

The reality is that we can do all of these and more. We can provide a commonsense legal and regulatory environment, a favorable business climate for our industries. We can build a comprehensive energy policy that leverages all of our vast energy resources together with good environmental stewardship. We can reduce spending, and we can live within our means. We can pay down our debt and leave our children a strong financial legacy instead of a large debt. These are all things we can do and we must do for our Nation. We need to work together, my fellow Senators, to do just that, for the strength and financial well-being of our country today and for the benefit of future Americans for generations to come. The future is truly in our hands.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). The minority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I congratulate the junior Senator from North Dakota for his initial speech here in the Senate and say to all of our colleagues that it should be no surprise that he was sent here by the people of North Dakota by an overwhelming margin. During his 10 years as Governor, the State enjoyed extraordinary success. At a time when many States were struggling financially, North Dakota had bulging surpluses and low unemployment, almost entirely as a result of the outstanding job then-Governor HOEVEN did in representing the people of North Dakota. So, as I say, it is no surprise that they sent him to join us here in the Senate by an overwhelmingly large majority, and I congratulate him on behalf of all of our colleagues on his initial speech.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I, too, rise in congratulating the Senator from North Dakota on his maiden speech. I have known then-Governor HOEVEN for quite some time. His wife and my wife have been very good friends.

What you heard is basically a background of the success he has had in the leadership of his great State. What you don't know is his ability to reach across the aisle in a bipartisan manner.

I can only say that JOHN is a dear friend, and JOHN is the type of personality we need in this body to mend this partisan gridlock in which we find ourselves. I cannot tell you how pleased I am to still be a colleague of his, and I look forward to many years of success working together, reaching out, finding the problems we have, addressing the problems, and then, like a good Governor, taking them on and making some good decisions, as he has done so well in North Dakota.

So, my good friend, it is so good to have you here. Congratulations.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, this week I got an e-mail from a first grader in Missoula, MT, 7 years old. Her note read:

Senator Tester, please pass a budget so that I can go to Yellowstone National Park this weekend, or at least wait until Monday to shut down the government.

I get a lot of letters and calls reminding me what is at stake. Yet some of our colleagues continue to put politics ahead of doing what is right. I will always remember that e-mail from Missoula. Even 7-year-olds expect us to get our job done. They expect us to work together to pass a budget. They expect us to work together to make responsible cuts. They expect us to make sure we don't put our government and the entire economy on life support. That is exactly what will happen if some in Congress let the government shut down. They will fail all of us.

If drawing a line in the sand becomes more important than working together, I think that is a shame. Of course, we can't afford the status quo either. We all know the problem. Everyone wants to point fingers. I could spend my time pointing at those who thought it was a good idea to put two wars we are fighting on the taxpayers' credit card or those who squandered a \$128 billion budget surplus in a matter of months about 10 years ago. But I will leave it at this: Our debt and spending problem is not something that we got into overnight, and it is not something we will get out of overnight.

It is not going to be fixed by slick talking points ginned up by Washington, DC, consultants. It will not be fixed by symbolic gimmicks. It certainly will not be fixed by irresponsible decisions such as ending Medicare as we know it. It will not be fixed by gutting student financial aid or physical infrastructure. Those create jobs now when our economy needs it the most.

Our spending and debt problem will be fixed by embracing a responsible, credible, long-term strategy to cut our debt; to cut spending, discretionary and mandatory—right now we are talking about cuts to only 12 percent of the budget known as discretionary spending—to strengthen our entitlement programs so they work for future generations; to reform our Tax Code so it is fair and sustainable; and to cut our defense where we can afford to cut.

We owe it to all Americans to get the job done. But we owe it to them to get the job done responsibly, and that is going to require some buy-in. But we have done it before.

During the Great Depression, people endured incredible sacrifice. But they

had inspirational leadership to challenge them to grow their way to prosperity. In World War II, they worked together and made sacrifices at home to build the machinery that helped us win victory. That momentum also created a powerful middle class. The attacks of September 11 brought us together again, and again we grew strong.

