribute to the Barbary States in exchange for the safe passage of American shipping vessels had gone far enough. Over the next 5 years, Jefferson sent the new U.S. Navy—ironically built over his objection—to attack and defeat the pirates. In the conflict that followed, new American heroes were made, especially Captain Stephen Decatur. Decatur’s exploits were dangerous and involved close quarters in combat. In his honor, my State of Illinois named one of its major cities after him, placing his statue in the city’s center.

In the end, piracy was defeated and the flag of the United States was not strongly challenged by pirates until this century.

In the wake of the murder of four Americans by Somali pirates, we need to recall Jefferson’s policy under what I would call the “Decatur Initiative” against Indian Ocean pirates.

Since 2006, pirates attacked more and more vessels. There were over 400 attacks just last year. According to the New York Times, the modern-day pirates of the 21st century currently hold 50 vessels and more than 800 hostages. According to the International Maritime Bureau, pirates murdered 379 people with an additional 199 individuals reported missing between 1993 and 2009.

According to reports, the typical pirate ransom in 2005 was between \$100,000 and \$200,000. By 2008, the average ransom grew to between \$500,000 and \$2 million. One year later, in 2009, the average ransom reportedly grew again to a range between \$1.5 million and \$3.5 million. In late 2010, ransoms now hover around \$4 million per vessel. Ransom payments as large as \$9.5 million for a tanker carrying crude oil have also been reported by the media.

Recently, pirates captured a supertanker worth \$200 million carrying 2 million barrels of oil bound for the U.S. Its ransom may become the mother load for pirates to extend their reach across the Indian Ocean and into the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. We would be naive not to expect profits from piracy will not be used to support terrorism against the West.

The Horn of Africa is of crucial importance, not only to the U.S. economy, but also to the global market as it serves as a major artery of international shipping. The oil tankers that cruise these waters provide much of the world’s energy supply and we cannot risk the safety of those shipments. This region is a potential incubator for the growth of two burgeoning al Qaeda franchises: al Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb, AQIM, and Somalia’s al-Shabaab group, which has pledged its loyalty to Osama bin Laden.

Yesterday, I raised this issue with our Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.

She hinted that our policy may be changing and that is welcome news. I asked, “if we can’t be tough on pirates, who can we be tough on?”

Today, I am announcing the start of an effort here in the Senate to draft legislation and support administration action along the lines of Jefferson’s policy on pirates.

These legislative concepts shall be collectively referred to as the “Decatur Initiative,” Decatur, whose most daring mission involved recapturing the U.S.S. *Philadelphia* from pirates.

The time has come for us to advance the following: 1. A defined “Pirate Exclusion Zone” that would allow the immediate boarding and/or sinking of any vessel from Somalia not approved and certified for sea by allied forces; 2. an expedited legal regime permitting trial and detention of pirates captured on the high seas; 3. a blockade of pirate-dominated ports like Hobyo, Somalia; 4. broad powers and authority to on-scene commanders to attack or arrest pirates once outside Somalia’s 12-mile territorial limit—this would include the summary sinking of pirate ships if a local commander deems it warranted.

Additionally, I will explore actions to attack the financial links between pirates and the terrorist groups such as al-Shabaab and target pirates with financial sanctions in the same way as other terrorist networks.

In the wake of the recent tragedy in the Arabian Sea, where American missionaries were gunned down in cold blood, I am hopeful that many of my colleagues will be willing to join me in taking bold action against the pirates who have been operating in the waters off East Africa. It is ironic that the United States and our allies station substantial naval forces against pirates in this region but take little aggressive action against them. While the pirates have substantial strength on the ground in Somalia, once they’re put to sea, we can be their masters and they have very weak means to oppose us. A set of vessels blockading pirate-dominated ports with aggressive orders to attack and sink any vessel leaving Somalia should make quick work of pirate operations.

The cost of oil and the price of gas is high enough. Further increases could endanger our slowly recovering economy. As part of the effort to stabilize the price of gas in America, we need to recover Jefferson’s policy and attack and defeat Somali pirates as soon as they leave Somalia’s territorial waters.

In addition, as this body begins to finalize spending legislation for the remainder of the year, I would like to highlight the growing danger to the U.S. economy and our country.

We all know that the national debt now tops \$14 trillion but we should note that this means we are adding \$35 billion to our debts each week or over \$5 billion borrowed each day.

That \$4 billion cut represents just .3 percent of this year’s annual deficit or just three one-hundredths of 1 percent