

is coming. That means entitlement reform needs to be on the table. This is a serious crisis. We must do something serious. Entitlement reform needs to be a part of it. That is the only way we will send a message to the world that we are actually willing to make the tough decisions needed to get our fiscal house in order. That is the only way the markets, the American people, and the rest of the world—especially those who hold so much of our debt—will believe we are on the right track.

As we prepare for a second round of talks, I would renew the call to get serious about this looming crisis and do something serious. I renew my pledge this morning to do what it takes to make sure we avert it without raising taxes or building in automatic tax increases in the future which would only destroy jobs. We can avert this crisis without doing harm to the economy or slowing down any economic recovery. That means no tax hikes now, and it means not rewarding the failure of a future Congress with automatic access to more taxpayer dollars. Above all, it means serious reforms. We need to summon the courage to make some tough decisions right now.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. REID. Madam President, briefly, first to comment on immigration reform, we have spent a great deal of time on the Senate floor the last two Congresses dealing with immigration reform. We worked hard in coming up with a solution, and we have a solution. We were working with President Bush toward coming up with a solution to immigration reform. The problem was that even President Bush—even President Bush—could not get his Republican colleagues to join with us in doing something about immigration reform.

Our immigration system is broken, and it needs to be fixed. But it is so important that the President in El Paso today talks about the need for immigration reform because he knows and we all know, as even President Bush knew, that immigration reform is necessary. The problem is that we can't get Republicans here in the Senate to help us. It is quite simple.

We know we have to do something about border security. We have done a lot in that regard. Have we done enough? No. There is more that can be done, but we have done a lot in that direction, and rightfully so. Just within the last year or so, we provided \$650 billion for more border security. That was on a bipartisan basis. We passed that. That was important.

We also have to do something about our guest worker program. At any one given time, we have thousands and thousands of guest workers here. Why? Because it is necessary, and it has been for a long time. Take the Chesapeake

Bay. We have learned that we have people who come in—seasonal workers—who can do the work on the clams and the stuff on the great Chesapeake Bay. We have about 1.5 million agricultural workers in our country, and we have a system that doesn't work even for them. We have to do this. Our agricultural industry depends on it.

We also have in our country today 11 million people who are undocumented. There isn't anybody with an ounce of common sense who thinks we can deport 11 million people. We can't do it fiscally, and we can't do it physically. Therefore, we should do something about the 11 million people who are here. How should we do that? Put them on a pathway to legalization. It doesn't mean amnesty. It means that they would pay penalties and fines, that they would go to the back of the line, not the front of the line. They would have to learn English. They would have to stay out of trouble. They would have to pay taxes. There are certain things they would be required to do.

Finally, we have to do something about the unworkable employer sanction provision that was put into the 1986 law. It hasn't worked. Prior to that time, the burden was on the government to make sure people who came to work throughout America were legal. We shifted that responsibility to employers. They can't do that. It is a catch-22 now. The way the law is set up now simply doesn't work. We have, since 1986, computerization which has taken over much of the world, and through that we can work toward having an employer sanction program in our country that will work.

My point is that President Obama should be commended for talking about immigration reform. It is necessary.

My friend the Republican leader should also understand that we have tried, and for our Republican people to talk about immigration reform and not vote accordingly is something the people of America have witnessed now for many years.

OIL COMPANY SUBSIDIES

Mr. REID. Madam President, saving money requires a lot of very difficult choices: Which programs do we cut in these tough times? Which priorities are more important than others? As we have seen in the Senate and across the country over the last few months, a lot of people have a lot of different answers to these questions.

Democrats believe we have to get our spending under control, and we have to look at what needs to be cut. But we need to have a fair program, one that looks at what we are going to do long term with the equities of our spending programs. We have to look at what we do with revenues to make sure they are fair and balanced. So there are a lot of choices.

My friend, the Speaker of the House, gave a speech last night in New York. He talked about raising the debt limit

and some of the things he thinks would be necessary in order to get that done. But I would direct the attention of my friend, the Speaker, to one way it would go very quickly to solving some of these problems. We know there is waste in the Federal budget and the Tax Code, but what I want to direct the attention of my friend, the Speaker, to is these five big oil companies.

