

that allow our economy in my State to grow and to prosper.

So I think one of the reasons tax revenues are down, people are not investing. When they are not investing, they are not turning those resources over. They are not taking realizations, and they are not paying taxes. We need to get investment capital put to work. We need to get people put back to work. The best way to do that is to provide economic certainty: tax policies, regulatory policies that are reasonable and that provide incentives, not disincentives, for investment.

Today, we have tax and regulatory policies that are doing absolutely the opposite. They are discouraging investment, and, as a consequence, I think we have a lower level of revenues. But the real problem, the real problem, is not revenues, it is spending. That is abundantly clear.

If we look at where we have been for the last 40 years in terms of what we spend as a percentage of our overall economy, that average is about 20.6 percent. That is a 40-year average, historical average, we spend on our Federal Government as a percentage of our entire economy. This year we will spend 25.3 percent of our entire economy on just the Federal Government.

That does not include spending on State and local governments. When we add that up, it is over 40 percent of every \$1 we spend in this country is spent on government. So what we see is the government is growing relative to our total economy, and the private economy, those folks out there who are creating the jobs in our private economy, is shrinking relative to the size of the government. That is a trend we have to reverse. It starts with getting spending under control. This is not a revenue problem. This is not a tax problem. As much as many of my colleagues would like to make it that, we flatly cannot look the facts in the face and come to any other conclusion but that spending in Washington is out of control, it has to be reined in.

We have to attack the issue, not only of discretionary spending—the part we annually appropriate for—but these entitlement programs which if not addressed are not only going to bankrupt the country but ensure that there is not a Medicare Program and a Social Security Program available to future generations of Americans.

These are very tumultuous times. There is a lot of uncertainty. I think the jobs numbers that came out this morning again point to how fragile this economic recovery is. It is so dependent upon good, sound policies coming out of Washington. For better or worse, small businesses, entrepreneurs now, unfortunately, tend to be partners with Washington, DC, because there is so much policy coming out of here, whether it is tax policy, regulatory policy, that impacts their bottom lines every single day.

We need to get out of the way to keep those taxes low, to get Federal spend-

ing under control, to make sure the regulatory framework in which our businesses operate represents the minimum level and not the maximum level that we can do to make it more difficult for small businesses to grow and to create jobs. If we can do those types of things, address the issue of spending and debt, take it on in a meaningful way, deal with this issue of reforming our Tax Code and making sure our tax rates stay low on businesses in this country and make sure regulations and regulatory policies coming out of Washington, DC, are not the impediment they are today to investment and job creation, I think we can get this country back on track.

But that is where it starts. If we want to create jobs, if we want to grow this economy, if we want to make it more prosperous and stronger for future generations, those are the steps, in my view, we have to take. I hope we get started soon. I do not think we can afford to wait.

A lot of people around here think these are all political exercises that we will go through the hoops and the motions, and we will wait to solve this until after the next election. We cannot afford to wait. The time is now. If we do not do it, we are going to put in great peril future generations and their ability to enjoy the same standard of living, the same quality of life we have enjoyed.

That is not fair to them. That is why I believe the time to start is now and the time to get this budget process—not only the reforms of the process but the spending restraints in place—is today.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I was presiding, before the senior Senator from Missouri took my place, and was listening to two of the last three speakers talk about their budget religion, if you will. I think about this. I think we have to look at a little bit of his history.

I do not think I need a lecture on balancing a budget. I was in the House of Representatives in the 1990s when, without one Republican vote, we passed President Clinton's budget. We had a huge budget deficit in those days. That budget began us on the path to a balanced budget.

I supported a balanced budget amendment in the mid-1990s. By 2000, the year President Clinton left office, we had the biggest budget surplus in American history. Then, in 2001, at the push of President Bush and his Republican colleagues in both Houses, this Congress passed a major tax cut, mostly for the wealthy in 2001; another major tax cut, mostly for the wealthy in 2003, both of which I voted against.

President Bush, with intelligence that was not especially sound—being gentle about it—took us into a war with Iraq, did not pay for it; took us into a war with Afghanistan, did not

pay for it. I voted against the war in Iraq.

In 2003 or 2004, he pushed through Congress by one vote—I remember I was in the House of Representatives opposing that bill, when they kept the rollcall open for 2 hours or longer that night. President Bush was on the phone with recalcitrant members of his party in the House of Representatives—pushed through a Medicare bill that was a bailout to the drug and insurance companies in the name of Medicare privatization, without paying for it.

President Bush leaves office then, leaving the largest budget deficit in our history—going from the largest budget surplus, written, by and large, by the Democrats, because Republicans did not play ball with us during most of the 1990s. Then, after President Bush and the Republican leadership in many of those years, House-Senate, President Bush left us with the biggest budget deficit in history.

