

Defunding Planned Parenthood would be the moral equivalent of turning off the electricity and a whole segment of health care would go dark.

That is what H. Con. Res. 36 means in human terms. In dollars and cents: preventive health care, the kind of work done by St. Vincent's in Bridgeport and Hartford Hospital, and Yale-New Haven hospital, and countless others around the State and in the country because our hospitals and health care providers are responding responsibly to the need for higher quality and lower costs. We must preserve the momentum to move forward and to make sure the promise, as well as the obligation, the opportunity as well as the mandate, is fulfilled.

I call for my Senate colleagues to stand together for women such as Rebecca and Maya and for clinics and hospitals and providers across the Nation who depend on Planned Parenthood and to reject this resolution, to reject the effort to turn back the clock and to settle this debate once and for all, to end the ideological war which has itself nothing to do with saving money; that in fact, will cost more than it saves. I call for us to turn our attention, as we should and we must, to people who want us to put America back to work to create jobs, to foster economic growth, to fulfill the mandate that was articulated and expressed so eloquently by the people of this country in this last election, which was not to wage war on women's health.

The message was to put Connecticut and put America back to work, create jobs and continue our fragile economic recovery.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today we are going to vote on last year's unfinished business. We are going to vote on a continuing resolution that will fund the government through this fiscal year, which ends on September 30. The proposal we have before us in order to fund the government through the end of the fiscal year certainly is not perfect. In fact, there are many—myself included—who would like to see it make deeper reductions in spending. That said, we will be voting on a proposal that will cut spending by around \$40 billion this year, and when you look at baseline spending over the next decade actually saves over \$300 billion over the 10-year period.

What strikes me about that is that it will be the first time in a long time that we have done something about re-

ducing spending. That is not something routinely or traditionally done here. In fact, we are going to reverse a trend that began a long time ago but accelerated a couple years ago when non-national security discretionary spending increased by almost 25 percent in the last 2 years.

This is an important first step. Granted, it is a first step, and in a minute, I am going to get to the bigger issue, but it is critical that we send a message and signal to the American people that we have heard their voices loudly and clearly and we get what they want us to do; that is, to get spending under control, shrink the size of the Federal Government, to get it to live within its means, and to quit spending money that we do not have in Washington. That is something that has been happening here for a long time. It has taken on a whole new dimension in the last couple of years.

As we talk about the unfinished business of last year, trying to get a measure in place that will fund the government through the end of the year, that will reduce spending by about \$40 billion, we are talking about the smaller part of overall spending when we look at the macroeconomic view or pull back to what some would say to the 30,000-ft. view and look at spending over the next decade. In fact, we had someone testify in the Finance Committee yesterday, the former Comptroller General David Walker. He put it well when he said talking about funding in the continuing resolution is like arguing about the bar tab on the Titanic. We are on a sinking ship, and we need to do everything we can in the short term, getting maximum amount of spending reduction, but then we need to pivot and start talking about the next big battle, and that is the battle over the 2012 budget. Ironically, we are just now getting to the 112th Congress's business because we are wrapping up the business of the 111th Congress. The Democratic leadership here didn't pass a budget last year or a single appropriations bill. As a consequence, we are voting here now on a continuing resolution to do last year's business to get us through the end of this fiscal year before we can start the work of the 2012 budget, which is where I think the big debate will begin about how we get this country back on a more reasonable fiscal path.

We have seen a couple of developments here in the last 2 weeks or so that bear on that debate. One is last week, when we had the introduction by the House Republicans of a budget plan, a 10-year budget plan that was very aggressive in trying to take on the issue of spending and debt, very aggressive in trying to put pro-growth policies in place that would help grow the economy and create jobs and that gets our economy back on track in this country. That was kind of the big discussion last week.

The President, I believe, felt left out of that discussion, so yesterday he de-

cid to make a speech in which he would lay out his vision for the next decade and how we address the big challenges this country needs to tackle. I would describe that speech as a do-over because the President's first trip to the plate was really his budget, which he submitted a couple of months ago. That budget was conspicuously bereft of any effort to address the really big challenges facing the country. It didn't talk about how we are going to reform entitlements, didn't address tax reform, and it actually increased spending—increased taxes and increased the debt dramatically over the next decade. It nearly doubled the gross debt from \$13 trillion or \$14 trillion to over \$26 trillion, and that is using I think pretty optimistic economic assumptions.

That being said, because the President didn't address any of the big issues in his budget and because the House Republicans put a proposal forward last week which would, I think he felt as if he needed to get in the game. So yesterday he made a stridently partisan speech in which he tried to put forth a plan. I would argue that speech yesterday was very long on politics and very short on substance. There wasn't a lot in there to really sink your teeth into if you are someone who believes seriously that we need to make reforms in entitlement programs. There was the usual prescription for dealing with the deficit and the debt, which consisted of increasing taxes. There are tax increases in here, tax increases in the President's proposal on small businesses—the job creators in our economy.

I would point out to my colleagues that half of all small business income is taxed at the individual level because many small businesses allow the income from that business to flow through to their individual tax return. In fact, the number of small businesses that would be impacted by his proposal employ about 35 million people in our economy. So you are talking about raising taxes on the job creators, on the people who really are employing people across this country, and that was a key element in the President's prescription for dealing with the fiscal crisis this country faces.

Another element of the President's plan was relying on this proposal that was part of the health care reform bill to squeeze provider payments under Medicare to try to wring a little more out of Medicare. He relies on an independent payment advisory board which would be empowered to go ahead and make reductions, to make cuts in provider payments. What is interesting about that is the health care reform bill last year did make some significant cuts to providers, not to reform Medicare but to create the new health care entitlement program, which, when it is fully implemented, will cost \$2.5 trillion. So that is what the President used—any savings that were achieved in Medicare last year. So when he talks

about now using this independent payment advisory board to make further reductions in provider payments, it is relying on the same old tried-and-true formula. I say tried and true, but it is actually a tried-and-failed formula that has been in place before.

There is no reform in this proposal. There is nothing new or innovative that says: Let's figure out a way to solve this Nation's fiscal problems, something that actually gets at the heart of the problem and doesn't use the same old failed prescriptions that have been used in the past.

I frankly don't know what is going to happen. If you continue to cut payments to physicians and to hospitals, you will find fewer and fewer medical providers who are going to serve Medicare and Medicaid patients in this country. It is as simple as that. When you lose a little on each transaction, on each customer or each patient you serve, you have to cost shift and make up for it by shifting more of the cost over to private payers, which continues to drive health care costs for everybody who is not receiving their health care from some government program even higher and higher. So there wasn't anything in there that I would suggest really gets at this problem.

Also conspicuously absent from that speech was anything to do with reforming Social Security. We all know Social Security is also a program which ran a deficit last year. It looks as if it will be in the black this year but next year it starts running deficits and runs them well into the future. We have to make that program solvent, not just for the senior citizens who are benefiting from it today, those who are nearing retirement age, but for the next generation. The President decided to punt on that subject as well.

So, as I said, the speech yesterday was long on politics, short on substance, and short on a meaningful discussion about how we get at and address and fix these enormous fiscal challenges we face.

The other thing the President does is he uses a 12-year timeframe. We normally operate here on a 10-year budget window. That is what the House and the Senate do. It is typically what the White House does when it submits a budget to Congress. So he stretched that out to 12 years, perhaps maybe to lessen the impact of some of the few reductions he does make in his budget, but nevertheless it is a very different schedule, in terms of the proposal he makes, relative to the one that came forth last week from the House Republicans.

The reason this whole debate is important is because we continue to spend and spend as if there is no tomorrow, and it is money we just flat don't have. This year, we will take in \$2.2 trillion, spend \$3.7 or \$3.8 trillion, and we are going to run a \$1.6 trillion deficit. I have said this before on the floor, but it is now 1:20 in the afternoon today, and by tomorrow, Friday, at 1:20

in the afternoon, we will have added over \$4 billion to the Federal debt. That is the rate at which the spending and debt problem is going today. We cannot continue on this path.

Some people would argue—the President and some of our colleagues on the Democratic side—that the way you fix this is “have a balanced approach” that raises taxes, that there has to be a tax increase as a part of this. I don't think the American people ought to have their taxes raised until we demonstrate a willingness to get at the heart of the problem.

The problem here in Washington is not a revenue problem, it is a spending problem. The numbers bear that out. If you look at the last 40 years of American history, the average amount we spend on the Federal Government as a percentage of our total economy is 20.6 percent. A little over one-fifth of our entire economic output is spending by the Federal Government. This year we will spend over 25 percent of our total economy on the Federal Government. So we have seen the Federal Government, in relation to our total economy, grow by about 20 percent over the historical average just in the last couple of years. In the last 2 years of this administration, we have added almost \$3.5 trillion to the Federal debt.

As I said before, spending increased—non-national security, discretionary spending increased in the last 2 years by almost 25 percent at a time when inflation in the overall economy was only growing at 2 percent. So you have the Federal Government spending at somewhere on the order of 10 times or more than 10 times the rate of inflation. You can't defend or justify that to the American people.

