

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

day and age when we don't have a debt-to-GDP ratio well in excess of 90 percent. We know when we have a debt-to-GDP ratio in excess of 90 percent, it slows economic growth by as much as half every year, costing our economy as many as a million jobs every single year. This ultimately is about jobs. Our sprawling debt kills jobs and kills economic growth necessary to create jobs.

So, no, this is not a quixotic quest for perfection. This is a quest for that which will suffice to get us back on track toward fiscal responsibility.

I mentioned two seeds the President has planted to lead to a shutdown, the first being his refusal to push through a budget for the entire year, fiscal 2011; the second being his reliance on continuing resolutions. The third seed he sowed, one I am not sure we will be able to get around this time, much as we wish to, is his threat in the last hour or two, his promise to veto the continuing resolution the House is expected to pass this afternoon. It may have passed moments ago. He is threatening to veto that before it even gets over here. One must wonder, why does the President want a shutdown.

We have to remember, these are not drastic changes that have been proposed. In fact, they are not even sufficient to get us back on track so we can say this heads us in the direction of an eventual balanced budget. These are minor cuts. Yet the President insists on moving us inevitably, inexorably in the direction of a shutdown.

While we are on the subject of addressing a false blame placed on the Republican Party and the tea party, I care to address the accusation made by various of my colleagues, an accusation I believe made in ignorance and that, in any event, is manifestly incorrect with regard to the tea party. This is a movement whose views are not extreme. What is extreme is a \$15 trillion debt we are adding to at a staggering rate of \$1.7 trillion a year. That is extreme, as is what has happened in the last few years, including the U.S. Government takeover of everything from our banking industry to auto manufacturing to our health care industry. Those things are extreme.

The tea party movement is something that is shared by many Americans, regardless of whether they appear at a rally of any kind. It is a spontaneous grassroots political phenomenon that simply recognizes our Federal Government has grown too big and has become too expensive.

We need to do something about that. Many of us who consider ourselves part of the tea party movement and believe the best solution, perhaps the only solution, is to return to that 223-year-old founding document we call the Constitution, look to those powers that are identified as something within the exclusive ability, the exclusive power and control of the Federal Government. The more we do that, the more we believe we can turn to constitutionally

limited government of the sort that can operate on a balanced budget.

This is not necessarily even a politically conservative movement. It is neither conservative nor liberal. At the end of the day, it need not be Republican or Democratic. It is simply American. It recognizes this country was founded upon the principle that national governments, as they become large and powerful, have a certain tendency toward gaining an excess of power and spending an excess of money, and to prevent a form of tyranny. A national government can function best when it has limited enumerated powers of the sort we granted the Federal Government a couple of centuries ago, powers including things such as national defense, establishing a uniform system of weights and measures, regulating trademarks, copyrights, and patents, and so forth. Included in that list we won't find anything about a government takeover of health care or manufacturing industries or the banking industry.

This is neither liberal nor conservative, neither Republican nor Democratic, and it certainly isn't extreme. It is simply American. It is what makes us great. It is part of what has created the strongest economy and the greatest civilization the world has ever known. At the end of the day, as those who have planted quite deliberately the seeds for an inevitable shutdown seek to blame others, we have to remember the seeds they have sown, and we have to be willing to cast blame where blame is due.

The blame here cannot and, as long as I am standing, will not be placed at the feet of the Republicans or of the tea party. We do not want a shutdown. We will do everything we can to fight against it. If we have one, it will be because the President of the United States and members of the other party in this august body have refused to put forward a palatable, defensible budget.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I associate myself with my colleague from Utah. I appreciate the clarity of his remarks. I wish to add to them.

I am glad we have some folks here today listening in. There is probably no other place in the country we can hear so much nonsense as we will hear on the Senate floor today. Unfortunately, we just heard that from the colleague before my colleague from Utah.

The House just passed another resolution to fund the government, fund the military for the rest of the year, pretty much at a figure we have all agreed on. It includes funding for 1 week to keep other aspects of the government open, and it makes some very modest cuts to our budget. Most of these have been agreed to in advance. But there seems to be one sticking point. This bill would prohibit using taxpayer money to fund abortions in DC.

My colleague who spoke a minute ago said this is an invasion of reproductive rights. I am here to tell colleagues that no one has a reproductive right to use somebody else's money for an abortion. That is all this is about. Not only taxpayers' money, but we are borrowing money to do something at a time when the country is nearly broke that Americans disagree on, and it violates the conscience of many Americans.

But my colleagues on the other side have decided to make this the crucial issue. Either Republicans agree to use taxpayer money for abortions or they are going to shut down the government. And they say we are emphasizing social issues. This is not just a social issue. It is an American issue. Even people who support abortion support the idea that taxpayers should not be forced to pay for it. It is a small request. The cuts are small. But it is clear, as the Senator from Utah just said, this shutdown has been planned by the President and the Democratic majority for a long time, believing they can win the PR battle, thinking that Americans are too stupid to figure it out. I am confident, as we go into this, that Americans are much smarter than my Democratic colleagues. I think they are going to figure out how irresponsible the President has been, how much lack of leadership there has been in the Senate, trying to blame Speaker BOEHNER in the House who controls one-half of one branch of government for a shutdown, when last year, when the President controlled the whole government, we didn't pass a budget. We didn't fund any aspect of government. This landed in the lap of a new Congress which still includes a Democratic majority here in the Senate.

