

longer be able to have trials. Security checks could stop, and so could paychecks to our troops. That is how desperate it would be.

What could be so important that my Republican colleagues are willing to put our economy at such dire risk? What could be worth walking away from the negotiating table, as they have done? Tax breaks for wealthy oil companies and corporate jets? Republicans have gone to the mat for Big Oil, fighting again and again to preserve wasteful, taxpayer-funded giveaways to companies that made tens of billions of dollars in profits in the first quarter of this year alone. Republicans walked away from the negotiating table to save tax breaks for corporate jets. So which big industries and special interests will they fight for next? Oil companies? To ship jobs overseas? Companies that ship jobs overseas? Corporate jets?

If they were truly serious about reducing the deficit, they would admit this kind of waste must end. Yet some top Republicans say eliminating these subsidies shouldn't even be part of the discussion as we find a way to reduce the deficit and avoid a catastrophic default. Several rank-and-file Republicans have said handouts to oil and gas companies and other wasteful tax breaks should be on the table as we negotiate. These are Republicans. And 34 Republicans endorsed the view that any taxpayer giveaways should be part of the solution when they voted to eliminate subsidies for ethanol. It seems Republicans can't even agree among themselves whether subsidies and giveaways are sacrosanct.

One thing they can agree on, it seems: They are willing to balance the budget on the backs of seniors instead. They are willing to end Medicare as we know it. They are willing to slash Medicaid, jeopardizing coverage for 80 percent of American seniors in nursing homes. Medicaid is for the poorest of the poor, but about 70 percent of Medicaid money goes to people who are in rest homes, nursing homes. Republican priorities, then, are very clear. They are dead wrong, though.

Democrats know we need to make difficult spending cuts to reduce our deficit, but to dig ourselves out of this financial hole, we must also create jobs to spur our economy, and we must break the cycle of wasteful giveaways, not break our promise to seniors.

The junior Senator from South Carolina, a Republican, threatened that any Republican who votes to avert a default crisis will be "gone"—those are his words—voted out in a wave of tea party anger. This kind of inflammatory language is irresponsible. There is simply too much at stake.

Also, this same Senator did not mention that 235 Republicans in the House and 40 in the Senate, including my friend from South Carolina whom I have just talked about, have already voted to increase our debt this year. Their ideological budget—it came from

the House—that they wanted to support here and did vote for it, would have increased the debt by more than 60 percent over the next 10 years. The so-called Ryan budget would increase the debt by more than 60 percent over the next 10 years. That is about \$9 trillion in a decade.

What did Republicans get for their so-called \$9 trillion? What would we get? A plan that ends Medicare; a plan that would slash Medicaid, jeopardizing coverage, as I indicated, for 80 percent of American seniors in nursing homes; a plan that protects tax breaks for billionaires and oil companies while putting millions of seniors at risk. That is the choice. The psychologist Alfred Adler once said, "It is easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them." Republicans shouted loudly and repeatedly about reducing debt. Then they gave us 9 trillion reasons not to trust this rhetoric.

The time for empty rhetoric is over. Now it is time for my Republican colleagues to put the good of our economy ahead of their own politics.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JAMES MICHAEL COLE TO BE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

NOMINATION OF VIRGINIA A. SEITZ TO BE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

NOMINATION OF LISA O. MONACO TO BE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of James Michael Cole, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Attorney General;

Virginia A. Seitz, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Attorney General; and

Lisa O. Monaco, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Attorney General.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 2 hours of debate concurrently on the nominations, equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask that the time of all the quorum calls during the debate on these important nominations be equally charged to both sides.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the final 15 minutes for debate on these nominations be set aside for the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, PATRICK LEAHY.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the last thing we need when we are trying to get back on track is a default crisis that would grind our economy to a halt and bury us under even more debt. Yet the latest round of Republican politicians threatening to default on our debt has made their priorities clear: They would rather stop paying our men and women fighting overseas, force deep cuts to Social Security and Medicare, and throw even more Americans out of work than tell big oil companies and corporate jet owners to pay their fair share.

Clearly our Republican colleagues are serious about politics, not deficits. You cannot be serious about deficits and at the same time recklessly jeopardize our economic standing in the world in order to protect tax breaks for the wealthiest few. Yet that is what leaders such as MITCH MCCONNELL seem to be saying. Yesterday my Republican colleague drew a line in the sand on cutting wasteful spending in the Tax Code, calling elimination of special interest giveaways politically impossible. Politically impossible? Really? Just two weeks ago 34 Senate Republicans joined Democrats in passing the repeal of subsidies to ethanol companies. Politically impossible? The landmark budget agreements of the 1990s brought us into balance and ushered in surpluses that took a balanced approach and created prosperity and job creation such as we have not seen in this decade.

Politically impossible? Right now in America middle-class families are living paycheck to paycheck while Senator MCCONNELL and his colleagues are going to the mat to protect billions in tax breaks to oil companies. They say two things—Senator MCCONNELL says two things: He says he is not raising taxes. He wants the average American to think it is your taxes. No one wants

to raise taxes on people below \$250 million—many of us, people below \$1 million. But when oil companies get big giveaways, when corporate jets get huge deductions, a greater deduction than Delta gets when it buys a plane for commercial use, that should be on the table. We should ask Senator MCCONNELL and the press should ask Senator MCCONNELL: When you say no taxes, do you mean some of our largest corporations should pay no taxes? When you say no taxes, should no taxes be on the table? Are you saying we should not close corporate loopholes? Are you saying people who are making \$1 billion should not sacrifice and all the sacrifice should be the middle class? Because that is what Senator MCCONNELL is saying.