The American people have a right to know we are serious about getting spending under control, as evidenced by the report of the Government Accountability Office a few weeks back where they looked at about one-third of the overall government to determine where there was duplication and where there was wasteful spending. They came up with a number of conclusions in that report, one of which was that there are 82 programs—82 programs—at the Federal Government that deal with teacher training spread across 20 agencies or so of the Federal Government.

Can you believe this—56 programs that teach financial literacy. Imagine Washington, DC, lecturing or instructing anybody around this country about financial literacy, of all things, but there are 56 programs spread across 10 different agencies or departments of government that deal with financial literacy. I mean, the American people have to be thinking, get serious.

This is the kind of thing that outrages and frustrates the American people. That is why I think they want us to singularly focus on reducing spending and getting this debt under control not by raising their taxes in the middle of an economic downturn, particularly taxes on our small businesses that will

create the jobs to get the economy back on track but by reducing spending. That is where this debate ought to be centered. Regrettably, as I said, the President, in his speech yesterday, immediately latched on to the idea that we need to raise taxes on our small businesses, on our job creators.

Well, we are going to have the chance, after the vote today on the continuing resolution—assuming that it passes—and then wrapping up last year's unfinished business, to shift to this debate about the debt limit. The debt limit will be the next major issue coming along that will present an opportunity for both Republicans and Democrats to engage in a debate about how to solve this country's fiscal problems, starting with measures we put in place that put caps on spending.

We have to get spending under control, and then we will have a debate about the 2012 budget. It is unclear to me at this point whether the Senate will do a budget at all. The House of Representatives clearly will. They passed it out of their Budget Committee, and they are going to vote on it today. They are going to put forward a plan that does reduce spending by over \$6 trillion over the next 10 years, that brings reforms to our Tax Code, that lowers marginal income tax rates on our businesses and our individuals, and that hopefully will create economic growth and development out there and create jobs.

It is a budget that changes the way we look at some of these traditional entitlement programs, insulating and protecting everybody who is over the age of 55. And that is the ironic thing about it, because our colleagues on the other side get up and immediately attack this proposal as cutting benefits to senior citizens. The House plan that was put forward does not impact anybody over the age of 55. So if you are retired today and drawing Medicare benefits or if you are nearing retirement age, under this particular proposal, you are unaffected. It would affect those younger than 55 who are beginning to look at the retirement years and wondering whether any of these programs are even going to be around for them. We can make those programs sustainable and viable for younger Americans who are willing to look at these things in a new way. The House budget does that.

It makes reforms that put the patient back in charge, the consumer back in charge, that I think draws on the great impulses of tradition in this country—competition, choice, allowing people to have more opportunity and more flexibility to choose a plan that works for them.

It seems, at least to me, that we have to get to a new model because the current model clearly doesn't work. It is an example of government spending that, if it perpetuates, has a \$38 trillion unfunded liability in Medicare alone and has further unfunded liabilities in Social Security.

We have a major problem in this country, and it needs to be addressed. It starts with the debate on the debt limit and then hopefully on the 2012 budget. I am glad to see the President finally having a proposal out there and engaging in this debate. Unfortunately, his vision is the wrong vision for the future of this country. But it is high time the American people saw us have this debate, take these issues on, and let's hope we can come together behind a proposal that will reduce spending, reduce debt, and put us more on a fiscal footing that is good for future generations and that gets this economy going and creates jobs.

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

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

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, we are going to be voting sometime today. I am concerned about the tea party Republican assault on the health of American women because that is what we are going to be deciding. The focus on this has little to do with deficit reduction because better health automatically saves money. This assault is an attempt to change individual behavior to a standard that the tea party people see as proper for others exercising their own free will. It contains an element of unfathomable hypocrisy for those voting to kill Planned Parenthood.

As Members of Congress, we all have immediate access to first-class health plans. We never have to think about health coverage for ourselves or our spouses or our children—it is all in the package. There is no decision to make between paying a medical bill or paying the rent; no decision to make between buying medicine and buying groceries; no decision to make between going into a hospital or going into bankruptcy. Yet the Republicans here are trying to take health care away from women, children, and families across America. They want to completely defund Planned Parenthood, an organization that has been serving women and families in America for more than 90 years.

Today Planned Parenthood operates more than 800 centers that serve 3 million women each and every year. For many women, Planned Parenthood is a critical source of medical care. To women who cannot afford coverage, Planned Parenthood says don't worry, your health is more important.

They do not just offer counseling on family planning, they also offer life-saving breast exams and cervical cancer screenings. Look at this. Eighty centers nationwide serve 3 million patients each year, provide 800,000 breast cancer screenings, provide 1 million

cervical cancer screenings. That is so important. Cancer screenings save lives. Since the 1950s, cervical cancer screenings have cut mortality rates by more than 70 percent. Remember, treating cancer and other diseases early enough saves health care dollars in the long run.

But this is not just about sound fiscal policy or better accounting. No. No. They want to tell women, millions of them, if you cannot afford it, tough luck. Tough luck. This is about the tea party Republicans remaking America in their own image. Their real goal is to impose their radical ideology on American women.

They want to come into our homes, tell the women in our families how to live their lives. This issue is deeply personal to me. My wife and I have five daughters and eight granddaughters, and nothing is more important to me than their health, their well being, and their freedom to make choices that suit their needs.

If we kill funding for Planned Parenthood, millions of women will lose access to essential care. Those tea party Republicans claim that will help close our deficit of dollars. But it will leave us with a deficit of decency. It is not just women's health the tea party Republicans are after, it is also health care for middle-class families across America.

They want to stop the landmark health reform law dead in its tracks. This is the law that adds 32 million Americans on the rolls of the insured.

So here is what I say to colleagues on the other side: If you do not want ordinary people to have affordable coverage, then show some sincerity and throw in the coverage you have. Be honest. Vote no, and tell your constituents why you are doing this, and say you mean it when you say no, and I am giving up my coverage to prove it. I am talking to Senators on the side of taking away the funding, and talking to Members of the House of Representatives to say no and mean no.

The health reform law makes health care more affordable, more accessible, and more sustainable, and holds insurers more accountable. It makes medicine more affordable for seniors by closing the doughnut hole in the Medicare prescription drug benefit program.

The new law also allows young adults to stay on their parents' health plans until age 26, and it gives small businesses tax credits to help them provide their employees with medical coverage. Without this law, insurers could once again restrict benefits, rescind coverage when people get sick, and refuse care to children with preexisting conditions. I do not think we want to return to the days when insurers could turn their back and turn away sick children.

Life for me was upfront and personal when it came to my family's health care needs. I grew up in a working-class family in Patterson, NJ. My father worked in the local silk mills, and he died of cancer at age 43, leaving my

mother a widow at age 37. Our family struggled in bankruptcy as my father's life ebbed away. My mother owed doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, money we did not have. After my service in Europe in the Army, because there was a government program, I was able to get my education through the GI bill. I joined two friends and built a company so successful that it is hard to imagine. It employs 45,000 people today, operating in more than 20 countries. Three of us from poor families. For me the GI bill made the difference. It is government stepping in when it was needed, and has put 45,000 people across this world to work.

That is what government is about. It is there to be helpful. This is not just an accounting office. It is not just a fiscal policy problem. Because of my success in business, I never had to worry again about whether I could provide health care for my family. I never forgot what it was like to be without health care.

We need the health reform law, because no American should ever have to make sacrifices to afford health care. Americans are beginning to experience the benefits of this law. Why now would we want to put the progress on hold?

I agree, we have serious economic problems in our country. But we are not going to solve them by taking health care away from American women and families. Do not take away this critical assistance for people who cannot afford the care they need. If we have fiscal problems, if we have debt and deficit problems, there are ways to solve them. But one way is not to take health care away from people who need it. It is an injustice, and we should not permit it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 4 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

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

The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. SHELBY pertaining to the introduction of S. 820 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for the next 15 minutes so Senator VITTER and I can introduce a very important piece of legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Ms. LANDRIEU and Mr. VITTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 861 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. LANDRIEU. I see other colleagues on the floor, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, shortly, we hopefully will be voting on a budget agreement for this fiscal year, and that will start the process of the debate on the next fiscal year. What we are about to do is more than pass a budget agreement; we are about to define a vision of America. We are about to make choices now and in the coming weeks that will reflect our values and our principles as a people and as a nation.

The real question before us, in my mind, is not simply about the numbers, it is about competing visions of America, whether we choose a vision of America where the air and water are clean, where food and prescription drugs are safe, where roads and bridges and transportation systems are modern, well maintained, and fuel prosperity for the future, an America that puts a premium on education and invests in jobs and the middle-class, an America where a mother who wakes up in the middle of the night with a sick child doesn't have to wonder if she can afford to take that child to the doctor or if her insurance will cover the costs, an America in which seniors have a reliable Medicare system they can count on, not just a voucher that doesn't even cover the cost of a plan in the private marketplace. That is an ugly vision of America we have seen before, and it is why we passed Medicare in the first place.

Let's be clear. This is not about the numbers. This is not just simply about the details of deficit reduction. This is about two competing views of this Nation, one in which we embrace the concept of community, each of us working together for the betterment of all of us—all of us sharing in the burden of balancing the budget and reducing the deficit.