When we work together, we succeed. It is in our DNA. It is what makes us the strongest, most innovative nation in the world. Now we have to summon that strength and determination again, to lead our way out of our economic challenges. It will not happen with gimmicks. It is going to take responsible decisionmaking, compromise, and shared sacrifice.

Several of our colleagues in the Senate are already leading the way. I compliment Senators CHAMBLISS, COBURN, CONRAD, CRAPO, DURBIN, and WARNER. They are working on a bipartisan strategy to cut debt and cut spending. Their plan will include cuts to discretionary spending. It will make our entitlement programs stronger. It will propose cuts to defense spending. And it will include tax reform.

Last year, Senator Alan Simpson and Erskine Bowles led a bipartisan commission in outlining a smart, long-term, credible strategy for cutting debt and spending. Senator Simpson and Mr. Bowles say they had 14 reasons for volunteering their time on the Debt Commission. Between them, they have 14 grandkids.

While I may not embrace every component of their plan, I applaud their hard work, their leadership, their patriotism. Their hard work is a solid blueprint we are already building from. I am ready to join them, and so are many of us in this Chamber. We need to do it.

Montanans are patriots. They are ready and willing to follow our lead in providing a fair Tax Code that provides certainty and fairness. They are willing to share in the pain of responsible spending cuts that will not take our economy backwards. They know we can afford to make cuts in defense. They know we need to fix—but not dismantle or privatize—our entitlement programs.

What is the alternative? Well, we may find out the hard way if folks are not willing to work together to reach agreement by midnight tomorrow. Shutting down the government means our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan will not get their paychecks on time—even though they will still be serving us.

This week, I heard from a soldier deployed in Afghanistan. He said he would be OK in a short shutdown because he has some savings. But if their paychecks stop coming, a lot of his fellow soldiers will be hurt. Many have lower ranks. Many have pressing financial obligations such as mortgages and car payments, kids to take care of. They would get the short end of the stick.

We have a duty to make sure the people who fight for us in harm's way do not have to worry about something as simple as getting a paycheck. That is why today I signed on to an important piece of legislation to ensure American troops on active duty continue getting paid if the government shuts down.

But Members of Congress are a different story. If the government shuts down, we do not deserve to get paid, plain and simple. I want to say thanks to my colleagues for unanimously approving our measure to prevent congressional pay during a shutdown. Now the House needs to follow our leadership. If they fail, and if I still get a paycheck, I am going to give it back.

A shutdown also means the government does not honor business contracts. That would cost jobs. It means the IRS suspends refunds. A Republican shutdown means new home loan guarantees will stop. It means the SBA stops approving business loans. Patent processing will be suspended. And it means Social Security, Medicare, and veterans' benefits checks could be delayed. Right now, in Montana, there are 1,240 veterans' benefits claims that are outstanding. If the government shuts down, those 1,240 veterans' claims cannot be addressed, and a 7-year-old in Missoula, MT, will not be able to see her national parks this weekend. We cannot afford that. Nobody deserves it. We can do better, and we will.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, a few weeks ago, as we were debating whether to move to this bill now on the floor, I sent a letter to the distinguished majority leader, Senator REID, and I was joined by several of my colleagues. We made a real simple point. The simple point was this: We have a spending and a debt crisis. We need to act and we need to act now. So rather than continue to bring up various cats and dogs bills, various matters that aren't related to that crucial, central spending and debt question before us, we should focus on the task at hand. We should focus on our greatest challenge: meeting this spending and debt challenge.

Unfortunately, the distinguished majority leader did not heed that call. He proceeded with this bill. For the reasons I outlined, I and the other signatories of the letter voted against moving to this bill. Unfortunately, now, as we are on the eve of a potential government shutdown, I believe what has transpired has sort of made my point again. Why haven't we been focused on that crucial spending and debt

challenge like a laser beam, to come together, to offer sensible solutions to avoid these eleventh or even twelfth hour negotiations? Because here we are and here we go again: Another crisis, another eleventh or twelfth hour negotiation; another potential government shutdown.