When I hear this revisionist history on the Senate floor—I was not even going to talk about this today. But I heard two colleagues, for whom I have respect, one from Alabama, one from South Dakota, talk about this budget deficit in a way that simply is historically inaccurate—in the name of this deficit, and we have to deal with this deficit.

I know the Presiding Officer is focused on that. A lot of us are focused on that. We have to deal with this deficit. But you don't do the same thing over again where you give big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans and then privatize Medicare. That is what they are doing. They are cutting health care, saying it is not sustainable, whatever that means, and giving major tax cuts to the rich, and we are saying that is not sustainable.

HONORING NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I wish to talk about teachers. In my State, the legislature just passed something called SB 5, and the Governor in Ohio signed it. It was a direct assault in many ways on the teaching profession.

The discussions I hear from conservative politicians and their allies in the media—and they have many on editorial boards, especially in central Ohio—and the lack of respect they show for people who choose to teach as a profession is mind-boggling. We trust our children to teachers, yet we attack them—or too many politicians attack them.

I am going to make it personal. I am going to start with my mom. My mom was a high school English teacher born in Mansfield, GA, in 1920. She taught in the era of segregation in Florida and Georgia. Raising my two older brothers and me in Mansfield, OH—she met my dad coming back from World War II, ending up in another Mansfield at the end of the war—she taught in an era of a growing American middle class. Like

teachers throughout our history, she taught her students and her sons that education is a gateway to opportunity, that it can integrate a segregated nation and create a prosperous nation.

At a time when our Nation needs our teachers the most, when our economy needs our students to succeed, it is appropriate to remind ourselves—in spite of this background noise I hear from so many conservative politicians about teachers' unions and about teachers who don't care, about teachers taking off in the summer and being done at 3 o'clock and all the kinds of attacks they like to make on teachers, I think it is important to remind ourselves of the importance of our teachers.

This week, our country recognizes National Teacher Appreciation Week to give thanks and gratitude to teachers across our country to whom we entrust our children and who have made a difference in our lives.

Let me share a few stories about great teachers in Ohio.

Linda Michael of Pomeroy, OH, in Meigs County, down on the Ohio River, works with homeless students from K-12 to make sure they have equal access to the same education as other students, from Head Start to preschool to doctor referrals. She locates students in shelters, motels, and homes of relatives to make sure they have what they need: housing assistance, clothing, food, utilities, and mental health. Is this a teacher who quits at 3 o'clock and doesn't work during the summer? This is above and beyond the call of duty that most of us do in our society. Imagine growing up homeless, going to school, not having your own room, not having a room to share with your sibling, not having a place to go at night. We need teachers to take care of them. We need to do better as a society, but teachers are really a safety net for these children.

Michelle Rzucidio-Rupright is an elementary school teacher in Cleveland. For her, teaching is not a 9-to-5 job. It means going to homeless shelters after school where her students live. It means buying supplies out of her pocket for her students in the classroom. She is a role model in the community.

I know Senator McCASKILL talks to teachers a lot and hears these things. How many teachers tell us they reach into their pockets? These are not Wall Street bankers. They are making sometimes as little as \$35, \$40, \$45, \$50,000 a year. Do we Senators reach into our pockets and buy folders for our office or buy pens? Do Senators do that? Do most businesspeople reach into their pockets to take care of these children? So many teachers do, to buy construction paper—the ones who teach grade school—to buy pens, to give kids money for lunch sometimes. Clearly, teachers play a role most people in this country don't play.

David Fawcett is a Columbus drama teacher. He has helped generations of new immigrants and low-income students see something greater in them-

selves—more than just a poor immigrant child trying to make it. He encourages students to learn language and speech and culture through lines of a play or a musical, through elocution lessons under his guiding presence. He is another teacher who focuses on the individual unique needs of a child who may have been born in another country and may have parents who don't speak English. That child has different challenges from what I had with educated, English-speaking parents in Mansfield, OH, with lots of ideas and privileges. I was taught by my parents to read before I started kindergarten because I was smarter than other kids because I had parents who knew that mattered for me to get ahead and for the advantages I had. Mr. Fawcett clearly focuses on each child's individual, unique personality needs, situation, all that.

John Keller is a government teacher in Orange, a suburb 15 miles east of Cleveland. Mr. Keller addresses the complexity of a subject with the simplest of tools: a sense of humor. He engages students as soon as they walk in the classroom, ensuring a passionate debate and empowering students to always stand up and speak out about the world around them. He makes them laugh. What better way to teach than engaging the students, having a big personality and making people laugh, and sometimes the teacher himself, I am sure, being the butt of the jokes, the humor about himself.