The other is a tea party vision, in which no government is good government and the notion of an American community is a myth, and we are simply a nation of competing individuals, each of us working for what we can get on our own. Tea partiers see an America in which the burden of balancing the budget should be borne by senior citizens, students, and middle-class families, while protecting subsidies to big oil companies and giving even more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans.

We see an America of shared prosperity and shared responsibility that reduces the deficit and balances the budget, knowing that millionaires and billionaires can be just as patriotic and willing to pay their fair share as a soldier in Afghanistan whose family is living on an Army paycheck.

Our friends on the other side tell us tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires create jobs and benefit middle-class families. They told us, when we passed the Bush tax cuts a little over a decade ago, it would create millions of jobs for every American, and what hap-

pened? Jobs were eliminated or sent overseas, and the wage gap increased. This tax policy may benefit some, but it doesn't create jobs and it doesn't reduce our deficit.

For some reason, we seem to think the wealthiest Americans are clamoring for more tax cuts, but I find no basis in fact for that. I have spoken to many CEOs and leading corporate executives in my State and around the country, and never have I heard a word about how badly they need another tax cut. I believe the wealthiest Americans are as patriotic as any one of us and are willing to step up to the plate and pay their fair share if we simply ask them to support a rational tax reform program that emphasizes shared fiscal responsibility and shared prosperity.

In my view, tax cuts for millionaires are nothing more than a political sleight of hand, a smoke-and-mirrors vision of America, in which there is no shared responsibility, no sense of community but a misguided belief that only if the rich had more money, the elderly, the sick, the poor, the middle-class families struggling to make ends meet, the disabled child on Medicaid who needs round-the-clock care, we would somehow be better off.

We have been there before, and it hasn't worked. It is a smoke-and-mirror vision of America to believe that if there were no environmental protections, that polluters would protect our air and keep the water clean and safe because it is the right thing to do. Again, we have seen that vision of America, and it came in a poisonous cloud of smog that lingered over America's cities, which is why Richard Nixon, a Republican President, created the Environmental Protection Agency in the first place.

If we are serious about reducing the deficit, we at least should be looking, for example, at subsidies for big oil. The top five oil companies earned nearly \$1 trillion—\$1 trillion—over the last decade. Passing my bill to repeal oil subsidies would save taxpayers \$33 billion over the next 10 years. We can safely assume oil profits will be much greater in the decade to come with higher oil prices, but let's assume that the top five oil companies only get another \$1 trillion in profits over the next decade. Taking back \$33 billion in government handouts would only shave about 3 percent of those profits. Let's not forget that much of these profits are in Federal waters and on Federal lands, so they are making these profits on America's own soil.

If we were serious about reducing the deficit, we would also be seriously looking, for example, at big oil subsidies and tax breaks. According to the data, the cost of exploration, development, and production of natural oil and gas in the United States averaged about \$33.76 per barrel of oil. Oil is trading at \$107 a barrel. That means big oil companies are enjoying a profit of over \$750 per barrel of oil they extract. Why in the world would they

ever need subsidies from the U.S. taxpayer in such conditions?

No, handing out money and reducing regulatory burdens on big oil companies and on the wealthiest Americans is not about balancing the budget or reducing the deficit; it is about a vision of America that favors the rich and would rather dismantle Medicare, cut Social Security, cut Medicaid for seniors, and the poorest among us in nursing homes who have no other place to go, rather than to solve our long-term deficit problems.

I am deeply disturbed at what is being proposed as we move forward in the next debate of the next fiscal year and the so-called push for balancing the budget by shifting \$4 trillion from the promise of America to protect this Nation and to create prosperity for its people, to the wealthiest Americans in a tax cut that actually does absolutely nothing to solve the deficit problem. I am disturbed when I see those on the other side lining up to resist any compromise, any effort for a reasonable chance at a workable solution.

Before the President was even done speaking yesterday, the tea party and many Republicans had already made up their minds that there was nothing to talk about, no room for compromise; that there is no other view than their own.

When I first arrived in the other body, we may have had very clear and fundamental differences, but we understood we were there to govern. Now our Republican colleagues seem to have stopped governing in order to score political points and hope they can win an election. The extreme wing of the Republican Party is driving the legislative process and the Republican Party to the darkest reaches of the political spectrum, fundamentally threatening the very notion of democracy. They want what they want, and they want it all. They will accept nothing less than everything. But let's not forget it was Republican policies that got us here in the first place.

It wasn't long ago, not long after the last Republican government shutdown during another Democratic administration, when we had budget surpluses—surpluses—as far as the eye could see. The day Bill Clinton left office, he handed President Bush a \$236 billion surplus, with a projected surplus of \$5.6 trillion over the next 10 years. When the Bush administration left office and President Obama was sworn in after 8 years of Republican economic policies that they are espousing, again, including tax cuts to the wealthiest, two wars waged unpaid for, turning a blind eye to the excesses of Wall Street—the new President faced an economy that was at the abyss of a new depression. The Republicans had turned a \$236 billion budget surplus into a \$1.3 trillion budget deficit and projected shortfalls of \$8 trillion over the next decade.

Now they want to give more tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires, losing \$700 billion on the revenue side over

the next 10 years by extending the Bush tax cuts and trillions more by slashing tax rates for corporations and millionaires without offsetting tax expenditures. Those making more than \$1 million a year would see tax cuts of \$125,000 each from the tax cuts and tens of thousands of dollars more from the proposed tax 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. They want to shift the balance to millionaires and billionaires while making Draconian cuts to make up for the deficits they create—cuts that do not reflect our values as a people and as a nation.

So let me conclude by saying we all agree we must do more to rein in spending and get back to the kind of surpluses Democrats created in the 1990s, but we can only get there through a reasonable framework that emphasizes shared prosperity and shared fiscal responsibility to achieve our common goal. The way we get there is through negotiation and compromise, not from smoke and mirrors, not through trickle-down theories that have not worked, and strictly adhering to an ideological political agenda that fundamentally starts the clock all over again on the battles for basic American protections that were fought and won in the last century.

Let's not go back. Let's protect American values and keep America moving forward and working. As I have said, you show me your budget and I will show you your values.

The Republican vision of this Nation, as defined in H.R. 1, does not represent this Senator's values. It is not the fulfillment of the American promise, idea and ideal, and I do not believe it is who we are as a people and what we want our Nation to represent.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, it is amazing to me to be lectured to and hear about how awful the tea party is from folks who have never been to a tea party to hear what the tea party represents. Come on down. Bring your Huey Long rhetoric that there will be a chicken in every pot and a windmill in every backyard. Bring it down to the tea party and let's have a discussion. Bring it out to the public.

We hear from those who want to lecture the tea party about cutting spending. Who among these folks has voted against an appropriations bill? We haven't even seen one this year. We didn't see a budget. We are spending \$2 trillion that we don't have, and they are here blaming it on the tea party.

Who is in charge here? It is not the tea party. Blame it on us. Give us an appropriations bill. Give us a budget. Do something constructive to fix the fiscal problems we have up here.

They say compromise is the ideal. They tell the tea party: You need to compromise. But do you know what

the compromise is? They want to raise taxes. The debt commission wants to raise taxes. The President wants to raise taxes. That is what they are talking about.

Yesterday, the President said he is going to cut \$4 trillion. Well, try to read what is going on here. He said he was going to spend \$46 trillion a month ago in his budget. Before we even discuss his budget, he is going to cut \$4 trillion off the \$46 trillion he is going to spend. These are no cuts. We will spend more this year than we spent last year. Forget about all the numbers, all the baselines, and forget about 6, 60, 30, 78, or 0, which is what the CBO scored this yesterday—zero in cuts. Forget about it and ask your Representatives: Are we going to spend more this year than last? If we are, that is not a cut. Ask your Representatives, ask your Senators: Will the deficit be more this year than last year?

The deficit will be bigger this year. We threaten to shut down government over nothing because we are not cutting spending in any serious way. They want to blame it on the tea party because in their secret caucus meetings they have done a poll that says the tea party could be the villain. Call them "extreme," call them all "tea partiers," say the tea party has "taken over" the Republican Party.

Do you know what the tea party believes in? Good government. We believe in balancing the budget, in reducing spending. We have plans to fix Social Security. We introduced a plan yesterday. If the other side is serious about fixing entitlements, we have a plan. Come to us and work with us, but don't just come down here and call us names.

Before you send any more money to Washington, ask your representatives whether they are spending your money wisely. Mr. President, \$100 billion in the budget last year is unaccounted for. We don't know where it was spent or we think it was improperly spent—\$100 billion. In our senatorial offices we get several million dollars. Some of us want to be frugal with that and send some back to the Treasury. We plan on sending several hundred thousand dollars back. We want to know where the money goes. We are still not certain. We have been asking for months.

Some people say that money is kept in some fund for 3 years and may go back. Other people told us that the leadership spends that money. We don't have a definitive answer for even trying to save a couple hundred thousand dollars of your money that we have control of.