While I am sorry we didn't focus like a laser beam on this central challenge sooner, now that we are here, I come to the floor to urge my colleagues to do what is reasonable and sensible and adopt what the House of Representatives is about to adopt, which is a plan to at least keep the government functioning smoothly for another week as we try to resolve the situation for the entirety of the remainder of the fiscal year.

So I strongly support this 1-week continuing resolution that I believe will very soon pass the House. We all say we are against an unnecessary government shutdown. I certainly say that and mean it. If we all say it, and if we all mean it, I believe we will support this sensible measure as we try to come to an agreement—all of us—on a plan for the remainder of the fiscal year.

This 1-week CR would keep the government functioning smoothly. It would avoid those disruptions and threats that are concerning to many Americans. That sensible, common-sense plan would also offer significant cuts to the current level of spending, \$12 billion of cuts.

What is important is those cuts are not very controversial. They come out of proposals mostly from the Democratic side. They mostly come out of the President's own budget proposal or the Senate Democratic plan for cuts or a series of nonpartisan suggestions made by the Congressional Budget Office. So I think it is reasonable to look to those sources of proposed cuts and work from those lists, and that is what this proposal does.

The only other matter included in the proposal is two relatively non-controversial so-called riders: one about Guantanamo Bay, which is pretty much current law right now because of language in the Defense authorization bill, and a second regarding abortions performed in the District of Columbia.

With regard to that second rider, again, this should be relatively non-controversial, particularly since this very language was in full force and effect from 1996 until 2009. It was the law for that extended period of time. President Bill Clinton signed that ban into law six times. President Barack Obama signed that very language into law in 2009. Vice President JOE BIDEN voted for the legislation, including this DC abortion funding ban language, seven times since 1995. Even minority leader NANCY PELOSI on the House side voted for legislation including this language 14 times. Here, the distinguished majority leader, Senator REID, voted for legislation including this language 10 times since 1995.

So, again, this is not extremely controversial, and it is certainly no reason to shut down the government. So, in summary, I am sorry we haven't been focused on this central challenge and this central issue for the last 2 weeks as I had urged along with my colleagues. I think we should focus like a laser beam on spending and debt, and I think we should have been doing that for the last several weeks rather than bringing the bill before us onto the floor. But we are where we are.

Given that, I hope we will do the reasonable, commonsense thing and continue negotiations for the rest of the fiscal year, but, in the meantime, pass the 1-week measure about to be passed by the House of Representatives. It continues the operations of the government. It also funds the Department of Defense for the entire fiscal year. It takes what should be beyond politics off the table. It protects our military. It gives full funding for our military men and women. It gives them certainty. We should all be for that. It cuts \$12 billion from current funding levels but takes the vast majority of those cuts, again, from the President's own list, from Senate Democrats' own list, and from a nonpartisan list from the Congressional Budget Office.

It only includes two so-called riders which have been granted wide acceptance in the past, including being passed, voted on, and supported by Senator REID, NANCY PELOSI, Barack Obama, JOE BIDEN, and others multiple times since 1996. That is a reasonable path forward. That is a responsible way to prevent a government shutdown as we continue to negotiate for an overall resolution of this matter for the remainder of the fiscal year.

I hope all of us, Democrats and Republicans, will listen to the American people and do the reasonable, commonsense thing and move forward in a reasonable way as we negotiate on broader issues in good faith. I hope we will pass this 1-week measure at a minimum right now as we continue to look for an overall resolution for the rest of the fiscal year.

Mr. President, with that I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator is recognized for 15 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong concerns about the direction Republicans and the tea party want to take our country, beginning with an irresponsible

Government shutdown simply for the sake of pursuing a social agenda and continuing their reckless budget plan that will devastate seniors and those most vulnerable over the next decade while rewarding millionaires with even more tax breaks. I look at this Republican budget put out by Chairman RYAN and it is a proposal that takes \$1.5 trillion out of health care for seniors and children and gives it to the wealthiest, but it does not even limit subsidies for special corporate interests or big oil. In so doing, it fundamentally resets our values and turns back the clock on the progress we have made to protect our parents and grandparents, seniors and children in this country and keeps the playing field reasonably level.