Deb Lammers and Paul Lenz, teachers in Miller City in Putnam County, OH—one of Ohio's smallest counties, southwest of Toledo—are the kinds of math teachers every student deserves. They are patient and kind. They adapt teaching skills to student needs, arriving early and staying late. Again, all this stuff: Oh, teachers quit at 3 o'clock; teachers don't work in the summer. All of this kind of thing from conservatives. Why they don't like teachers is beyond me, but why so many conservative politicians attack teachers for all kinds of things, I don't even pretend to understand. But Ms. Lammers and Mr. Lenz, teaching in Putnam County OH, arrive early and stay late, being accessible to students whenever they need help.

Delete Walker is a retired grade school teacher in Shaker Heights. For decades, she helped children overcome the insecurity of shyness, instilling in them the confidence to read out loud, to sing in a musical to confront their fears. We know how young children—I have four, my wife and I do. And when they were young—they are not so shy now, but when they were young, they were fairly shy, and they had teachers who helped bring them out of their shell sometimes. As parents, we try to do that, with some success, but I have watched teachers with my own children. I have watched them help them believe in themselves, particularly young girls. I wanted to teach my daughters that they could accomplish anything—anything—and the fact of

their gender, especially in that generation a few years ago, especially when I was a kid—girls were treated differently, and girls were not expected to achieve the way boys did or in too many cases the way boys were expected to. I saw teachers, with my own daughters, help them believe in themselves and in a big, important way. That is what Ms. Walker did, now retired, but with grade school children she taught in Shaker Heights.

Diane Skelley, Vicky Hilliard, and Pat Carson are high school teachers in West Carrollton, OH, outside of Dayton. Through the written word, chemistry equations, or musicals, they are teachers who encourage students to try harder and reach higher, never to doubt one's talents. I know a young woman in my office was taught by these three teachers, and I know she believes she can—I know her parents too—take on the world and grow and learn something that women maybe a generation or two ago might not have been so successful at, and Diane Skelley, Vicky Hilliard, and Pat Carson—all three of them at West Carrollton helped her achieve that and helped countless others in Montgomery County in southwest Ohio to move forward, whether it was in English, music, or chemistry.

Vicki Speakman was a Grandview high school teacher. Grandview is outside of Columbus. She was a Spanish teacher, a dedicated mother, a bedrock of the community. She was diagnosed with cancer. Ms. Speakman remained a constant presence at games and concerts, never missing a chance to share a smile, tell a joke, reach out to a lonely student. Ten years ago next month, she lost her fight with cancer, but, like all great teachers, her memory lives in the countless students whose lives are better because of her—not just her memory but the impact she had on these students. Whether they think of Ms. Speakman every day or every week, they live a life differently because of Ms. Speakman. That is true with so many of these teachers.

When I think of this teacher—and I did not know Ms. Speakman, but when I think of her presence at ball games and school plays and I think of so many teachers I had at Mansfield Senior High School—my junior high was one that will probably make the pages here today laugh. The name of my junior high school was Johnny Applesseed Junior High School in north central Ohio, where Johnny Applesseed, 200 years ago or so, used to go around—it was a peculiar life he lived. He went around a country that was totally forested planting apple trees. But to each his own. He became a legend as a result. But I remember, in grade school and junior high and high school, so many teachers who would come to our plays. I played basketball in eighth grade and played baseball and basketball in high school. I would see teachers—not just the coaches but teachers—come to the games, the Friday

night basketball games or the Tuesday afternoon baseball games or the school plays on Saturday. They were part of the community, cheering on their students, not showing favorites but caring particularly for students who were a little more shy or a little less talented who might need a bump up or encouragement from their teacher.

The same goes for Jackie Geary, who taught reading for nearly 45 years in Dayton. She was the matriarch of a family of educators. Her husband Mike is a professor at the University of Dayton, one of our great universities in Ohio. Her daughter Beth is a special needs teacher for families of U.S. military personnel in the country of Japan. Aside from her constant smile and laughter, she reminded all who knew her that one of her great responsibilities was to read to a child each and every night. Jackie passed away last month after a long battle with cancer. Up until her very last days, she insisted on teaching the most valuable lesson of all: compassion and love and commitment.

Again, these are teachers who go above and beyond the call of duty not just to collect a paycheck, not to go home at 3 o'clock, not to be off in the summer and not be a part of the community. Ms. Geary and Ms. Speakman gave so much of their lives to their students. Both passed away, Ms. Speakman some time ago, Ms. Geary more recently. Both will be remembered, and their impact will be seen throughout.

Sandy Ryan is a special-ed preschool teacher in Cleveland. She first taught special needs adults. She then went to college later in life to earn a master's degree to teach special needs children. She buys her students coats in the winter, supplies, including book bags, and coats for children who can't afford them. Again, we don't pay teachers a lot. They are barely in the middle class in terms of their income if they are a single parent and on a teacher's salary. Yet they reach into their pockets. This isn't just buying pencils and pens and occasional lunch money; this is a teacher who buys coats in the winter sometimes for her students because she teaches in a low-income area.