The Pentagon spends a lot of money. Are they spending the money wisely? You don't know because we cannot audit them. Why? Because the Pentagon tells us that they are too big to audit. You heard about the companies saying they are too big to fail. The government now tells you they are too big to be audited. We got a partial audit of the Federal Reserve, and we got some information from that.

We are now fighting the war against Qadhafi. Last month, we were giving him money. We gave him some foreign aid, and we helped to bail out his national bank. The national banks in those countries are the leaders' piggy bank. Half of it is probably spirited off to secret accounts in Switzerland. The U.S. taxpayer bailed out Qadhafi's bank, and now we are bombing it.

The budget bill that we are talking about has now been scored by the CBO and will cut almost nothing—maybe a couple hundred million dollars. It will increase defense spending by \$8 billion and cut spending by \$8 billion. The net is about zero. Our deficit this year will be bigger than last year. Our overall spending will be bigger this year than last year.

We are not yet serious in Washington. We have not yet recognized the severity, the enormity, and the significance of how big this deficit is. This deficit is going to have serious repercussions. The Chinese have bought over \$1 trillion of our debt, and the Japanese, nearly a trillion.

The Japanese have suffered an enormous national disaster. The question is, Will they continue to buy our debt or can they?

The other question is, How long can a government continue to exist that spends more than it brings in? On the other side, they want to blame the tea party or the Republicans or the rich people. Do you know what. Both parties are responsible—Republicans, Democrats, Senators, Congressmen, the President—everybody up here is responsible. It is not one party or the other.

When Republicans were in charge, they ran up the deficit. Now the Democrats are in charge, and the main difference is that they are doing it faster. The Republicans weren't doing a good job either during our time in power.

We have to understand that the people can do things; not everything has to be done up here. The States can do things. We have to believe once again in the American dream. Believing in the American dream is not standing on the floor and castigating rich people. What is great about our country is that any among us—any of our kids—can become rich people if they work hard, go to school, and achieve. We live in a mobile society, and that is what the American dream is about. We got away from Europe because all the land was owned and stifled by the nobility. We came here where there was plenty of land and opportunity, and the American dream is believing in that.

The interesting thing is, when they try to soak the rich—this old Huey Long stuff—it is actually failing with the American people because many of us believe that our kids could gain great wealth or great success. We still believe in the American dream. If they want to castigate that and say forget about it and say what we need is just more government, they need to explain to people why they don't believe in

capitalism, in the American dream, and why they don't believe in the greatness of America.

I still believe in America. I want to get government out of the way. I think we cannot have an America that succeeds until we are able to do something about our debt crisis. I fear that no one up here—or very few here—on either side recognizes the severity and imminence of this problem. My hope is that before a crisis occurs in our country we will begin to seriously discuss balancing our budget and have plans to do so and seriously cut spending.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I understand there are other colleagues on the Senate floor. I want to speak for a few minutes as chair of the Homeland Security Appropriations Committee and express my views about the vote we are going to cast in a few hours relative to that committee.

To Senator PAUL, I say respectfully—and it is going to be a lively debate—that to a hungry family, a chicken in the pot looks pretty good every now and then, and there are literally millions of children, sadly, in this country today who go home from school and open the refrigerator or look on the stove, and they can't find a drumstick anywhere. That is what this debate is about.

No. 2, I used to love to hear President Clinton say that one of our jobs here was to create more millionaires. I belong to the DLC, and I am proud of it—the Democratic Leadership Council. We believe in creating opportunity that comes along with responsibility and creating paths forward to prosperity.

Most people I represent—including tea party people—don't believe companies such as GE—one of the biggest companies in the world—should get away with paying no taxes. I guess the Senator from Kentucky thinks that is a good idea. We don't.

I also think most people I represent—including the tea party—think people who make over \$1 million a year—not millionaires or people who make \$250,000 a year, but people who make over \$1 million a year—could pay a little more so that we could afford either early childhood education or early health care in an effective and efficient way because people know—tea party people and others—what a smart investment that is. This is going to be a very interesting debate. I look forward to it.

I rise as chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee to discuss the full-year continuing resolution that the Senate will take up today. For weeks, the press swirled about a possible government shutdown. Almost all of the attention was on who would be blamed if the government shut down. That has been averted for the time being.

However, far too little attention has been focused on the consequences of the funding cuts that were proposed by

the House. With some officials in Washington slashing budgets, terrorists continue to seek ways to do harm to this Nation. Terrorists do not care about “spending top lines” and “CHIMPS.” What the terrorists care about is finding our vulnerabilities and exploiting them to do harm to Americans, to target our military, and to damage our economy.

In the State of the Union earlier this year, the President stated that al-Qaida and its affiliates continue to plan attacks against us. He is stating the truth. He stressed that extremists are trying to inspire acts of violence by those already within our borders. According to the Attorney General, in the last 2 years, 126 individuals have been indicted for terrorist-related activities, including 50 United States citizens. Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano has said that the threat of a terrorist attack is as high as it has been since 9/11.

Recent events have served to highlight the complicated dynamics of this situation. The Fort Hood shooting happened, at the hands of a U.S. citizen. The New York City subway bombing attempt happened, at the hands of a legal resident alien. The Times Square bombing attempt happened, precipitated by a naturalized citizen. But we also continue to face threats from abroad. The 2009 Christmas day bombing attempt and the October 2010 air cargo bombing attempt happened. We face increasingly sophisticated daily cyber attacks from countries and hackers that desire to do us harm. Violence in Mexico is at unprecedented levels and there are concerns that the violence will spread across the border.

In addition to these threats, the Department of Homeland Security also must prepare for and respond to natural disasters. The earthquake and tsunami in Japan and our memories of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita remind us of our need to be prepared for a catastrophic disaster.

The Homeland Security title of the full-year continuing resolution contains a 2-percent cut in funding. I am particularly concerned about the treatment of funding for FEMA disaster recovery efforts. We are currently facing a shortfall of at least \$1.2 billion this year and \$3 billion next year in the disaster relief fund. These shortfalls are the result of past catastrophic disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike, the Midwest floods of 2008, and the Tennessee floods of 2010. At the insistence of the House, an additional \$1 billion was provided on a non-emergency basis to meet the fiscal year 2011 shortfall. As a result of having to absorb the additional \$1 billion within the DHS base budget, we were forced to cut necessary investments in our security, cuts of over 4 percent.

It makes no sense to cut programs that prepare, prevent, and help us respond to future disasters to pay the costs of past catastrophic disasters. Yet when you compare the full-year

continuing resolution to the Omnibus bill that we tried to bring to the floor in December, we lost funding for 175 canine teams for explosives detection. Despite the increasing threat of home-grown terrorism, we lost \$810 million to equip and train first responders. We lost funding for 1,300 handheld radiation detectors and funding for five Coast Guard boats and for 140 foot ice-breakers. We lost funding for urban search and rescue teams and funds to deploy the latest technology for blocking cyber attacks on sensitive Federal computer systems.

In the past, on a bipartisan basis, we have funded the costs of catastrophic disasters as an emergency. In fact, \$110 billion out of \$128 billion appropriated for the FEMA disaster relief fund has been appropriated as an emergency. We simply cannot responsibly secure the homeland and prepare for future disasters if we are forced to absorb the costs of past catastrophic disasters.

Mr. President, I am pleased to say that we were successful in negotiations with the House in eliminating some of the most harmful cuts contained in H.R. 1. The bill no longer contains what I considered irresponsible cuts for the Coast Guard, for Customs and Border Protection, for immigration enforcement efforts, for the Transportation Security Administration, and for cyber security. But, the bill that will be put before the Senate today does not provide resources that are commensurate with the threat that we face. I believe this view is shared by a large majority of independent observers. I will vote for this bill but urge caution as we proceed to fiscal year 2012.

I remind my colleagues that it is essential that we make decisions on how to secure the homeland with the latest information on the threats that we face, not based on arbitrary spending top lines that were produced during the campaign. As we look ahead to drafting the Homeland Security appropriations bill for the fiscal year that begins in October, it is time to get off the campaign trail and work together on a path forward for a more secure homeland.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, we have a vote today on a measure to continue spending for the Federal Government for the next couple months. It amounts to nearly \$40 billion in cuts. That is a good start. I think most Americans would agree with that. But it is only a start. We should now work together across party lines to bring down our long-term debt in a responsible way that protects middle-income families and, of course, as well the most vulnerable in society.

We do have substantial cuts in this bill today. In fact, there are record cuts for what we know as discretionary funding.

At the same time, though, we have to get down to the more difficult business

of reducing deficit and debt and that work is ahead of us. As we do that, we have to make sure we are protecting middle-income families and those who are vulnerable.

This is a good start, but we should remember what families are going through right now, families all across the country, where one member of that family—sometimes more—has lost their job. In Pennsylvania, for example, we have over 500,000 people out of work. Fortunately, that number has come down since last summer. Last summer, it was approaching 600,000; now it is about 511,000. But we need to bring that number down.

As families are making decisions, they have to make some difficult choices, especially those who lost a job, a home or sometimes both but even families who are not living through the horrific crisis of unemployment and joblessness, even families where one or two members of that family are working. Those families, as well, have to make difficult choices. That is the way we should approach this, as a family or at least to do our best to imitate what families have to do every day of the week and to make those difficult choices.