But even before that discussion, I wish to make a few things clear about the implications of shutting down the Government and what we on this side have already cut from the President's budget to reach an agreement. We started this year with \$41 billion less in spending than the President requested. Plus, in March we cut another \$10 billion below last year's funding levels, including the complete elimination of 33 Federal programs. In total, we have offered \$33 billion in cuts for the remainder of the current funding year, which ends in September.

But the most radical elements of the Republican Party will not take yes for an answer. They say we have not come far enough, which in tea party terms means we have not given them everything they want. So they will shut down the Government rather than take yes for an answer.

I saw a picture on the front page of one of the papers with a tea party banner that said: "Shut her down. Shut her down."

I thought we were here to make sure we kept the Government going. It is clear their real reason for shutting down the Government is to promote a social agenda that is not acceptable to the broader part of the country. They are willing to shut down the Federal Government, put our economy, our small businesses, our veterans at risk and potentially delay tax refunds for millions of American families, all simply to make a political point and to try to impose the social agenda of a minority on the majority.

Shutting down the Federal Government over a woman's right to choose or the Federal Government's ability to enforce laws that protect our children's health, in my view, takes irresponsibility to a whole new level. Even the Speaker of the House himself has said a shutdown will "end up costing more than we save." The Speaker is right. It would cost about \$8 billion every week or .2 percent of GDP every week the Government is shut down.

The Speaker is right on the substance, but he has not yet been willing to lead and deal with the tempest in the tea party on his right, threatening to cut this economic recovery short to

satisfy a narrow, rightwing political agenda.

At a time when small businesses are just beginning to get access to capital they need to create jobs for American families, a shutdown will result in \$400 million in capital each week not going to small businesses through the SBA loan program and will throw the engine of small business job growth into neutral when we want it to be in overdrive.

In the last shutdown, more than \$1 billion in small business loans to 5,200 businesses were delayed, so we know what small businesses are in for if we have another shutdown. This is not the time in our recovery efforts to say no to helping small businesses put people to work.

In housing, the FHA loan process, which accounts for 30 percent of the housing market, will be interrupted just as we enter the height of the spring home-buying season in my State of New Jersey. With prices low and so many houses on the market, this is not the time to prevent 15,000 homeowners from getting a home loan every week, more than half of which are for new home purchases that would reduce the inventory of the surplus properties.

Now, because Social Security is a mandatory funding program, seniors and the disabled will continue to receive their checks. But if we let the tempest in the tea party shut down the government, interruptions at the Social Security Administration could delay changes in people's benefits and payments. In just 4 days of the last shutdown, 112,000 new claims for Social Security retirement and disability benefits were not taken and over 800,000 callers were unable to reach the Social Security Administration. Certainly in this economy, this is not a time to leave those who rely on Social Security with nothing.

With the tax season upon us, it is certainly not the right time to delay tax refunds families are anxiously awaiting in order to make ends meet, put into the economy, and help the recovery keep going.

It is not the time to shut down 368 National Park Service sites, the Smithsonian, the Statue of Liberty, the monuments, museums, and national parks across the country which, in the last shutdown, lost 9 million visitors and the tourism revenues to those communities. Given that our last shutdown occurred in the dead of winter, we can expect a shutdown in the midst of spring breaks and high tourist season to have a much larger impact on tourism revenues and the wallets of families who have already booked trips to national parks and planned visits to national monuments and museums. To put it in context, if we shut down the government for 5 weeks, we could lose up to \$1.2 billion based on the \$12 billion visitors brought to the national park communities last year.

If the tea party continues to insist on a government shutdown, military paychecks would be delayed at a time

when military families are struggling with multiple deployments and struggling like everyone else to make ends meet. They will ultimately get paid but only when the shutdown is finished. In the last shutdown, more than 400,000 veterans saw their disability checks delayed. Now, let's not repeat that mistake when more of our wounded sons and daughters are returning home from two wars raging abroad every day.