Ms. Donna Marie Shurr is a high school teacher in Oberlin. She partners with local and international projects—water projects in the community, to building homes in Jamaica, to schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. She inspires students to believe that education is continuous and service is a lifelong pursuit that extends beyond the classroom. She is a teacher who, by showing by example, teaching by example, helps these students navigate the rest of their lives. They have a commitment to service beyond the classroom, beyond their workday, beyond their family, a commitment to service in the community, and it doesn't stop at our borders. With Ms. Shurr from Oberlin, not far from where I live, it is international also.

Ms. Dean Blase is an English teacher at Clark Montessori School in Cincinnati. I visited Clark last year. It was a finalist for the competition for President Obama to deliver its commencement speech, losing out at the last minute to a school in Michigan. Teachers such as Ms. Blase instill values of curiosity and wonder in their students from diverse backgrounds, encouraging academic achievement and community service.

Teachers are counselors, coaches, mentors. They serve as surrogate parents. They are friends of students at the right time. They are advisers, they are cheerleaders, they are partners, they are—fill in the blank—that any of us can do because we have had good teachers in our lives. They so often go the extra step. They drive talented pupils to competitions and scholarship interviews. They are an essential part of our communities.

Yet, in Ohio, SB 5 is an amazing thing. It basically takes away rights from teachers, collective bargaining rights. I know teachers—when they collectively bargain, they sit down at the school board and, sure they negotiate for decent wages, health care, and a pension, but they also negotiate for class size.

I was talking to a teacher at a roundtable at a church right off Capital Square a couple of months ago, and she teaches in a Columbus suburb. But she talked about in negotiations how they negotiate class size because she knows, no matter what she is paid or no matter what benefits she has, she wants to be a very good teacher. She cannot be as good a teacher if there are too many students in the classroom because she cannot give them the kind of individual attention she would want to give them.

Yet the Governor, the legislature, because of this ideological mission they are on, want to bust teachers unions, they want to, apparently, downgrade the respect teachers have in the community. Maybe they think they should become bankers or doctors or lawyers so they can make more money. I do not know why they think that.

But what that means is—I am tired of hearing parents tell me and young people tell me: My daughter or I or whoever was going to be a teacher, and they were studying at Miami University or Ohio University or Toledo or Hiram College, whatever, and they decided—when they hear all these politicians, conservative, mostly Republican politicians, in Ohio, Columbus, downgrading teachers and criticizing the profession of teacher—they think: Why do I want to do that? I am not going to make a lot of money. If I am not going to have any respect from the people who run my State, why do I want to be a teacher—in spite of the fact they did want to be a teacher.

I am also hearing from young teachers who are now in the classroom waging these fights that it is not easy teaching kids who do not have much

advantage, it is not easy teaching kids who have discipline problems, it is not easy teaching kids whose parents are not particularly engaged for reasons of dysfunctional families or income or all the reasons parents are not as involved as we would like them to be. It is hard enough to do that without a bunch of Republican conservative politicians criticizing the profession in saying: They quit at 3 o'clock, they do not work in the summers, they are lazy, whatever they say about them.

So I wished to talk about teachers who have affected my life. Most of these teachers I have mentioned have taught people in my office. We walked around the office and said: Tell me about some teachers. Almost every one of these teachers is somebody who has helped to produce stars, absolute stars, in my office. That is one reason I wanted to share their stories, and I wanted to share their stories because I think most of us who are fairminded—unless we are elected to legislatures and rightwing politicians—most of us care about education, most of us care about teachers, most of us appreciate what teachers gave to us, most of us honor them and respect them.

But you are not honoring and respecting teachers, you are not honoring and respecting perhaps the most important profession in this country, when you take away their rights, when you downgrade them, when you go after their unions in the name of some ideological mission you are on. It is tragic, and I am sorry. I apologize for them and their behavior to the teachers of Ohio and teachers around the country. It is too important a profession to do that.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO HAROLD SCHNITZER

MR. WYDEN. I come to the floor to honor a man who touched every corner of my home State of Oregon. Harold Schnitzer left his mark on our business community, the arts, health care, education, and practically every nook and cranny of my home State.

Harold Schnitzer died last week of complications relating to cancer and diabetes. He learned of his impending death earlier this year and faced it with extraordinary style, grace, and the wit that marked his 87 years of life.

Those who knew Harold Schnitzer describe him in one of two ways. Many knew him as a powerful and philanthropic force in our State. Others knew him as approachable, easygoing, and especially as a person who never took himself all that seriously. I knew him