There has not been one bill from the Senate that the Democrats agree on. The President has not sent down one funding request we could vote for. We don't have a bill proposed by Senator HARRY REID today that we can vote for to keep the government open. Yet he is saying what the Republicans on the House side are sending over is not good enough.

The House just passed another bill. Fifteen Democrats voted for it. If we had 15 Democrats in the Senate who were reasonable, we wouldn't have to deal with this ridiculous, irresponsible government shutdown. I don't know what else Republicans in the House could do. They sent over, over 40 days ago, a bill that would have funded the government through the rest of the year with very nominal cuts. It was set up to fail in the Senate. We have yet to have hardly any debate on the issue. During all this time we have spent less than 3 hours of debate on the most important issue in the country. We spent the last couple of weeks on a small business bill. I bet no American could tell us what we are even talking about. Before that we spent a couple of weeks on a patent bill—anything we could do

to avoid the responsibility of debating the most pressing issue in this country.

I also have to take issue with what the Democrats are trying to do with the tea party. I remind them that many tea party members are Democrats. They are Independents. They are Republicans. Many of them have never been involved with politics before. Many are Hispanic and African American. They are all Americans. But they are concerned about our country. They seem to be able to do something we can't do here. They add and subtract. They understand we can't keep spending more than we are bringing in and expect the country to survive. We even brought up a resolution—the Senator from Utah did—to have a sense of the Senate that we should balance our budget. Just about every Democrat voted against that. That means there is an intent to bankrupt our country. Because there is no way around it; if we keep spending more than we bring in, we will bankrupt the country.

That is the course this President has put us on. That is the course Senator REID and the Democratic majority want to keep us on. When we try to do even modest, nominal reductions in spending to change the trend line, they are coached, as Senator SCHUMER has said, to call it extreme and to blame it on the tea party. Americans are smarter than that. I think my colleagues are getting ready to figure that out.

We come down to the bottom line the Senator from Utah mentioned. Why are they doing this? They look back to 1997, back in the 1990s, and they think they can win the PR battle. Even more importantly, the President needs a distraction. The focus on the President now is revealing a lack of leadership in domestic policy and foreign policy. He has led us into a mess in Libya. He has led us into a domestic mess and has us on a course to bankrupt the country. He is trying to take over health care. And all those unions and other people who were advocating for it are now asking for waivers. There have been over 1,000 waivers, people who want to get out of this health care bill. The financial reregulation Dodd-Frank bill is threatening to hurt the economy even more. The President needs a distraction. This is a choreographed distraction to close the government down, to draw attention, to try to shift the blame from a President who has been AWOL from leadership and has very little political courage.

That is what we need right now across America. That is what Americans are asking us to do, to keep fighting, be bold. This is not a matter of partisan politics as much as it is a matter of national survival. We have to make some hard decisions. We can't keep spending more than we are bringing in. We have to do what families do, tighten our belts, balance the checkbook.

These are not radical ideas. All we have to respond to is what the House has passed today. Senate Democrats

who control this place have not offered any solution. The President has not offered a solution. I suspect we will not even be allowed to vote on the one option we have, what the House sends over here. Yet they think Americans are so stupid that they can come to the floor and blame Republicans who have no control over the situation except to send us what they think is best from the House.

That is what they are doing. They need to be applauded. Speaker BOEHNER has done everything he can to try to work with all parties here to responsibly keep the government going and at the same time to recognize we cannot keep this reckless spending the President has been doing the last couple of years. This is an urgent and serious matter that I am afraid is being played as a PR game by the other side.

The misrepresentations I heard just before about the budget being proposed on the House side are very difficult to swallow. The truth is very rare in this body. I hope all Americans will take the time to look at what is really going on because this is all a blame game, and the Democrats are counting on Americans not to pay attention, to take their cues from the national media.

We are going to do everything we can to keep the government open, to responsibly respond to what the voters told us last November, and not to play the blame game with the other side. But this is being played as a game instead of a matter of serious national survival, a serious national issue. But the bill we will hopefully have a chance at least to debate that the House just passed will take our No. 1 responsibility, to defend our country, fund our troops, and make sure that is done for the balance of the year. We can argue about the rest next week, but let's fund our troops this week and do what we were sent here to do.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to add the following Senators as cosponsors to S. 724: Senator MANCHIN, Senator UDALL of Colorado, and Senator ROCKEFELLER.

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, that brings to 43 the number of bipartisan Senators, including the Presiding Officer, who are supporting the bill that will assure that our military personnel are paid even if there is a government shutdown.

We all realize the stress that a military person and a family are under if

that military person, especially, is deployed overseas. We have troops in Afghanistan. I was talking to my staff a minute ago, and he heard from one of his friends in Afghanistan, on his ninth deployment, who had heard about our bill and he thanked us for realizing there might be a delay in the military pay and for trying to address it if, in fact, the government is shut down. His ninth deployment, and he is worried about whether he is going to be paid on time so his family, with a 1-year-old child, will be able to make sure and pay the mortgage on the first of the month. Oh, my gosh, what are we thinking here?