We are facing a deficit and debt set of facts and a challenge we have never faced in the Nation's history, and we have to be responsive to that. I spent a decade in State government in Pennsylvania as the auditor general of the State and, in the last 2 years in that decade, as treasurer. I know a lot about cutting waste, fraud, and abuse, how to identify it, how to cut it out, and how to make change. That is why I was so heartened by what I saw in a GAO report last month.

On March 1, the GAO released a report entitled "Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue." It should serve as one measure, but it should serve as a how-to guide to reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in government. It is all there.

Here are some of the highlights. The report identified numerous areas of the Federal budget where unnecessary duplication, overlap or fragmentation exist. By some estimates, addressing these redundancies could save more than \$100 billion and potentially as much as \$200 billion. It is not going to reduce the deficit by as much as we need to reduce it, but that, as well, is a very good start, a good place to look. We need to take a hard look at reports such as that and take action.

I voted to support an amendment last week that would require the Office of Management and Budget to immediately cut at least \$5 billion in wasteful and duplicative spending in government programs. I was happy to see that pass the Senate. This is another step, a first step, and a good start, in addition to what we are doing today by cutting almost \$40 billion. But we have to cut spending in a way that is smart. We have to cut spending in a way that is

smart enough to realize that those decisions have to contribute to economic growth to keep the economy in a State such as Pennsylvania and a country such as America growing. We have to continue to grow as we cut, and we have to continue to create jobs as we cut. We cannot do one and not the other.

The Federal budget should also reflect not just our national priorities but our values as well. This holds true in the budget we are about to debate, the 2012 budget. Unfortunately, what Republican Members in the House have proposed for the upcoming fiscal year puts the entire burden of reducing the deficit on older citizens, students, and middle-income families. That does not sound like a family to me. That does not sound like working together, coming together on a plan, everyone trying to sacrifice, everyone trying to pitch in. It sounds as if we are placing the burden on members of the family who should not bear the whole burden.

The Republican plan would end Medicare as we know it. It is as simple as that. It would end Medicare as we know it. In Pennsylvania, that means 2.2 million people who are Medicare beneficiaries would be directly and adversely impacted. These are not just numbers and statistics. It happens to be 2.2 million people. But who are they? They are people who fought our wars. They are people who worked in our factories. They are people who built this economy over many generations. They are people who took care of our children, taught our children, cared for our children. These are people who gave all of us life and love, and we are going to come in with a Medicare scheme to just put the burden on them and say we have done deficit reduction? I do not think that is what a family does, and I do not think that is what America has done or will ever do.

We worked hard to reduce out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries under the affordable care act. The Republican House plan will double—double—out-of-pocket expenses, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The Republican plan does nothing to reduce health costs or reform the health care delivery system. It does nothing at all to do that. What it does is shift costs to older citizens and people with disabilities.

The GOP plan in the House targets health care spending. Here is what it does: It cuts over \$770 billion out of Medicaid by converting it to a block grant program. What does that mean? It means that those who are supposed to be able to rely on the good services provided in Medicaid have to shoulder the burden. Medicaid provides health care to the most vulnerable people in our society. Older citizens living in nursing homes, in many instances, millions of them rely on Medicaid, not always just Medicare. Children, tens of millions—I think the number right now is about 27 million to be exact—27 million people rely on Medicaid and people with disabilities.

As we look to reform our budget and to reduce the deficit and debt as we must, we should not take steps that will harm children by some of the proposals we see for Medicaid.

About one-third of rural children in America are beneficiaries of Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. We should remember that when we are thinking about what Medicaid is.

By every measure, Medicaid is both cost-effective and an essential lifeline for our children. Many people know about the early periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment provisions within Medicaid. It is the gold standard for how poor children get their health care.

Thank goodness, we have had that in place all these decades. But we have people now who want to eliminate that basic gold standard in health care.

We have a long way to go. We have a lot of work to do. We have much work to do on the deficit and debt, and we have to get to that. We still have to reduce spending. We did reduce it by a record amount in the bill we are voting on today. But as we do this, just as families have to come together and share burdens and cut costs, we have to remember our approach should be similar to any American family. Unfortunately, there are some people around here who do not seem to understand that, that we need to approach this as a family approaches it and not place all the burden on the vulnerable—on children, older citizens, and those who sometimes do not have a voice in Washington.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MR. KYL. Mr. President, in a few minutes, we are going to be voting on the continuing resolution which our House colleagues are voting on literally as we speak. I wish to address that briefly, but I must comment on one of the things my colleague from Pennsylvania said.

He is critical of the Ryan budget but does not appear to have read the Ryan budget because I know he would not deliberately mischaracterize it. He is wrong in several respects, and I will cite one example. He said the Ryan budget will end Medicare as we know it and that millions of seniors will be directly affected. That is simply not true, unless we count someone as a senior who is 53 or 54 years old. The Ryan budget does not affect anyone above the age of 54 with respect to Medicare. It says, if you have Medicare and you are 55 or older, nothing changes for you. All we do is provide premium support for those age 54 and below.

It is simply incorrect to say millions of seniors would be directly affected by the Ryan budget with respect to their Medicare coverage.

Let me go back to the point of our discussion right now. As I said, we will be voting very soon on the continuing resolution. This is the final continuing

resolution, we can finally say, for the fiscal year 2011, that funds the government for the rest of this fiscal year. It does mark the end of a long and hard-fought process. I am pleased we have been able to cut billions of dollars from the Federal Government and avoid a government shutdown.

It is true \$38 billion in spending cuts represents a tiny fraction of the Federal budget, and it is less than many of us would have liked. But those who have been critical of the deal, saying it does not go far enough, should keep three points in mind.

First of all, our fiscal problems were not created in a day and will not be solved in one budget. It is a good start. It is like the weight I put on. It took me a long time to add the 10 or 12 extra pounds, and I am not going to get them off overnight. It will take me time to get them off.

The budget agreement begins a process that is critical to beginning the reduction of our deficit. The agreement will enact the largest nondefense spending cut in dollar terms in American history, just months after President Obama asked Congress for a spending freeze that would have provided no cuts whatsoever.

The Wall Street Journal points out:

Domestic discretionary spending grew by 6 percent in 2008, 11 percent in 2009, and 14 percent in 2010, but this year will fall by 4 percent. That's no small reversal.

I believe they are correct.

Second, no one got everything they wanted. Some wanted more in cuts, some wanted less. I would have preferred we cut more, but this was the best deal we could get that could pass both Chambers of Congress and signed by the President.

Third, this debate has altered the conversation about spending, and that is a good thing. As columnist William McGurn wrote Wednesday, during the budget negotiations, Speaker BOEHNER helped change the national debate over spending "from 'stimulus' and 'investment' to 'how much spending we need to cut'—which is why [the President] press[ed] the reset button" in his speech this week on spending and debt. I think Mr. McGurn is correct. We have changed the fight from how much money we are going to spend on stimulus to how much we are going to cut from this and future budgets.

Once the final 2011 budget passes, and we move on to the much larger discussion about the 2012 budget, we will be talking not about saving billions but about saving trillions of dollars. The problem, as we all know, is a \$14 trillion debt, with a large amount of that owned by China and by other foreign countries. It also represents over \$53 trillion in unfunded liabilities.

In May, our Nation is expected to hit its debt ceiling, and the President has asked us to increase that ceiling. Senate Republicans and House Republicans—and I believe many Democrats as well—have said that in order to raise the debt ceiling, we need to do

something significant about the debt and about constraining future spending. The longer we wait, the worse the problems will get. They are exacerbated over time. And we are not going to raise the debt ceiling without ensuring we don't have to keep on doing it in the future.

Raising taxes, as the President proposed, will not be helpful in this process. It is disappointing the only specific proposal the President laid out in his speech yesterday was, in fact, this call for higher taxes. Speaker BOEHNER has said raising taxes is a nonstarter, and I imagine the vast majority of Senate Republicans will take that position as well. Most Americans do not believe that we are undertaxed but that Washington has a spending problem.

I will briefly go over a few of the better ideas our conference has been discussing, which I think could attract support from both sides of the aisle.

First is a balanced budget amendment, which all Senate Republicans have cosponsored. This should not serve as a means to raise taxes but as a mechanism to ensure the Federal Government has to live within its means each year, just as most American families do.

Second, I believe there is strong support in the Republican caucus for a constitutional spending limitation at 18 percent of the gross domestic product. Why 18 percent? Because that is roughly equal to the revenue as a percentage of gross domestic product over the last 40 years. An 18-percent spending limit would stop Washington from spending more than it takes in each year.

And third—and I am glad to see the Senator from Missouri in the Chair while I pass on this compliment—Senators Corker and McCaskill have sponsored the Commitment to American Prosperity Act, known as the CAP Act. I strongly support their legislation. It would cap both mandatory and discretionary spending and put all government spending on the table.

Beginning in 2013, the CAP Act would establish Federal spending limits that would, over 10 years, reduce spending to 20.6 percent of the gross domestic products. That is the average of the last 40 years. To reduce any gamesmanship, the bill codifies the definition for emergency spending.

