

it. He should be applauded for that by people of good will on both sides. Unfortunately, we already know how many Democrats intend to respond to this plan. We have heard their spin already. In the absence of any solutions of their own to a looming entitlement fiasco and the testimony of countless experts on the fiscal perils we face, Democrats intend to use Congressman RYAN's plan against anyone who supports it—despite the facts. They will try to scare the public by claiming it says things that it does not. They will squander the golden opportunity we have right now to tackle the biggest problems we face in a bipartisan way, the way our predecessors did when the two parties shared power in Washington, all in the name of having an edge in the next election. Frankly, it is shameful.

Americans elect their President and Senators and Congressmen to lead. They don't expect us to agree on everything, but they expect us to work together when a problem becomes so pressing that cooperation across party lines is required. Now is such a moment. The debt is at crisis levels, posing a threat not just to businesses and families planning for the future but to our national security.

Since the President has taken office, nearly 3 million Americans have lost their jobs. As a result of the ongoing housing crisis, millions of homeowners are currently underwater on their mortgages. The only industry that seems to be growing is government, and the only city that seems to be isolated from problems most Americans face right now is Washington—all at taxpayers' expense.

The budget debate in which we have been engaged in the past several weeks is the direct result of the fact that Democrats in Congress failed to pass one of their own for the current fiscal year. Republicans had to step in and do it for them. Now, 6 months into the current fiscal year, the President and current Members of Congress still have yet to produce a plan of their own. House Republicans have produced multiple plans, including one they will offer today which funds our troops through the end of the year, keeps the government running, and gets us one step closer to the level of spending cuts that even the senior Senator from New York has described as reasonable. Unfortunately, Democrats would rather take potshots at these proposals from the side lines, hoping they become unpopular with the public so they can benefit politically. They have completely and totally abdicated their responsibility.

I would like to applaud Congressman RYAN not only for the energy and creativity and seriousness which he has brought to these issues but also for his courage in doing so at a time when Democrats in Washington would rather sit on their hands. By stepping forward, he has forced a much needed debate about the many crises of the moment.

It is my hope that our friends on the other side recognize this effort for what it is—a serious, good-will effort to do something good and necessary for the future of our Nation—and that for the good of the Nation, they will join this effort at some point before it is too late.

1099 PROVISION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as I have traveled across Kentucky over the past year, I have heard from countless small business owners who told me how burdensome the so-called 1099 provision in the Democrats' health care bill would be to implement and how it could hamper their ability to create good private sector jobs. I hope they are tuning in to the Senate floor today so they can watch the vote on its repeal.

This has been a hard-fought effort, and all of the credit should go to the junior Senator from Nebraska, my good friend Senator MIKE JOHANNIS. He has led this fight on behalf of the countless entrepreneurs and small business owners across the country who raised the alarm on this issue.

This is a big win for small business. Importantly, it is also the first of what I hope are many successful repeal votes related to the disastrous health spending bill the Democrats passed last year. The more Americans learn about this bill, the less they like it. We hope we can respond to their concerns with many repeal votes like the one we are going to have this morning right here in Congress. Then we will replace it with the kind of commonsense reforms that will actually lower costs and encourage job creation.

Once again, I thank Senator JOHANNIS for his leadership and hard work on repealing this onerous provision. This is a classic example of a Senator who listened to his constituents, developed a solution, won the support of his colleagues, and doggedly pursued a course of action that led to today's vote. America's small businesses can thank Senator JOHANNIS for pushing this initiative across the finish line. I call on the President to sign it into law.

I yield the floor.

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 Senator from Louisiana.

(The remarks of Mr. VITTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 723 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, we hear a lot about the disaster and things that are taking place and the loss of lives in Libya as well as many other places, particularly in the last few months. But going seemingly unnoticed is probably just as great a disaster that is happening in Cote D'Ivoire right now as we speak.