I think there are certainly legitimate disagreements about the spending and the budget. I am one who believes we should be cutting the spending. I think the ways to get there are certainly legitimate areas of disagreement. There should be one matter on which we do not disagree and that we would unanimously pass in this Senate; that is, in the event the government does shut down because the sides are still apart when the deadline comes Friday night, that our military get their paychecks, and those who are serving our military overseas or wherever with food service and the things that are done by civilian employees serving the military, that they, too, would show up for work and they would be paid.

We cannot have somebody thinking: Oh, golly, now, I wonder if I am supposed to show up to serve the military meals in Afghanistan or in the base in Iraq or the police station where our troops are embedded. Are we going to ask those questions? I hope not. I hope that if there is one thing this Congress and this President can agree on, it is that there should be no question that the mother at home with the 1-year-old child whose husband is on his ninth deployment in Afghanistan will not worry that she will have that, hopefully, direct deposit so she can pay her mortgage on time.

S. 724 is very simple and very clear: that our military will be required to come to work, which will be no doubt for them, and they will be paid on time. The same goes for anybody serving the military where it is essential for the service of the military. We have almost 100,000 people in Afghanistan today. We have 47,000 in Iraq. There are a lot of people who are serving under great stress and doing a great job under very trying circumstances. I hope this Senate, if, in fact, the government shuts down, can speak very clearly.

I don't think we can wait until 11 o'clock Friday night to make that determination. The processing of the bills and the direct deposits and all that is right now because the paychecks are imminent. It is about 1 week until the paychecks come, but we have a process and we need to ensure the process is going forward.

We know the House, as we speak, is debating the 1-week continuing resolution. It does have the funding for the

Department of Defense until the end of the fiscal year. The President has said he will veto that because of the riders in the bill, which means we could be facing a government shutdown. I don't want the government to shut down because I don't think we even know the real consequences to the thousands of people who are affected, to the veterans who get benefits and live benefit to benefit or the military personnel, of course, and those in the Department of Defense.

Many of us are trying to make the decisions as to who is essential in our offices. It is very hard to do the constituent services when we are involved in a government shutdown. I can't tell my colleagues the number of emergencies I get: people who have loved ones overseas who can't get visas, can't get back, who lost passports. We have so many calls where people need services. So we have to select what are the essential services. These are all things people are not aware of that will happen when there is a shutdown of government.

So I hope we can come to an agreement. If, in fact, we have an agreement—and some people are saying we do for the top-line spending; I haven't heard it yet, so I don't know if that is the case—but if the leaders have made a decision that there is now an agreement on that, I hope we will be able to act and not have a government shutdown.

I also hope we will be able to pass a long-term continuing resolution. It is high time people know what they can contract for, what government services are going to be ongoing and at what price, at what funding level. Nobody would run a small business this way. Nobody would run a corporation this way: Well, we can't agree, so we will just have a week-to-week continuing resolution in a business. Nobody would do that.

I think we have to be focused on the big picture. We have 6 more months in this fiscal year, until October 1. We need to make sure we get this out of the way so we can focus on what is truly going to make a difference in terms of whether we can get this deficit down and get the debt off the plates of our children in the future, and those will be the reforms that will be tied to the debt ceiling. If we don't have reforms, that is when we should draw the line in the sand and say we are not going to have the debt ceiling lifted without the reforms in place that will allow us to not hit that \$14 trillion number in the future. I hope we will have a 10-year plan that would start lowering the deficit every year over 10 years so eventually we would have it down to a reasonable amount as compared to our gross domestic product. That would provide the credibility to the rest of the world that we are going to meet our obligations, that we will not default, and that we would be taking hold of our financial situation in this country. That would be the pruden-

dent thing to do. I hope we will all be able to work together to do it.

As of now, I think the important thing for this Senate to do is to pass S. 724 that now has 43 cosponsors. It is a bipartisan bill that says the military should not have to worry about a government shutdown. That should be the last thing on their minds. They should be protecting themselves from harm in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families should be able to do the best they can to support their families while their loved ones are overseas. I hope there will be a time going forward when we can pass this bill in short order—not at 11 o'clock Friday night but in the next day or so—if, in fact, we are not able to see our way to passing the 1-week continuing resolution that would prepare us, hopefully, for the long-term continuing resolution to get this fiscal year out of the way and let us focus on next year's budget, which starts October 1, and the long-term reform that is going to be necessary to start cutting our deficit significantly.

Thank you. I yield the floor and 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. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I understand our Democratic leader is meeting with the Republican Speaker of the House and the White House and working to try to establish the funding level we will have for the rest of this fiscal year that ends September 30.

Let me explain, briefly, how we got here. Our Democratic majority in the Senate failed to pass a spending level last year—failed to pass a single appropriations bill last year and, at the start of the fiscal year, voted a continuing resolution for 5 months. In the course of all that, there was a national election and the most driving force in that election was the American people's deep concern about reckless Washington spending and surging debt that they know is endangering the American economy, can reduce growth, cause a debt crisis and put us on an unsustainable path and burden our children and grandchildren with massive debt, the likes of which we have not seen before.