If the tea party continues to insist on a government shutdown, clinical trials of lifesaving drugs will be halted and new patients will not be accepted into clinical research programs at the National Institutes of Health.

If the tea party continues to insist on a government shutdown, they will put our entire economy at risk. As a matter of fact, business leaders have said that a shutdown could result in higher interest rates and chaos in the markets. Every week, 350 import licenses could be delayed, resulting in holding up billions of dollars in American exports at a time when we need those exports to help fuel the recovery. During the 1995 shutdown, \$2.2 billion in U.S. exports could not leave the country because thousands of export licenses could not be issued.

Ivan Seidenberg, the CEO of Verizon, who is also the chairman of the Business Roundtable, said:

I don't think any of the CEOs would welcome a government shutdown. Problems for business would run from contracts being postponed to disruptions in the supply chain.

John Engler, president of the Business Roundtable, said:

Business would face the danger of the law of unintended consequences. Interest rates could rise and there could be turmoil in financial markets.

This would all happen because Republicans, being held hostage by tea partiers, have rejected \$33 billion in spending cuts for this year because they did not get all they wanted, because they are not getting their way on unrelated, extraneous social issues such as women's reproductive rights and enforcing laws on our books to protect our children's health. They simply will not take yes for an answer because yes on spending cuts is not really their only goal. Spending cuts is not why they are trying to shut the government down.

I would remind our colleagues that democratic governments are not about total victory. Authoritarian governments do that, not democracies. In democracies, we are all fairly elected to represent our constituents. We all have a view. We all have a vote. We all have an obligation to govern and legislate for every American, not just for those who hold the views of the tea party. With all due respect, tea partiers claim to love our right to free speech and yet clearly do not believe anyone's views other than their own are acceptable.

I say to our colleagues, we all have deeply held beliefs. Defending them and shouting them from the rooftops is

easy, but listening to those who disagree with us and working on the differences is the hard work of government.

I remind my colleagues on the other side that the word "congress" is derived from a Latin verb meaning "to walk together." We have already made cuts to the President's budget. We have already made real cuts in this year's spending. We have offered a reasonable compromise that seeks even more cuts but, more importantly, a compromise that seeks common ground, not capitulation, and neither should our colleagues expect capitulation. All we ask is that those on the other side do what is right and act in the broader interests of the Nation, not shut down the government, disrupt services, and put the economic recovery at risk, all to satisfy a narrow political agenda.

I know there was a lot of fanfare on the Republican budget proposal that was put out as we look to the next fiscal year. In my view, it is by far one of the most partisan, ideological, and fundamentally destructive budgets I have seen in my time in Congress—destructive of fundamental protections for every American and for what we have come to accept as fundamental protections that are uniquely American.

It fundamentally takes \$1.5 trillion out of health care for seniors and children, and it gives it to the wealthy. It would take health care from seniors and children rather than take subsidies from special corporate interests such as big oil companies. If Republicans got their way, New Jersey residents would lose \$34 billion in health benefits, and almost 400,000 New Jerseyans would see their coverage cut entirely.

The Republican proposal talks about cutting taxes, but in reading it, I find only two groups whose taxes would be cut: the rich and those who are even richer. Corporations and millionaires and those soon-to-be millionaires will keep all of their recent tax giveaways and would actually see their tax rates slashed by 30 percent. This proposal loses \$700 billion on the revenue side over the next 10 years by extending the Bush tax cuts, particularly to the wealthiest in the country, and trillions more by slashing tax rates for corporations and millionaires. Those making more than \$1 million a year will see tax cuts of \$125,000 each from the tax cuts and tens of thousands of dollars more from proposed rate cuts, while people in my State would lose \$34 billion in health benefits, and 400,000 New Jerseyans end up without health coverage at all.