I came to the floor yesterday, and I talked about the fact that elections took place in Cote D'Ivoire last November. The President, the incumbent President, Laurent Gbagbo, was challenged by Alassane Ouattara. They claim Ouattara won the election. Ouattara comes from the north, the Muslim area up there.

We found so much voter fraud that we identified, and we specifically talked about on the Senate floor, that I have asked Secretary Clinton, by letter twice, to intervene and demand a new election.

When I say "voter fraud," I entered this in the RECORD yesterday, so I will not do it again today. But this shows how they miscalculated all those votes in the north. In just one precinct, 100,000 votes—well, actually 94,873. Obviously, if we have 100,000 or so votes in that one precinct, it can happen that way.

But use logic. If all else fails, stop and think about this. How could it be possible that in the northern part of Cote D'Ivoire, when they had the election, what we would call the primary election, President Gbagbo got thousands, thousands of votes in each one of the precincts. Yet when the runoff came, he got zero. That is a statistical impossibility. I think for those of us—certainly, the United States thought the U.N. and perhaps France was accurate in their initial response to this thing that we were going to have to get something done.

Let me go ahead and finish what happened. I mentioned yesterday in the town of Duekoue, Ouattara's forces, along with the French, went in there, murdered about—we think something over 1,000 people. We get the reports from the Red Cross and from other sources.

But Ouattara has tried to deny his involvement in this slaughter. His forces took the town earlier, and this was the week after the Gbagbo forces had gone. I think we can just look at Guillaume Ngefa, who is the deputy head of the U.N. mission in Cote D'Ivoire.

He said Ouattara's forces had carried out the killings in Duekoue. "We have evidence. We have pictures. This was retaliation."

So we have all this evidence I mentioned yesterday which was part of it. I read yesterday from the Guardian, the British Guardian. The U.N. mission said traditional hunters, known as Dozos, fought alongside Ouattara's forces and took part in killing 330 people in the western town of Duekoue, which we now know is over 1,000 people. The International Committee of the Red Cross said at least 800 people. It goes on and on, which I made a part of the RECORD yesterday.

In addition to that, we have a statement that was made on the BBC yesterday. Keep in mind, they have, in Duekoue—they murdered all those people. They have mass graves. People are charred and burned. I am going to quote right now, so hold your stomach.

I spot four pigs eating something dark in a charred courtyard. Standing by a newly dug mass grave, a U.N. soldier from Morocco is choking with rage and grief. I ask him if the dead are children. He nods and begins to sob quietly into his face mask.

So we know of this disaster that has taken place there, and we do nothing. We know about it. I just will say: America, wake up. The massacre could have been avoided if Ouattara had accepted the mediation effort from the African Union. President Gbagbo did accept, Ouattara did not. He rejected it, and I think we know why he rejected it—because he wants that power. He wants that job.

Anyway, where we are now—and I am going to try to get this all in—the United States should call for a ceasefire and for a new election. I have also been told, within the last day, that the U.N. helicopters, U.S. peace-keeping helicopters are firing upon Gbagbo's military camp.

Lastly, I have sent a letter to the Foreign Relations Committee Chairman JOHN KERRY. Let me applaud JOHN KERRY. He has agreed to hold a hearing to look at this. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate it because it takes courage to stand up against the United Nations and France and our State Department and admit that we have to look into this. So that is exactly what we are going to do.

But that was yesterday on the floor. What has happened? What happened last night? Last night, the job was finished. They went in, and they massacred I do not know how many people.

President Gbagbo had young children who were surrounding his palace and his residence. They are willing to sacrifice their lives to save their country from the French influence they are getting with Ouattara.

They were armed with baseball bats and 2 by 4s. I do not know, there are hundreds of them out there. Last night, Sarkozy had gone to Secretary General Moon and said: Use my forces to end this, and they did. We know what happened last night.

Maybe you do not know what happened last night. They went in with helicopters and with rockets, and they destroyed most of a major city,

Abidjan, the capital of Cote D'Ivoire. We have evidence. I hope people will take advantage of this, particularly those people—I know there are a lot of people out there who are opposed to any intervention we have. They do not truly care about Sub-Saharan Africa. No one cares about Sub-Saharan Africa.