The continuing resolution that passed at the start of the fiscal year carried us 5 months of the 12-month fiscal year. I suppose, after the shellacking the big spenders took last fall—the biggest shellacking in 80 years—huge numbers of individuals got elected to the House and a large number to the Senate who are committed to containing spending—there should have been no doubt that when we came to decide how much spending we would have the last 7 months of the fiscal year, that there would be proposals to

reduce spending. The House responsibly came forward with H.R. 1, which calls for a reduction of spending by \$61 billion over the last 7 months of the fiscal year, and it was sent to the Senate. The Senate has done nothing. We have a vote on the bill. Actually, more votes were obtained in the Democratic-controlled Senate for the Republican House bill than votes achieved for the Senate Democratic bill. Ten Democratic Senators were uneasy with the bill the Senate majority produced because it only reduced spending by \$4.6 billion. Have they forgotten what happened in November? Have they forgotten that projections continue to grow throughout the year, and instead of a \$1.3 trillion expected deficit this year, the numbers have grown to \$1.4 trillion in debt added to our country this fiscal year ending September 30?

Did not the American people expect us to do something? One would have thought this \$61 billion reduction is somehow the end of the world. We have been fighting ever since.

We have had a series of short-term continuing resolutions so the government does not shut down. Why should the government shut down? Because under our Constitution, if the Congress does not fund a government entity, the entity does not have a right to exist. It can't go out and operate as a government entity if it has not been funded by the Congress. So we have a serious problem. I hope our colleagues reach an agreement. I hope Senator REID and Speaker BOEHNER can reach an agreement, but I am uneasy about it. Frankly, I am not happy about some of the things that have been occurring.

Let me read for my colleagues what Senator REID, our Democratic leader, has been saying. You know we want to have a compromise, they say. Why don't you guys all get together and be nice to one another? Well, we should, and we do, even though we sometimes are pretty aggressive in our debates. But it is a bit much when Senator REID says the tea party is trying to push through its extreme agenda—issues that have absolutely nothing to do with funding the government.

He goes on to say:

They have made a decision to shut down the government because they want to make it harder, for example, for a woman to get a cancer screening.

I have asked myself: What in the world could he be talking about there? My staff thinks the only thing he could be referring to is the proposal to reduce funding for Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in America.

He goes on to say:

Do they really want to shut the government down because the tea party doesn't want scientists to make sure the air we breathe is clean and pure?

Give me a break.

He goes on to say:

This is a time we don't have to fight over the tea party's extreme social agenda.

They had a tape of my good friend, Senator SCHUMER, and he had to back

down from it, but everyone agreed to use the word "extreme." So they called everybody "extreme." They had a press conference and it got picked up. One of our fine Democratic colleagues was talking about the extreme Republicans, and then he said the extreme Republicans, "my good friends." Good for him. Give me a break. There are other statements like that. The Democratic leader in the House, NANCY PELOSI, said:

The GOP Ryan budget is a path to poverty for America's seniors and children and a road to riches for big oil.

One of the Congressmen said that the Ryan budget "puts yet another brick in the wall between the haves and the have nots."

Senator CONRAD, chairman of the Budget Committee, of which I am the ranking member, called that budget "unsustainable and unreasonable."

Well, we have a problem in America. The debt in this country is dangerous. We are coming out of the recession, and we need to continue growth. We need to continue job creation. It is not as good as a lot of people say, but it is improving. It has been slower than most recessions for us to recover. But Alan Greenspan, Erskine Bowles, Bill Gross at PIMCO bond company, the largest in the world, who has stopped buying U.S. Treasury bonds and sold all his U.S. Treasury bonds, and Moody's have all warned us that we could be facing a crisis in short order. We need to make some changes.

Also, all of this is being conducted under an atmosphere that is affected by the budget for fiscal year 2012.

Chairman RYAN and his fabulous Budget Committee in the House have produced a very good budget. It is a courageous and long-term budget which deals with the unsustainable course of Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid. He proposes solutions that save those programs and protect our seniors. They put us on the right trajectory. That is what has been hammered as some extreme document.

What has the Senate produced? Nothing. The Senate hasn't produced anything, nada. This is most troubling. But what has the other party, who is required to submit a budget—the Budget Act requires the Senate to produce a budget, and it requires the House to produce a budget, and it requires the President to submit a budget. The President, a week late, submitted a budget.

Mr. Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson tell us we are facing the most predictable economic crisis in our Nation's history as a result of the debt we are running up. We cannot continue this. It is unsustainable. Mr. Bernanke says we are on an unsustainable course.

What did the President do? What kind of budget did he propose? His budget increases spending every year. It increases discretionary spending every year. It increases taxes by \$1.7 trillion. It doubles the debt in 5 years and triples it in 10 years. It is

unsustainable. It is, in light of the circumstances we face today, unacceptable. He provides no suggestion whatsoever to save Social Security, which is moving into an unsustainable course, nothing whatsoever to fix or strengthen Medicare or Medicaid, all of which every expert in the country agrees are on dangerous paths that cannot be sustained. It is stunning.

Interest on our debt last year was \$200 billion. We borrow the money we don't have. Interest last year was \$200 billion. This year, we are going to spend \$3.6 trillion and we are going to take in \$2.2 trillion. Forty cents out of every dollar we spend is borrowed. This is the third straight year with a \$1 trillion-plus deficit. These last 3 years, we are averaging \$1.4 trillion in deficits per year. The highest we ever had before that was \$450 billion.