This budget proposal shifts the balance to the wealthy and makes cuts that do not reflect our values as a people and as a nation. At the top of the list of Draconian Republican cuts is Medicare. Let's for a moment look at the logic of the Republican budget proposal when it comes to Medicare, a program that since 1965 has protected seniors and made sure no older American would be without health care when they need it the most.

In 1965, we passed Medicare. Why? Because senior citizens could not get health insurance. And the reason health insurance companies would not take the risk of insuring older Americans, who, logically, would need to see doctors and receive treatment more often than younger Americans, is rather clear. Even if there were such a plan, the cost would be prohibitive for a senior on a fixed income. So we created Medicare, and today it is one of our most successful programs. No senior is left without access to lifesaving, life-enhancing drugs or the care they need.

What are the Republicans proposing in this budget? They are proposing to end Medicare as we know it. In fact, they want to privatize Medicare, and they say their privatization plan is just a way of asking wealthier seniors to pay more. But let's ask ourselves, logically, how much do we think an insurance company will charge in premiums to a 65-year-old American male who may have had a heart attack or heart ailment or suffers from diabetes. How outrageous do we suppose the premium will be, and how much of a voucher will that 65-year-old American need to purchase even a minimal health care plan? That logic escapes me. Today, buying a private plan on the open market for a self-employed, middle-age couple can cost as much as \$18,000 a year. The average retiree in America is living on about \$19,000 a year. So, again, the logic escapes me. The fact is, this proposed privatization plan for Medicare completely overlooks the history of why we needed Medicare in the first place. It illogically assumes insurance companies will provide quality health care coverage at a huge discount to older Americans. If that is not wishful thinking, I don't know what is.

Let me close by simply saying that it is time to make sure this government stays open, it is time to make sure we don't thrust the economy backward, and it is time to ultimately ensure that those who have given service to this country, such as the men and women in uniform, don't get hurt, and that we do by coming together on a reasonable budget.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Utah.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I could not agree more that we should not have a government shutdown. I could not agree more that we need to take steps to protect and improve our economy. I could not agree more that we need to take steps to make sure our brave uni-

formed men and women are fairly compensated and otherwise treated. I must, however, express my profound, albeit respectful, disagreement with my colleague, the junior Senator from New Jersey.

This is not a possible shutdown that we are facing as a result of the Republican Party or as a result of the tea party. As a lifelong Republican and as a founding member of the Senate Tea Party Caucus, I can tell you unequivocally that there is not one member of this body, nor is there one member of the Senate Tea Party Caucus who wants a government shutdown, certainly no Republican. From the outset, Republicans have attempted to bring forward proposals to make sure we do not get into a shutdown.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, Why does the President of the United States, President Barack Obama, want a government shutdown? Let's ask a few questions.

Why was it that a few months ago, after the election but before the new Congress took over, when the President had both Houses of Congress under the control of his party, why did he opt not to pass a full budget for fiscal year 2011? That was the first seed he sowed in the direction of a government shutdown. I submit it was one that was either irresponsible on the one hand or deliberate and malicious on the other, intending to bring about a sequence of events that would culminate inevitably in a government shutdown.

No. 2. Even after the new Congress convened, after the balance of power shifted completely in the House of Representatives and after a number of seats in this body shifted and the new Congress convened in January of this year, the President did not bring forward something that could attract both Houses of Congress to approve and that he could fund the government with for the balance of the year. He instead chose to operate on a series of continuing resolutions. We are now moving up against what I believe will be our seventh continuing resolution if it is passed. What we have from the President is radio silence in the direction of what we need to do to move forward.

A number of us have suggested all along in this process that at a point in time in America when we have a national debt approaching \$15 trillion, at a point in time when we are adding to that debt at a staggering rate approaching \$1.7 trillion a year, it does not make sense and it is not responsible to continue, even in small increments, perpetuating that degree of reckless, perpetual deficit spending.

What we want to see more than anything isn't any specific set of social issue legislation. It is not any specific degree of spending cuts. It is instead a plan, some plan that will move us in the direction of a balanced budget, that will put us on track so we might once again enjoy the benefits of a balanced budget, so we might again enjoy the