I have stood on this floor time and time again, back when we were sending troops into Bosnia, and the excuse was ethnic cleansing. I said: For every 1 day in any town in any country in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are more people ethnically cleansed than in any day in Bosnia.

But nobody seemed to care. So we have hundreds of kids around there, and last night they were mowed down. If anyone questions this, you can access on my Internet, inhofe.senate.gov, and get the YouTube that shows graphically what they are doing. I do not know how many hundreds, how many thousands of people were brutally murdered last night by the French, supporting Ouattara. It is something we need to get involved in.

When I look at President Obiang, who is from Equatorial Guinea, he is the chairman of the African Union. He says he condemned the foreign intervention in the Ivory Coast. We stand by idly, and we don't do anything about it.

I renew my request to Secretary Clinton and to the State Department and to others who care about the loss of innocent life in sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in Abidjan and Cote d'Ivoire, to come forward and help us find justice. I hope President Gbagbo and his wife Simone are not dead today. They might be dying as we speak. They are raiding their residence, raiding the palace. It is a brutal mess. I don't think I have ever seen in the years I have been here, particularly coming from France, supported by Sarkozy, the raid on innocent lives in sub-Saharan Africa.

If no one else comes in, I will talk longer. I ask unanimous consent to speak until someone comes in to speak.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I guess you might wonder why I am concerned. I have had an interest in sub-Saharan Africa for quite some time. After 9/11, finally the United States decided they would do something of concern in sub-Saharan Africa. So what we have had since that time is an interest in helping them to build African brigades, as the terrorists come down through the Horn of Africa and Djibouti and into the continent. We need to help the Africans build brigades so they can resist, not doing it for them, not doing it in place of the Africans, but to help them so they can defend themselves. That is exactly what we have been doing.

I have been honored to be the point man on the Armed Services Committee

to go over and work with these guys. These countries in Africa are our friends. They participate in programs such as the IMET program that allows us to train their officers in the United States, such as the Train and Equip Program that allows us to work with them and train these individuals. When we see an atrocity such as this take place, when we visualize the young kids out there being brutally murdered, we should do something about it.

I praise someone who philosophically I have not agreed with most of the time, Senator JOHN KERRY, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. I am on his committee as well as Armed Services. He is sympathetic to what is going on and has agreed to having a hearing. There is a man named Meltheodore. He was the mayor, when I first met him, mayor of Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire. He is currently a member of Parliament in Cote d'Ivoire. He is the head of an opposing political party to President Gbagbo. He was a candidate against President Gbagbo when he ran successfully for President. Here is a guy who would have every reason to be opposed to President Gbagbo. Yet he is willing to testify before Senator KERRY's committee that not only did they rig the election, but he showed the documentation on rigging the election, and we should be in a position where we could strongly recommend another election.

I have nothing against Alassane Ouattara except I do know that he has been an enemy of the Gbagbos since long before 2002, when he was opposed to him. This is, I guess, the final kill. But at what expense is this coming? It is coming at a high expense in terms of a number we can't quantify today. If colleagues don't believe it, look it up. They can get the YouTube site. They can watch what happened last night. They can get that off of my Web site, inhofe.senate.gov.

I see my friend Senator MANCHIN from West Virginia. Before yielding the floor, I wish to applaud him for his being courageous and standing up for doing something about the EPA taking over the regulation of greenhouse gases that would put coal and oil and gas out of our reach. I applaud Senator MANCHIN.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. I thank my good friend for his hard work. We are working in a bipartisan manner.

WEST VIRGINIA COAL MINERS

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise to mark the tragic occasion of the worst U.S. mining disaster in 40 years. A year ago today, 29 brave and patriotic men went underground to mine the coal that powers our great Nation. They didn't come back. Our entire Nation grieved with their families for their tremendous loss. I rise to honor