We, as taxpayers, are giving billions and billions of dollars every year to these companies—billions every year. Every cent of it is taxpayer money to oil companies that already are more than successful.

These oil companies made \$36 billion in profits during the first quarter of this year. I repeat that: \$36 billion in profits during the first quarter of this year. ExxonMobil alone made 70 percent more this year than they did last year. Exxon holds the record for making more than any corporation in the history of our country in years past. These oil companies, I repeat, made \$36 billion in the first quarter.

The industry's \$36 billion in quarterly profits means they are making about \$12 billion a month or \$4 billion a week, and yet the U.S. Government is giving these companies billions of dollars in corporate welfare every year. That is unnecessary. Why are taxpayers on the hook for oil companies that are doing just fine on their own?

If we are serious about reducing the deficit, what an easy place to start, I say to my friend, the Speaker of the House of Representatives. It is a no-brainer. Let's use these savings from these taxpayer giveaways to drive down the deficit, not drive up the profits of oil companies.

We need to make one thing very clear: Wasteful subsidies have nothing to do with gas prices. These oil handouts have existed for decades. Prices have continued to rise. Oil executives' paychecks have also continued to rise.

In the State of Alaska they are paying \$8 or \$9 a gallon for gasoline. In the State of California, there are places where you pay as much as \$5 a gallon for gasoline. Here at an Exxon station along the waterfront, I looked out the other day, and the gas prices there were within a few cents of being \$5 a gallon. That is in our Nation's Capital. So that money Americans are paying at the pump is not related to those subsidies I have talked about, but those profits are proof enough they do not need them. The companies do not need those subsidies. Even big oil CEOs, such as the head of Shell, and Republicans in Congress—even my friend, the Speaker—have said on occasion these subsidies are not necessary.

Some of our conservative colleagues have a hard time stomaching giving a hand to those who need it the most. But we should all agree—in the interest of fairness, common sense, and saving taxpayer money—that we cannot continue with this corporate welfare to those big oil companies that need it the least. That is a good place to start.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first hour equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the next 30 minutes.

The Senator from Illinois.

OIL COMPANY SUBSIDIES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise in support of the comments made by the majority leader. I was in Chicago over the weekend, and downstate as well in Illinois, and saw these gasoline prices and understand the hardship they cause. At a BP filling station in Chicago near Lawrence and Lake Shore Drive, I ran into a man who is a plumber who has a van and goes from job to job. He said it is not unusual now for him to spend over \$100 a week on gasoline. Of course, that is taking away money he could have brought home for his family. It is a real hardship on him.

He kind of smiled and chuckled and said: They do it to us every year, don't they.

That is true, Madam President. Whether we are talking about the situation in New Hampshire or Illinois, we can predict the rights of spring in America: the opening of the baseball season, Easter egg hunts, Seder dinners for Passover, and skyrocketing gasoline prices.

Then there are the excuses. There is always an excuse: Oh, we had to switch from winter to summer. We didn't see that coming. Oh, there is a problem in the Middle East. Whatever it is, any excuse will do, and the gasoline prices go up.

We can do something about it, and we should. The majority leader is right. We accept the challenge of Speaker JOHN BOEHNER who said in New York: Let's make a serious effort to deal with this deficit. Well, we have a great downpayment: \$21 billion we can take off the deficit. We can take it away from a group that does not need it. We are talking about the oil companies that are registering record profits—\$36 billion. If we decide to take away the subsidies that are now being given to these extremely profitable companies, it will save taxpayers \$21 billion over 10 years.

Let's get started there. That ought to be the easy part because right now we know what is going on. We are paying for these high gasoline prices three times: First, when we fill up our tanks.

Oh, they hit us hard there—\$60, \$80, \$100 just to fill up the tank. Second, because we are giving \$4 billion a year in subsidies to the oil companies, taxpayers are being hit again. It is not just what we pay at the gas pump, it is what we pay on April 15. Part of that is going to the oil companies.