I know some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle wish to see even more dramatic reductions as a part of the CAP Act. I will note the Corker-McCaskill proposal is responsible and mainstream and it could, hopefully, attract a good deal of support from both sides of the aisle.

Over in the House of Representatives, there are also some good ideas. Budget Committee Chairman PAUL RYAN has been a leader on fiscal issues, and that Chamber will soon consider his budget plan for the next fiscal year. Chairman RYAN believes this blueprint could reverse Washington's trend of spending beyond its means and passing the debt

on to our children and grandchildren, and I believe he is on target. His budget reflects the kind of difficult and politically unpopular choices lawmakers will need to make in order to do something about our unsustainable spending and debt.

Perhaps that is why Democrat Erskine Bowles, head of the President's deficit commission, praised the Ryan budget as "a serious, honest and straightforward approach." Notably, Mr. Bowles and his cochairman Alan Simpson said the President's budget "doesn't go nearly far enough in addressing the Nation's fiscal challenges."

Chairman RYAN's budget would return Federal spending—specifically what is known as nondefense discretionary spending—to 2008 levels. That is the level before the massive spending unleashed by the Obama administration. The spending cuts proposed in Ryan's budget total \$5.8 trillion over 10 years.

In a recent article, John Taylor, an economics professor at Stanford, Gary Becker, a Nobel prize winner, and George Shultz, former Secretary of Labor, Treasury, and State, wrote:

Credible actions that reduce the rapid growth of Federal spending and debt will raise economic growth and lower the unemployment rate.

They also said:

Higher private investment, not more government purchases, is the surest way to increase prosperity.

Reducing government spending can increase economic productivity and jobs.

President Obama has sought to stimulate the economy and create jobs by spending trillions of government dollars. What has that gotten us? RECORD deficits, excess borrowing—about 40 cents of every dollar the government now spends will have to be borrowed—and it has gotten us stubbornly high unemployment.

Chairman RYAN's budget also calls for tax reform through sensible and growth-promoting policies. The budget contemplates a top tax rate of 25 percent for individuals and businesses. Currently, the tax rate on business is 35 percent, the highest of all of the countries in the developed world. That rate, by the way, discourages investment, it discourages job creation, and it makes America an expensive place in which to do business. In effect, it encourages business to move their operations overseas, something all of us are very concerned about.

What we need are solutions that emphasize the strength of American entrepreneurs and our private sector, not the government; to spur the economy and help put people back to work.

In the debate ahead, I hope we can engage in serious discussions about how to take on our fiscal problems in a responsible way—to bring down the cost of government, boost our economy and promote economic growth. That is what Americans are looking for, and it is what our country needs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I rise to make a parliamentary inquiry.

The Senate will soon receive from the House legislation to fund the Federal Government for the rest of this year—H.R. 1473. Normally, spending bills such as this one go through the Appropriations Committee. Despite the fact that this spending bill the Senate will soon take up covers funding for the entire Federal Government, including all appropriations bills for the year, it was never even considered by the House or Senate Appropriations Committees.

Snuck into this massive spending bill are legislative provisions that typically are not allowed by Senate rules to be included in the appropriations process. The Senate has a rule—rule XVI—that prohibits Senate legislative amendments to an appropriations bill. Despite this Senate rule, the spending bill the Senate will consider today includes provisions that are clearly legislative in nature. Specifically, I am referring to section 1858 of the spending bill which repeals free choice vouchers from the affordable care act that became law last year.

There should be no doubt that repealing a law or part of a law is legislating. In this case, section 1858 repeals part of the Internal Revenue Code. Amending the Internal Revenue Code is general legislation, not the appropriation of funds. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office has actually determined that free choice vouchers involve no appropriation of funds whatsoever.

Madam President, my parliamentary inquiry is whether repealing free choice vouchers in the spending bill the Senate will soon consider is legislating on an appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair is advised that repealing any law is legislative in nature, and repealing a law in an appropriations bill is legislating on an appropriations bill.

Mr. WYDEN. I thank the Chair for making this very clear; that repealing free choice vouchers—the opportunity to come up with a marketplace-oriented approach for people in a health care no man's land—in this spending bill is clearly legislating on an appropriations bill and that is not the way the Senate traditionally does business.

If this provision were brought up in the Senate, we now know it would be ruled out of order. It would be ruled out of order because in the Senate we simply do not legislate on appropriations bills. The Senate doesn't legislate on appropriations bills for a simple reason. Every Senator knows it would be open season for the special interest lobbyists all over this town.

The administration and this body took a stand earlier this year against earmarking—something the Chair is very much aware of—and I wish to quote from the President's State of the Union Address. The President said: The American people deserve to know that

special interests aren't larding up legislation with pet projects. Both parties in Congress should know this: If a bill comes to my desk with earmarks inside it, I will veto it.

Madam President, I wish to have somebody explain the difference between letting a lobbyist slip an earmark into an appropriations bill and slipping legislative language into an appropriations bill that benefits a whole array of special interest lobbyists. It sure seems to have the same effect to me.

I am not certain who proposed eliminating free choice vouchers in this appropriations deal. Maybe a lobbyist asked for it or maybe some staffer with special interest sympathies saw an opportunity to send the lobbyist what one lobbyist called today "an early Easter gift." But either way, I know with 100 percent certainty this decision was not made with the public interest in mind. The American people are not the ones who benefit from eliminating free choice vouchers. The American people like the idea of being able to have choices for their health care—choices, I would point out, that are much like the ones we have as Members of Congress.

The fact is this is one provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that combined the thinking of colleagues on both sides of the aisle—Democrats who wanted to expand coverage and Republicans who have an interest in choice and competition. This was the one provision that provided a concrete path to holding down health care costs, and it has now been gutted by the special interests.

Some special interests are arguing that free choice vouchers would in some way harm employer-based health coverage. What we know for certain is that for the group of people who could access a free choice voucher, the employer-based health system is dysfunctional. It is dysfunctional for them. The group of people who are covered by free choice vouchers—folks who aren't eligible for the exchanges and folks who aren't eligible for subsidies—now have only two choices: coverage that is completely unavailable or coverage that is completely unaffordable.

The chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, at the time free choice vouchers was accepted, specifically talked about how this filled a gap in the bill. And now, with it gone, more than 300,000 Americans aren't going to have a path to affordable, good quality coverage. Free choice vouchers were needed at the time we worked on the affordable care act and they are even more necessary today.

For example, the Kaiser Family Foundation, in their most recent analysis, has demonstrated how consistently, again and again, more health care costs are being shifted onto the backs of American workers. In their most recent analysis, they found that employee health expenses in the last year have gone up 14 percent, and the

employee was eating almost all of that. Almost all of it was being shifted onto the backs of the workers.

This was important today—it was important when we moved originally to enact the legislation. It is even more important today. The fact is, these individuals are only looking for another path because the system does not work for them. If it worked for them, we would not even have an issue. But as the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee pointed out, this is a gap in the system, a gap that, had we been able to sustain free choice vouchers and stop the lobbyists from stripping them out, we would have had a way to ensure that hundreds and hundreds of thousands of hard-working Americans—these are folks who work at jobs—would still be able to go to sleep at night knowing they had decent, good-quality, affordable coverage for themselves and their families.

The Senate does not legislate on appropriations bills because, as the President said so appropriately, we should be working to rebuild people's faith in the institution of government. We do not slip legislative language into these kinds of bills that benefits a few special interest groups at the expense of hundreds of thousands of Americans. This is not the way we do business.

Throughout 2009, I promised my constituents that I would not support health care reforms unless they were real reforms. This legislation lets special interest groups take real reform out of the health care law. It seems to me that, all over this town, the special interest groups are looking at the bill and they are saying now it is going to be possible, if we can just find, behind closed doors, some allies to take away real cost containment, real opportunities for good-quality, affordable coverage for people. This legislation takes real reform out of the health care law. Because I keep my promises, I will not support it.

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

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the last 2 weeks have been very good weeks for this country and this Congress. We are passing a continuing resolution and funding the Government and not letting the government close makes a great deal of sense. I think that was very much to the better. Even more important, we now will have a significant debate, over the next few months, about what this country should be like over the next several decades. That is very important for our country. It is what we should be doing. I salute Congressman RYAN for laying out on the table a vision and Speaker BOEHNER for supporting it.

I disagree with that vision, but they did have the forthrightness and the directness to put their views on the floor. It is a different vision than what America is today.

I also salute President Obama. He joined the issue yesterday, clearly, without obfuscation, directly, and showed the many places where he differed with Congressman RYAN. He laid out a different vision as to where America should go. In a minute, I will discuss my views of those visions, but I wish to say this at the outset: It is very good to have this debate. I hope this will be a month or two in which there will be invective and there will be clashes, but I hope, at the end of the day, the debate between the Republican vision of where America should go and the Democratic vision—between Congressman RYAN and President Obama—will be one of those times when historians will look back and say this is a place where America, through its Congress and its President, chose a direction. That is, after all, why we are here.