The lowest budget deficit, projected by the President's own budget office, scored by the CBO, in 10 years would be \$740 billion. Worse, it is going up in the outyears. In the tenth year, under President Obama's budget, the deficit would be \$1.2 trillion. And the reason the numbers dropped was always there—based on the projection that our economy will continue to rebound, nothing that the President has done. His spending levels increased under the budget.

Therefore, I believe and I honestly think that the President's budget, in light of the warning and the danger this debt is posing to America, is the most irresponsible budget ever presented by a President of the United States. It is stunningly damaging. It is unacceptable. It accelerates the unsustainable path we are on. As Congressman RYAN, chairman of the House Budget Committee, said, it makes it worse than the unsustainable baseline numbers we are operating under now. It makes it worse.

The Republican House has produced a good budget, the President has produced a budget that is unacceptable, and our Democratic colleagues in the Senate have produced nothing. They just want to complain. They want to make these kinds of attacks: punishing working families; another brick in the wall between the haves and the have-nots; denying women the right to have breast exams and cancer screening; extreme social agenda—extreme, extreme, extreme. Be sure to use that word, "extreme." I don't believe the American people are going to buy this or that they are going to be taken in by the big spenders. They weren't last fall when 64 new House Members were elected who are committed to restrained spending, and I don't believe they will in the future.

Some think that Republicans will get blamed for shutting down the government if they don't have an agreement. Let's talk about that.

As a matter of compromise, the House has sent over another bill, H.R. 1363, that would extend funding for another week and allow the negotiations

to continue for another week, and that will reduce spending by an additional \$12 billion. That bill also funds the Defense Department through the end of this fiscal year so that they are not hung out there with CR after CR, and so that the Defense Department, the people who defend our country, can have confidence in the funding level for the rest of the year. H.R. 1363 is here in the Senate. The House passed that legislation so the Senate can pass a permanent fix for the rest of the fiscal year or it can do 1 more week and we can continue to talk. It is hard for me to imagine how the Republican House, which has sent two good pieces of legislation over here, ought to be blamed when the Senate has passed nothing. They brought up nothing.

It is a bit odd to me also that the President said, "I am going to veto it." I saw a commentator this morning say that the President wants to act like a good daddy and try to get the Senate and the House together and put his arm around them and be the person who brings them all together. Maybe that would be good if it would happen. It looks as if he has taken that hat off and is threatening to veto even a 1-week extension of spending that funds the Defense Department.

Why? One experienced Senator told me: I will tell you why. Senator REID may not have the votes. He may not want to vote on the 1-week CR. A lot of his Members are getting tired of this. They know we have to reduce spending and we need to fund the Defense Department. If it came up on the floor, maybe a lot of Democratic Senators would vote for it and it would pass. Maybe they can work out some of these agreements if we have another week.

I am just saying that some people think all of this sound and fury is politics. I guess there is some politics in it; that is hard to deny. But this is not the normal political squabble between Republicans and Democrats. We really do face a debt crisis. We really have a responsibility.

President Obama's own debt commission pleaded with us to do something about the systemic threat we face from our surging debt that could knock down the growth and progress we are just beginning to feel a little bit here. It could kick us back. Alan Greenspan, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and as Erskine Bowles, a chairman of President Obama's debt commission and President Clinton's former chief of staff, have said that nothing could be more devastating to the country than if we had a debt crisis. They are warning us to do something now, not just a short-term spending level for the rest of this fiscal year but the budget for the next year. They tell us we have to deal with the entitlements, the long-term danger they present, as well as the short-term spending levels. I believe Congress knows that.

Some say the American people don't believe in cuts; they talk about cuts, but they don't believe in them. I don't

think so. I believe Mr. Christie is hanging in there in New Jersey, and Governor Cuomo in New York is proposing serious reductions in spending. His popularity is strong. In Alabama, my State, Dr. Bentley, our new Governor, just announced that the discretionary spending levels would be cut by 15 percent the rest of this fiscal year. Nothing we are proposing is close to those kinds of spending reductions they are talking about in Alabama. We are going to have to do some spending reductions. It is going to be meaningful, significant, and it will be difficult to deal with. We should do it carefully.

If we bring down this level of spending, it will have a transformative impact. For example, if you take the \$61 billion and you did what the House said—reduce the spending level \$61 billion—that reduces the baseline of Federal spending by \$61 billion, and over 10 years we will save \$860 billion. That is real money just from reducing baseline spending by \$61 billion. We have to think in terms of 10-, 20-, 30-year budgets because, as it gets in the outyears, the dangers are even worse.

I believe we can do this, and I believe the American people are ready to face up to these challenges.

I salute my colleagues in the House for presenting a budget that is honest. If you want to know what kind of challenges we face, look at that House budget because it deals with them. The budget the President submitted is filled with gimmicks. When the CBO analyzed the President's budget, it found over \$1 trillion in gimmicks. CBO found that his debt projections were off by over \$1 trillion because of gimmicks.

I think Congressman RYAN's budget is honest. Not only that, it deals with the long-term threats to our economy and our finances. It is something we ought to consider. If my colleagues have different ways to achieve some of the things he achieves in his plan, let's hear them, let's talk about them. Let's make sure seniors are not going to get hammered and unfairly treated in any way. We can do that. We ought to have an open and fair debate.