Again, we do not wish to tax and will not tax average middle-class people. That is the President's pledge and that is our pledge. The question is: When you tell an average teacher or cop or firefighter you have to sacrifice, are you going to tell the millionaire they have to sacrifice too? Not because we dislike them, but because it should be shared across the board, and Senator MCCONNELL has said: No, the millionaires should not sacrifice. Because the only way they are going to sacrifice is closing loopholes in the Tax Code. They don't need loans to help their kids get to college.

One other thing: Senator MCCONNELL says we should take anything about corporate loopholes, about taxing wealthy people off the table. His "my way or the highway" approach is what is standing in the way of getting an agreement. The person standing in the way right now is Senator MCCONNELL. You have not heard such strident language from the other leaders. He says: Take everything we want and nothing you want or we will not get an agreement. That is what he is saying.

The bottom line is very simple. Senator MCCONNELL, cutting Medicare benefits will not make us stronger; Firing teachers will not make us stronger; rolling back investments in innovation and research and high-tech jobs of the future will not make us stronger, but ending wasteful tax subsidies that do nothing but contribute to the deficit for oil companies and corporate jet owners will make us stronger. Meet us part of the way here. Don't say my way or no way because that is too risky, and that is telling the world we will not fulfill our obligations the way every family in America has to fulfill theirs.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KIRK. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STEALTH SURVEY

Mr. KIRK. Madam President, I rise with great concern regarding a program just revealed in the Sunday New York Times—outstanding work by Robert Pear—"U.S. Plans Stealth Survey on Access to Doctors." I am asking my colleagues to join me in sending a letter to Secretary Sebelius, sharing our concerns with the legality, standards, and repercussions of this program.

I have deep concerns regarding the Department's recent plans for this so-called stealth survey, its legality, the notification to Congress, the lack of standards for any misconduct or bad reporting by the staff hired to carry out this work in looking clandestinely at American doctors and their practice of medicine. The cost and proposed clandestine method of collecting information about physicians' offices is questionable. Therefore, I will be requesting details on how this survey will be conducted and how investigators will be punished for misconduct or extortion they may carry out in their duties and how patient and physician confidentiality will be maintained.

In our letter, we are outlining 12 key questions.

No. 1. Since there are already a number of surveys answering this question, does this expenditure of taxpayer money add anything? We are asking for the Department to provide detailed records of their literature review on the current research that has already been published on the subject before launching this taxpayer-funded expense. We are also asking for the total cost of this program to be revealed.

No. 2. We are asking for records on how the National Opinion Research Center of Chicago, IL, won a Federal competitive bid to carry out this work.

No. 3. In concluding the results of this survey, how will the NORC decide what qualifies as an acceptable response or best practices from physicians they have targeted?

No. 4. How will patient and doctor confidentiality be maintained? If researchers report bad information or use this survey for extortion, bribery or other acts, how will they be disciplined?

No. 5. Once concluded, who has access to this information—the Department, the White House, the Congress, the press?

No. 6. By what criteria will individual physicians be targeted for participation? Will age, average incomes, surrounding office locations or political affiliation be excluded from factors considered when targeting physicians?

No. 7. Will Federal employees carry out this work or will it be conducted by a contracted call center for data collection? Also, who is qualified to conduct this survey and how will they be chosen?

No. 8. If the staff improperly releases patient or physician data, how will they be disciplined?

No. 9. I would like their description of the fiscal year 2011 Appropriations Committee program or account under which this was funded.

No. 10. I am also requesting a description of the statutory authorization used to carry out this work and the congressional notifications informing the committees of jurisdiction of their intent to obligate funds for this purpose.

No. 11. I am also asking for specific sections identified in the President's budget under which the funding for this work was requested.

No. 12. If a physician wishes to correct data collected by the NORC, what legal redress does he or she have?

There have been a number of very reliable studies which confirm that many patients on Medicaid and Medicare cannot find a doctor to see them. Previous studies also confirm that we do not have enough doctors, particularly primary care doctors. We all know government programs often provide poor service and suffer from funding failures or corruption.

In this time of serious fiscal constraint, I urge us to focus our limited Federal resources on ways we can actually address these problems rather than launch another taxpayer-funded spending program to clandestinely review the work of our physicians.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KYL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for up to 7 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE DEFICIT

Mr. KYL. Madam President, I just wish to bring to my colleagues' attention a very well-written but disturbing op-ed in today's Wall Street Journal by one of our country's foremost economists, a person whose calculations and prognostications we should not lightly lay aside, Larry Lindsey.

In this piece, entitled "The Deficit Is Worse Than We Think," he posits three reasons why we need to get serious about deficit reduction. I will just mention the three reasons, put this op-ed in the RECORD, and make a comment or two about it.

First, he says, if interest rates in this country go back to their historic levels, we would have annual interest expenses on our debt roughly \$420 billion higher in 2014 and \$700 billion higher in