We have many different issues to consider, but the role of government, what it should do and what it should not, is probably the most important for the next several decades. The fact that the issue has been joined by Congressman RYAN on the one hand and President Obama on the other can only be good for America. What we will do is come to a conclusion, hopefully, in the next month or two. Let me give my views of those two visions.

Yesterday, President Obama delivered a thoughtful, inspired speech about the need to rein in our out-of-control deficit. He called for a comprehensive approach, including cuts to defense and mandatory spending, and he rightfully put revenue on the table. His is a serious plan, one that would reduce the deficit by \$4 trillion over the next 12 years. As only a President can do, he powerfully framed the debate that will likely continue to rage, certainly for the next several months and probably over the next year and a half—long after we resolve the debt ceiling. This is a debate the American people want to have. It is a debate Democrats are ready and eager to engage in. It is a debate we believe we will win. We have the high ground.

The House Republican plan puts the middle class last instead of first. It will never ever pass the Senate, and we know the American people will reject it as well. The debate we just concluded, the debate about the CR, was about spending levels. The debate ahead of us is about more than spending levels, it is about the role of government itself.

House Republicans are not trying to balance the budget—no. They are trying to fundamentally alter Americans' relationship with their government. They believe the message of the last election was that Americans wanted a dramatic change, a great limitation in how much the Government should do.

It is our view, as Democrats, that the American people gave us two messages. First, deal with the deficit. There is too much spending. I say, as a party, we ignore that message at our peril, but we have not ignored that message, neither in the CR nor in the President's proposals.

The American people sent a second message as loudly and as strongly as the first; that is, grow the economy, help the middle class continue to have better lives, as they have over the last five decades, make sure there are meaningful jobs in America. I believe a budget that reflects the American people's view has to do both these things: reduce the deficit but keep that American dream brightly burning, the American dream that the American middle class holds, which says the odds are quite good that we will be doing better 10 years from today than we are doing now and the odds are better still that our children will do better than we. That is what we believe American people told us to do.

We believe the budget revealed by Congressman RYAN and supported by Republicans is not what the American people want. It is a negative, pessimistic message. It is a message that says the great days of America are over and we do not believe it is what the people want. As we go through this debate, we shall see how that comes out. I believe we will prevail.

The Republican budget unveiled last week by Chairman RYAN is, on closer inspection, not a serious document. The pundits and political handicappers may have hailed it as a bold, daring approach to the fiscal challenges facing our country, but a closer examination reveals that Ryan's budget hews exactly to his parties' orthodoxy. It does not gore a single Republican ox. The House Republican budget puts the entire burden of reducing the deficit on seniors, students, and middle-class families. At the same time, it protects corporate welfare for oil companies, gives giant new tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires, and leaves Pentagon spending almost completely untouched.

Consider what PAUL RYAN wants to do to Medicare. His plan ends Medicare as we know it and replaces it with a private voucher system that will cut benefits. Seniors would be left to fend for themselves with no guarantee of affordable coverage. They would have to pay thousands of dollars more out of their pockets.

As this chart shows, under the current Medicare system, the average senior on Medicare in 2022 will contribute about 25 percent of the cost of their health care. But under the Ryan plan, seniors would have to pay 68 percent of the cost of coverage themselves according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

That is an outrageous burden. Simply put, it would drive many seniors into poverty. This generation of seniors, the first generation who was able

to say they could retire and not go to bed every night sweating about how they were going to pay for health care if they or their spouse got an illness, would be the last generation to do so under PAUL RYAN's vision.

In America, we have said we have bounty. And some of that bounty should go to those in their golden years, to those who worked hard and who built the country and who raised the families and fought the wars. They should not have to worry that they could not afford health care if, God forbid, a serious illness afflicted them. The Ryan budget turns its back on that vision.

Republicans have been patting themselves on the back recently for tackling entitlement reform, but their approach is nothing more than a rigid, ideological quest to unravel the social safety net.

Medicare certainly has cost issues, but a better way to protect and preserve Medicare for future generations is to cut out the waste and inefficiency that everyone knows exists, not to privatize the program. Our plan is simple when it comes to Medicare: Mend it, do not end it. In the health care reform law, we made a good downpayment on this effort. We began to shift Medicare in the larger health care system from an expensive, fee-for-service model toward a system that pays providers for episodes of care. The truth is, when it comes to reining in the cost of Medicare, the President did it first, and he did it better. We Democrats are willing to build off that law. We can make further reforms to the delivery system. It needs further reforms. And we will further drive down the costs. The Ryan budget reverses progress we have already made and in doing so reopens the doughnut hole, further burdening seniors' budgets.

It is bad enough that the Ryan budget ends Medicare as we know it and increases costs for seniors, but just as egregious is what RYAN proposes to do with all the money he takes from seniors on Medicare. As this second chart shows and as the President said yesterday, House Republicans want to give millionaires a new tax cut of \$200,000. To pay for it, it would make 33 seniors each pay \$6,000 more for health care. What kind of vision is that? The Ryan budget uses Medicare cuts to reduce the tax rate on millionaires and billionaires to 25 percent from 35 percent. That is the lowest level since 1931 when Herbert Hoover was President. The Ryan budget reduces taxes on the rich to the lowest level since 1931, the Hoover era, the era of the Great Depression.

I have nothing against the rich. God bless them. Many of them are living the American dream. They are what many of us aspire to be. But in order to keep that dream alive and get our country on firmer fiscal footing, we need a little shared sacrifice. Democrats want to work with Republicans to get our fiscal house in order, but we believe the best way to do it is to end the

millionaires' tax break, not cut Medicare benefits.

Let me be clear. A grand bargain on long-term deficit reduction is next to impossible unless we look at raising revenue. Unfortunately, Republican leaders are already trying to rule out revenue. If the other side refuses to even consider savings in the Tax Code, they will lose credibility with the American people. We simply cannot balance the budget by focusing solely on domestic discretionary spending, a narrow 12 percent slice of the budget. Cancer research and Head Start did not create our current deficit problem, and we will not fix it by going after cancer research and Head Start.

Thankfully, many rank-and-file Republicans seem to agree with the need to put revenue on the table. The Senator from Oklahoma, a true fiscal conservative, said a blanket defense of all tax cuts is profoundly misguided. My Republican friend from Nebraska said Republicans need to keep an open mind and keep everything on the table, including revenue. My Republican friend from Georgia had said that revenue, along with entitlement cuts, should be part of the budget compromise. My friend from Tennessee, with whom I work closely on the Rules Committee, said that tax subsidies for big oil "may be too expensive." As you can see, many of my colleagues are prepared to tackle this challenge with, to use the phrase of the Republican Senator from Nebraska, "an open mind."

The bottom line is that any budget that leaves defense and revenue off the table is ultimately untenable. Indeed, a dollar cut from defense spending reduces the deficit just as much as a dollar cut from domestic discretionary spending. While there is certainly waste on the domestic discretionary side of the budget, there is also certainly waste on the defense side.

While we are certainly open to compromise, Democrats will not tolerate the House Republican budget assault on Medicare. It is not fair, it is not right, and it will never, never pass the Senate.

I am hopeful that both parties in both Chambers of Congress will come together to reach a reasonable, responsible deficit deal, but in order to do that, Republican leaders need to take off their ideological straitjackets. They can start by going to the drafting room and coming up with a fairer, more broad-based proposal than the Ryan budget.

In conclusion, Speaker BOEHNER needed Democrats to pass this year's budget, and he will need Democrats to pass a long-term deficit reduction plan as well. The sooner he abandons the tea party, the sooner we can have a compromise.

We hope the coming debate will yield a sound, serious deal. That is our hope. That is our wish. That is what the next few months are about. If it doesn't, we Democrats will have to take this contrast of priorities into 2012. We know

that in that battle, too, we will have the high ground.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I see my distinguished colleagues, the senior Senator from Hawaii and the senior Senator from Mississippi, the leaders of our Appropriations Committee, on the floor. I just ask if I may be able to continue for 2 or 3 minutes.

Mr. INOUE. Please.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I appreciate the extremely hard work the majority leader—and I have told him this—and the President—I have told him that—and our distinguished chairman—I have told him that—the work they have done to get the best possible deal under extremely difficult circumstances.

I now understand that with the final resolution, I will not be able to vote for it, as I assume others in the Vermont delegation will not. I am afraid that it creates an impossible bargain. It averts a government shutdown at the expense of our overall national interests.

This year, Congress spent most of its time negotiating three rounds of deeper and deeper cuts in the current year's budget, an exercise in oftentimes misguided wheel-spinning which ignores the fact that discretionary spending is but a relative fraction of the overall budget while addressing some of the most pressing and urgent needs of ordinary Americans. Advocates paint this agreement in moral terms. I agree with them. Budgets are about our real priorities.

There is so much in this budget package that is inconsistent with basic Vermont and American values. Drastic cuts ending hunger programs for low-income women and children, elimination of Vermont's weatherization program, and cuts to economic development programs that grow jobs in my State of Vermont are not my idea of prudent sacrifices. There is no moral credit to Congress to cut vouchers for homeless Vermont veterans who served their country honorably, nor does Congress cover itself in glory by denying first-generation Vermonters help in going to college because of cuts to the TRIO Program. Is there moral good in eliminating housing counseling for low-income families facing foreclosure or slashing small stipends for seniors who are on Meals on Wheels? The estimates of these cuts in my little State range as high as \$150 million—a tremendous burden at a time when we face the worst time since the Great Depression.