But there is a third hit. Do you know where we get the money to pay the subsidies to the oil companies? We borrow it from China—the largest creditor of the United States. We are borrowing 40 cents for every \$1 we spend. So out of the \$4 billion we are talking about that is going annually to these oil companies, 40 percent of it—about \$1.6 billion—is being borrowed every single year from countries such as China. So the third way we pay is, ultimately, on the debt to China and the interest on that debt.

Can we afford that? At a time when Americans are sacrificing, can't we ask the oil companies, with record profits, to sacrifice their Federal subsidies? That is all we are trying to do. I know Senator SCHUMER from New York is going to take the floor momentarily and talk about this issue. We will have a bill on the Senate floor. For those Members on both sides of the aisle who have given impassioned speeches about reducing the deficit, here is their chance. It is a put-up-or-shut-up moment. If we believe in reducing the deficit, here is \$21 billion of low-hanging fruit. Let's pick it. Let's pick it for the taxpayers. Let's take these savings and put it right on deficit reduction. I hope that is something on which both sides of the aisle can agree.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, let me say a word very quickly about the President's speech today in El Paso.

I have said on the Senate floor many times, because it is a source of pride to me, I am a first generation American. One hundred years ago, my mother was brought to this country as an infant, 2 years of age. My grandmother brought her over from Lithuania, and they landed in Baltimore in 1911—100 years ago. How they made it—the four of them, at that point: my aunt, uncle, grandmother, and mother—how they made it from Baltimore to East St. Louis, IL, I do not have a clue because I am sure they did not speak but a handful of words in English.

They made it like other immigrants made it: because they were determined to come to this country. They were prepared to leave everything behind in their lives—their homes, their churches, their relatives, their friends, their languages, their cultures—and come to this great Nation and take the risk, the risk of opportunity. Think about that story and multiply it millions of times, and that is the story of America.

The people who hate immigration are turning their back on the heart and essence of this great Nation. We are an

immigrant nation of people of extraordinary courage who picked up and moved and said: We are going to try our best in a new place with a new language. When most of them arrived—I am sure it was the case with many who were on the boat with my mom—there were folks standing on the shoreline saying: No, not more of those people. Don't we have enough of them? They don't speak our language. They don't look like us. They don't dress like us. They eat funny food. They hang out with one another. We don't need more of those people.

For as long as immigrants have been coming to these shores, there have been people standing on the shores saying: Please, pull up the ladder. We don't need any more of those folks. But we do. We need them not only because they work hard, we need them because they have a spirit and a determination which makes us a different nation.

The DNA each of us shares from those immigrant parents and grandparents gives us a drive and a determination to make this a better nation. When we close the doors to immigration—orderly, legal immigration—we are closing the doors of opportunity in this country.

The President will speak to immigration today. He has been a loyal friend of mine for a long time. He was a co-sponsor of the DREAM Act, which I introduced 10 years ago, and I would not be surprised if he brought it up today in El Paso. He did last week in the White House. I know he is committed, as I am, to make sure children who were brought to the United States as infants and youngsters, who had no voice in the decision to come here, who have lived a good life here, worked hard and went to school, said the Pledge of Allegiance every morning in the classroom and know no other flag but the U.S. flag, children who want to become tomorrow's adults and tomorrow's leaders deserve a chance. The DREAM Act will give them that chance. They can choose to enlist in our military and become citizens of the United States, or they can choose to complete college, at least 2 years of it, and find a path to citizenship. That is reasonable, it is compassionate, and it is fair. I hope as part of immigration reform we include it.

I plead with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Do not turn your back on America's heritage. Do not turn your back on fairness and compassion. Join us in real immigration reform. Join us in passing the DREAM Act.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, I commend my colleague and friend from Illinois for his outstanding remarks on both subjects, the deficit and on immigration. I am here to talk about the deficit, but I will just touch on immigration.

People are saying, well, why is the President going to El Paso when we