The only people who have stepped up and have shown leadership so far have been the members of the House Budget Committee. The President's budget is irresponsible, and the Senate has done nothing. It is time for us to get together, get our act together, finish the funding for this fiscal year, reduce spending every dollar we can, and do a budget for next year that puts us on a path to a sound economy where growth can occur and jobs will be created.

I yield the floor, and 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. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, earlier today the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1363, a 1 week continuing resolution that will pay our troops and keep the government running.

It is a pretty sad commentary on the willingness of the White House—and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—to get serious about spending, that we have even arrived at this point.

We need to be clear about a few things in this debate.

First, we are here because Democrats did not do their job last year. Among the most basic responsibilities of Congress—in fact its core constitutional responsibility—is to take up and pass a budget and fund the core functions of the government for the year.

Last year, Democrats had the majority in the House of Representatives. They had a filibuster proof majority in the Senate. And, of course, they had the White House.

But they were so tied up with pressing matters like passing a \$2.6 trillion health care bill that the American people did not want, that they never got around to passing a budget.

And then in the fall, as the bottom fell out of public support for the Democrats, they were too interested in salvaging their majorities and trying to spin ObamaCare that they never funded the government.

So that is why we are here.

We are debating a spending bill for fiscal year 2011.

It is April of 2011.

Fiscal year 2011 started in October of last year.

It is very simple.

Democrats did not do their job, and so they left it to the new Republican majority in the House to fund the government for fiscal year 2011.

The Republican-led House got to work. They passed H.R. 1.

Now I know that it is in the Democratic talking points to call this bill extreme, but what exactly did it do?

When you strip away the ideology and the rhetoric about this so-called dangerous and extreme bill, what exactly did it do?

Here's what it did.

It reduced non-defense discretionary spending by \$61 billion. That is a big number, but let's put this in perspective. This year we are scheduled to spend \$207 billion just on interest on the debt.

This year we have a projected budget deficit of \$1,600 billion.

And this year, the Federal Government is on pace to spend \$3,800 billion.

So H.R. 1 was proposing \$61 billion in reduced spending by a Federal Government on pace to spend \$3,800 billion.

You all have heard the old joke.

When someone is asked if they got a haircut, they respond I got them all cut.

In this case what the Republicans are proposing is like going to the barber

and getting just one of the hairs on your head trimmed.

The Democrats call this bill draconian.

But as one person put it, the spending reductions in this bill are equivalent to ordering a Big Mac, a large Coke, and a large fry, and then eating the whole Big Mac, drinking the whole Coke, eating 98 of the 100 fries in the bag, taking a bite of the 99th fry, and then leaving the rest. That is hardly a crash diet.

But to hear Democrats talk, Americans would starve if H.R. 1 passed. That is not an exaggeration. Former Speaker PELOSI suggested as much just yesterday.

To hear Democrats talk, this is Armageddon. To hear them talk, this \$61 billion in spending reductions is so onerous, America will never be the same.

Americans aren't buying it. The people of Utah, and people around the country, understand that if the Senate were to accept the full \$61 billion in spending reductions, life would not only go on, no one would notice any difference at all.

Let's look at this a different way. Nondefense discretionary appropriations have been hiked up by 24 percent in the last 2 years, and 84 percent if you count the stimulus bill. But to hear Democrats talk, even beginning to roll back this explosion in government spending is akin to shredding the Declaration of Independence. Give me a break. The bottom line is that the cuts in H.R. 1 are more than reasonable. People who are remotely serious about reducing the size of government should accept them in full.

But the White House, and their Capitol Hill allies, do not seem to have gotten the message that Americans want to roll back spending. Instead, they are playing politics. They have calculated that if the government shuts down—if Senate Democrats refuse to pass and the White House refuses to sign a bill to reduce spending—the Republicans will be left holding the bag. They think that history will repeat itself, and just as in 1995, the public will blame Republicans for a government shutdown.

Even the New York Times might not be able to carry that much water for the President and his Democratic allies.

The American people get this, and they are saying enough is enough. If the White House and its Capitol Hill allies think they can force a government shutdown and blame Republicans, they must have zero respect for their constituents. The last week of negotiations has proven yet again that big spending is in the Democrats' DNA.

They are congenitally incapable of reducing government spending, so much so that they are even willing to shut down the government.

In the words of John Blumsky, "when the going gets tough, the tough get going."

But when the going got tough on these negotiations, the Democrats were missing in action.

The President jetted off to a couple of fundraisers. And his Capitol Hill allies turned to the rankest of political smears.

The incoming chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, who until about 5 minutes ago was scolding Republicans for their lack of civility, hit the ground running and claimed that the budget proposed by House Republicans for next year is a death trap for seniors and a tornado through nursing homes. So much for an adult conversation.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee was quick to fundraise off of these spending fights.

In an e-mail to their dare-I-say extreme base, they claimed that Republican negotiators are engaged in blackmail and blamed tea party citizens for the shutdown, rather than the Democratic leadership that refuses to pass the fiscal year 2011 spending bill and move on.

I will tell you what. They might have an easy time raising money by smearing conservative Republicans and blaming them for this mess. But this is fool's gold, because they are going to have a heck of a time explaining to our men and women in uniform why it is that they refused to pass a bill that would make sure they are paid.