The reason we are here, as a column pointed out very well in our national papers yesterday, is because even though we had an agreement to pass an omnibus bill last December, at the last minute, those on the other side of the aisle who had agreed on that reneged, and of course we were not able to get the 60 votes necessary in the Senate.

I had supported that omnibus budget bill even though there were enormous

cuts in it. It would have enacted tens of billions of dollars in carefully drawn, reasonable reductions below the White House budget proposal. The distinguished Senator from Hawaii had worked very hard and encouraged us to make cut after cut after cut. We all agreed with him. I agreed with him. It was in the omnibus. And if that had passed, we would not be here. But because those who had agreed to support it changed their minds at the last minute, it killed the omnibus bill and it forced the Congress into a series of stopgap funding bills and now into a slapdash continuing resolution.

In addition to the cuts in the omnibus bill, I also supported reductions of billions more, and I voted for billions of dollars in cuts and short-term reductions in the continuing resolutions earlier this year.

Now, some who tout this round of cuts as the most important and as the largest cuts in discretionary spending in history are the same ones who pushed through hundreds of billions of dollars of tax cuts to companies that ship jobs overseas—American jobs overseas—greatly adding to the profits of our oil companies that are now charging us \$4 a gallon for gas and more; pushed through for multimillionaires, many of whom said they did not want the tax cuts—pushed it through nonetheless.

The correlation between those spending cuts and those unfunded tax cuts is direct. It is unflattering to the proponents of both initiatives.

Frankly, I am tired of being lectured on fiscal sanity from those who voted for an unnecessary war in Iraq, saying that is because of 9/11, even though, as we know from every single report that has come out, Iraq had absolutely nothing to do with 9/11. But we spent \$1 trillion, thousands of American lives, tens of thousands of other peoples lives in Iraq, and then, for the first time in the history of this country, instead of paying for a war, as we always have in the past, we say: Oh, no, we will borrow the money. And by the way, we will give you a tax cut too.

So who paid for that war in Iraq? The men and women who valiantly fought there and their families who waited, wondering if they would come back alive, broken, or dead, and often were given the worst and grimmest news. They are the only ones who sacrificed. Everybody else got a tax cut, and we borrowed the money from China and everywhere else to pay for a war we should have never been in, and \$1 trillion later, 10 years later, we are still spending tens of billions of dollars there.

Some corporations—some others made a lot of money; we did not. And then we spend another 8 or 9 years that we should not have been in Afghanistan doing the same thing—borrowing the money for that.

It seems that our soldiers paid a great burden, and the American people paid a great burden. But boy, some

made out like bandits. I don't want any lectures from those who gave the bandits their bag of gold.

I yield the floor.

FISCAL YEAR 2011 SAFER PROGRAM

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I want to highlight an important provision that is included in the Homeland Security division of this bill. It is related to the firefighter hiring program known as SAFER. In 2009 and 2010, Congress approved waivers for several restrictions of the SAFER grant program because in this economic downturn fire departments were struggling to meet those requirements. By adding this flexibility to the program, fire departments were able to make the best use of the funding provided in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. A provision in this bill maintains three of the same waivers for fiscal year 2011 and specifically allows for the grants to be used to retain and/or rehire personnel, to supplant local funds, and a local match is not required. While some might argue that it is a local responsibility to hire firefighters, it has been made clear disaster after disaster—and especially including catastrophic events such as the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina—that firefighters are the first people we call on from all over the Nation to serve in a national response. Of course, I supported the inclusion of all six waivers contained in the Inouye amendment. Through negotiations we were able to secure the provisions that allow for the retention and/or rehiring of firefighters, the waiver of a cost share, and the ability to supplant local funds.

Mr. INOUE. I thank my subcommittee chairman for highlighting this important provision. Ensuring that the SAFER grants are available to retain and/or rehire firefighters and waiving match requirements will provide communities the assistance they need in these tough times.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, much attention has been given to how the Ryan plan ends Medicare as we know it by turning Medicare into a voucher program.

For example, on April 6, 2011, AARP wrote to Congressman RYAN:

Today's budget proposal appropriately acknowledges that health care costs must be addressed if the federal budget is to be balanced. However, rather than recognizing that health care is an unavoidable necessity which must be made more affordable for all Americans, this proposal simply shifts these high costs onto Medicare beneficiaries, and shifts the even higher costs of increased uninsured care onto everyone else. By creating a "premium support" system for future Medicare beneficiaries, the proposal will increase costs for beneficiaries while removing Medicare's promise of secure health coverage—a guarantee that future seniors have contributed to through a lifetime of hard work.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities put out a statement on April 6, 2011 stating:

Many future Medicare beneficiaries with modest incomes, such as elderly widows who must live on \$15,000 or \$20,000 a year, also would likely be hit by the plan's Medicare provisions; the Medicare voucher (or defined contribution) they would receive would fall farther and farther behind health care costs—and purchase less and less coverage—with each passing year. Aggravating this problem, Ryan has said that his plan calls for repeal of a key measure of the health reform law that is designed to moderate Medicare costs—the Independent Payment Advisory Board. In other words, his plan would scrap mechanisms to slow growth in the costs of health care services that Medicare beneficiaries need, even as it cuts back the portion of those costs that Medicare would cover.

The Center for American Progress writes:

Medicare as we know it would end for new beneficiaries in 2022 under the House Republican budget proposal. It would be replaced with a government voucher that would be paid directly to private insurance companies. This system would double costs to seniors. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, or CBO, concluded that "most elderly people would pay more for their health care than they would pay under the current Medicare system."

However, there has been less discussion of the other ways in which the Ryan plan would hurt current beneficiaries.

So I would like to give some specific examples how the changes Congressman RYAN proposed will impact current Medicare beneficiaries.

The Republican plan will force beneficiaries to pay for preventive services and eliminates the free annual wellness exam they can currently receive. Nearly all 44 million beneficiaries who have Medicare, including 2.2 million in Pennsylvania, can now receive free preventive services—such as mammograms and colonoscopies—as well as a free annual wellness visit with their doctor.

The Republican plan will eliminate the efforts that have begun to close the doughnut hole. If the Republican budget becomes law, costs for Medicare beneficiaries who fall into the doughnut hole will increase drastically. Over 266,000 Pennsylvanians will pay an additional \$149 million in 2012 and \$3 billion through 2020.

The Republican plan hurts beneficiaries today by repealing improvements designed to save them money and provide needed services. It hurts beneficiaries even more beginning in 2022 when end Medicare as we know it and puts in place a voucher system to ration health care and increase costs for beneficiaries.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, last Friday night, in the absence of a budget deal, the Federal Government came within 1 hour of shutting its doors and all but emergency services. The obstacle to an agreement at that point was not a matter of spending levels or budget cuts. The obstacle was ideologically driven policy riders that some insisted on including in the budget bill. Thankfully, in the end, we prevailed in stripping out the abhorrent rider to bar funding for Planned Parenthood.

A small but vocal minority is adamant about eliminating one specific organization's health centers, which provide health care and family planning services for women nationwide. Planned Parenthood centers receive Federal funding from title X of the Public Health Service Act—the only Federal grant program dedicated to offering people comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services. President Nixon was instrumental in enacting this legislation, and it has been supported since then by lawmakers and Presidents of both parties. As many women can tell you, title X was a remarkable breakthrough in women's health care.

What a travesty it would have been to gut health services to women that literally have meant the difference between life or death, health or grave illness, to countless American women. Vermonters were outspoken in their opposition to this rollback for women's health, and I am proud of our State and grateful for our success in this round.

Tens of thousands of women in Vermont depend on title X of the Public Health Service Act for lifesaving preventive treatments and care. Around the country, there are many providers of title X services, but in Vermont, Planned Parenthood centers are the only clinics where many lower income women can go for family planning care. Planned Parenthood centers in Vermont offer women and teens annual health exams, cervical and breast cancer screenings, and HIV screenings and counseling. Last year in Vermont, Planned Parenthood provided critical primary and preventive services to nearly 21,000 patients.

In the last few weeks more than 6,000 Vermonters have contacted me about their support for the funds that make title X health services possible and for Planned Parenthood's long and commendable record of making title X's promise a reality for millions of American women in Vermont and across the Nation. I have heard from nurses and doctors in Vermont urging me to support funding for Planned Parenthood in order to continue essential care these centers offer to their own patients and to women who would not receive primary health care were it not for Planned Parenthood.

Despite the misleading and blatantly false statements of some ideologically driven advocates, more than 90 percent of the care Planned Parenthood health centers offer is preventive. In fact, 6 of every 10 women who use Planned Parenthood for title X services describe it as their primary source of medical care. And despite what some opponents of women's health funding have proclaimed, absolutely no title X funding can be used for abortion services. The sad irony is that defunding title X and Planned Parenthood would result in more unintended pregnancies, and probably more abortions.