Because the Democrats in this chamber will not accept the modest spending reductions in H.R. 1, the House took up H.R. 1363 today. This is a continuing resolution that will fund the government for a week, prevent a shutdown, and fund the Department of Defense through the end of the year, making sure that our servicemen and women receive their paychecks and that our national security is not compromised.

The ball is in the court of this body's leadership.

The President has now made it clear that he is willing to shut down the government rather than pass this CR.

They have issued a Statement of Administration Policy suggesting that they will veto this continuing resolution if passed.

If the President wants to go off this cliff, I can not stop him.

But I would encourage my Democratic colleagues here that they do not need to follow him off that cliff.

Now, their leadership is saying that it will oppose H.R. 1363 because it eliminates taxpayer funding of abortions in the District of Columbia.

In the end, I cannot believe that they would shut down the entire Federal Government in order to appease the most radical pro-abortion members of their left-wing base.

We will see what happens.

Maybe the Senate will do the prudent thing and pass H.R. 1363.

But I am not holding my breath.

The \$61 billion in spending reductions passed by the House months ago is equivalent to 1.6 percent of total projected federal spending. Americans tighten their belts much more than

this every day, but Democrats are acting like these cuts are the end of the world.

I would say that the leadership on display from the White House on this issue is pathetic, if there was any on display at all.

Because the White House has showed zero leadership on the issue of spending and government bloat, because it has refused to make the decisions that would force the Federal Government to live within its means, we are in this unacceptable situation of a potential government shutdown. Our Nation is broke. We have to stop spending money we do not have.

But on this most critical of issues the President has been missing in action.

His advisers seem to be treating this exercise like it is a no-stakes Harvard Law seminar in multiparty dispute resolution.

But the stakes could not be higher.

This situation calls for leadership, but we are getting nothing from the White House.

It is time for real leadership that keeps the government running while cutting spending.

I urge the Senate to adopt H.R. 1.

In the alternative, we should adopt the House-passed short-term CR.

There is no need for a government shutdown.

Democrats who think that clever strategists and professional politicians can spin the American people into thinking this is the Republicans' fault, even though it was the Democrats who walked away from the table, should remember last year's experience with ObamaCare.

Reluctant Democrats in the House and Senate were told by the same strategists and professional spinners that ObamaCare could be messaged in a way so that it would benefit them.

Today there are many former House and Senate Members who wish they had not bought that snake oil.

If the government shuts down, no amount of spinning is going to convince Americans that this was the fault of anyone other than the President and Democratic congressional leadership who have refused to make any meaningful reductions in Federal spending.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, have you ever noticed when someone points their finger and says "it is all your fault, it is all your fault," did you notice that there are three fingers pointing back at them?

Here we have the blame game going on. What we have is politics at its worst. In trying to govern a country that is large and diverse and complicated, as our country is, you have to have people of good will who will come together to build consensus, who will respect each other's opinion, who will respect each other, and realize that

their opinion may not be the only opinion.

That is what we have that is leading us to this point. We have folks who are saying, it is going to be my way or no way. And because of the vote structures, 60 votes required here in order to pass anything out of 100 Senators, we are coming to the precipice, and we are about to fall off.

It is not supposed to work this way. You can have people who sharply disagree about a particular issue, but when it is time to build a consensus and get it done, you have got to have that capability of coming together. Some people use the word "compromise." But compromise has a dirty connotation. It should not. It is the glue of solution making. And that is what this world's most deliberative body for over two centuries has done so well, is come together to build consensus to govern the country. Notice something else. You do not govern from the political extremes. If the political extreme says, it is my way or the highway, you cannot build that consensus in the middle. Thus, that is the situation we have gotten into. A radical, in this case—we have had it on the left end of the political spectrum in the past, but that is not what this is. This is a radical rightwing agenda that is saying, from the House of Representatives, it is going to be their way or no way or they are going to shut down the government.

That is a sad state of affairs. That is saying we cannot come together and agree and reach a solution. So what is going to be the consequence? Well, do you realize when the government is shut down and people are out of work, this does not just affect Federal employees? What about those employees in the private sector whose business depends on being frequented by Federal employees? For example, someone whose business suddenly goes down, are they going to be able to pay their rent?

What about the poor person who is suddenly not going to have a paycheck and they are not going to be able to pay their mortgage? Do you think their bank is going to work with them in order for them not to be in default?

Wait. Let's back up. Look at the experience of my State, Florida. How many banks have worked with people who have been unemployed who have not been able to pay their mortgage, and the banks are not working with them?

So if we go out of the government being functioning, and all of the activities of government, what about the airlines? Certain essential employees will have to operate the air control towers and TSA for security. But do you think the people who are not going to be able to work in the Federal Government in the hemisphere of aviation, do you not think that is going to ripple through the economy in this example of the airlines?

What happens if there is that lapse of safety and this time an airliner does

not land safely as we have had where people have fallen asleep in the tower?

Let's talk about our military. At the end of the day the other side is saying, oh, is it not awful that those of us on this side are not going to pay the military? We are going to vote over and over to pay our military. Our leadership is going to make consent requests over and over to pay our military if we are going to be shut down.

What about our intelligence apparatus, the very apparatus that in far distant lands gets a snippet of information that is passed through the governmental centers that allows us to avert the terrorists from ever doing the attack in the first place? Is that going to be affected? Oh, essential personnel will be there. But what about some of those extended personnel we rely on for our intelligence apparatus?

Ladies and gentlemen, we are not only playing with fire, we are playing with superheated fire. What about GABBY GIFFORD's husband, the commander of the next space shuttle mission? They are supposed to launch April 29. Are all of those workers at the Kennedy Space Center who are preparing the next to the last space shuttle flight going to continue that preparation? Are they going to lay off the astronaut crew because they are not essential as they are training in split-second, very precise training?

Is CAPT Mark Kelly, United States Navy, going to be able to command that mission to take the final components up to low-earth orbit to connect those final components of the International Space Station? What kind of effect is that going to have and be felt throughout the NASA centers all over the country?

What about the Securities and Exchange Commission? What about the banking regulators? What about the Internal Revenue Service going after the people who are trying to defraud us? Do you know that we have prisoners in the State prison system in Florida—more than any other State—who have been putting in fake income tax returns and getting refunds? We have finally got the IRS working with the State prison system, and they are going to shut that off in the next week. Are we going to be able to stop that fraud upon the taxpayer? What about the fellow who just received a \$250,000 IRS refund check, and he has not even filed his income tax return, because somebody has stolen his identity and put in a fake return, and fortunately the check got to him, not to the shy-ster. Are we going to have those IRS personnel to continue to go after that? You can go on and on.

What about our court system? What about the administration of justice? This is what we are facing.

Rigid ideology, in some cases placed on top of excessive partisanship, is now bringing us almost to our knees. If we shut down at midnight tomorrow night, and if we go through the weekend, guess what is going to happen to

the Asian financial markets come Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening here, when it is Monday morning there, and those Asian markets open up. Oh, and by the way, have not the people of Japan suffered enough? The 20 or so ships we have over there trying to assist the people of Japan, are they going to have to go on furlough too?

This is the time, as the Good Book says, for people to come. Let us reason together. This is the time for people of good will—and there are plenty of those people who are Members of the Senate—on this side of the Capitol and on the other side of the Capitol to come together. Come, let us reason together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The majority leader is recognized.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Would the Chair be kind enough to announce, are we in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business until 5 o'clock.

Mr. REID. I have cleared this with the Republican leader. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate extend the period of morning business until 9:30 p.m. tonight, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each during that period.

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

The Senator from Illinois.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, like the majority leader, I was here the last time there was a government shutdown. I never believed it would reach that point. I certainly didn't believe it would be a long shutdown, but it turned out to be over 2 weeks before it was over. It was a period of profound embarrassment for all of both political parties who served in Congress that it had reached a point where our efforts to find common ground had failed, and we had basically failed by closing down the government and calling an end to basic government services.

The Senator from Florida went through a partial list. The list could go on and on. What about the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Men and women who risk their lives every day guarding the most dangerous people, what is to happen to them as we shut down the government? He raised questions about our efforts to monitor terrorist activities. Those efforts are not only exclusively among the military. He mentioned the intelligence-gathering operations of the United States. I don't think most people outside our walk of life have any idea how many men and women get up every single morning, monitoring transmissions of information, monitoring activity all around the world, looking for that one shred of

evidence that there is something dangerous about to occur. These are Federal Government employees, subject in many respects, many of them, to a government shutdown.

In the Department of the Treasury is a foreign assets desk that monitors every single day the movement of money, looking for evidence of drug cartels and terrorist activities and criminal activity in the United States and around the world. They share that information with law enforcement at every level—State, local, and international—to keep us safe. These are Federal employees affected by a government shutdown. We just learned our Secretary of State is canceling a major conference on Tuesday, bringing in leaders from around Washington and the world to talk about critical issues, because of her fear that the Department of State will be shut down on Tuesday. We also know, in embassies all around the world, men and women literally risk their lives to be there representing the United States, offering their services for Americans and others in terrible circumstances, and they are going to be subject to a shutdown, skeleton crews.

We ask ourselves: Is this necessary? Have we reached a point where there is no alternative? The answer is there is an alternative. The alternative is for people of good will to come together and find common ground.

I am closer to the position of Senator REID because I know, I have followed his conversations, his reports on the negotiations. I am certain of what I say. When it comes to the dollar amount for budget deficit reduction, we are virtually in agreement. The differences are minuscule. We have agreed on the amount of spending to be cut. That is no longer a matter of debate.

What happened in the last 24 hours is a dramatic shift away from the budget deficit discussion. Now Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, who is my friend, on behalf of his caucus, is arguing it is no longer about the budget. It is no longer about the deficit. It is no longer about cutting spending. It is about a social agenda, some issues.

No. 1, Speaker BOEHNER insists we have to accept language from the House which says the Environmental Protection Agency will basically shut down its operations when it comes to certain environmental hazards such as greenhouse gas emissions. Some of us think that is a catastrophic decision, a disastrous decision. The House Republican caucus voted for it, the Republican majority. Now they are saying to us: Accept it.

Yesterday, we debated that issue. We debated it in the Senate for many hours. The Senator from Florida was here. We had four separate votes on the issue of taking the power away from the EPA. The first amendment offered received seven votes in the affirmative. The second one received seven votes in the affirmative. The third one received 12 votes in the affirmative. The fourth